PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 89

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1985-86

COMPRISING PERIOD
16 DECEMBER 1985—17 JANUARY 1986

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£52·50 net

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY RIGHT HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, SEPTEMBER 1985)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone, CH
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—The Rt. Hon. Leon Brittan, QC, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Edwards, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Havers, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC, MP

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—Richard Luce, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Young
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Timothy Raison, MP
Malcolm Rifkind, Esq, QC, MP
Timothy Renton, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Trade—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
Minister for Information Technology—Geoffrey Pattie, Esq, MP
Minister of State—The Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—John Moore, Esq, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, TREASURY—The Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
David Waddington, Esq, QC, MP
Giles Shaw, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Alick Buchanan-Smith, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—Norman Lamont, Esq, MP
Minister of State for Defence Support—The Lord Trefgarne
MINISTER OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Gray of Contin
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY—
Minister for Health—The Rt. Hon. Barney Hayhoe, MP
Minister for Social Security—Antony Newton, Esq, MP

MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—Dr. Rhodes Boyson, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—
The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT—Mrs. Lynda Chalker, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister of State—The Lord Elton, TD
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Local Government—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction—John Patten, Esq, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY—Mrs. Peggy Fenner, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS—Richard Luce, Esq, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—
The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, MP

Defence—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—Norman Lamont, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE SUPPORT—The Lord Trefgarne
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—John Lee, Esq, MP

Education and Science—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Robert Dunn, Esq, MP
George Walden, Esq, MP

Employment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
PAYMASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
Peter Bottomley, Esq, MP
David Trippier, Esq, MP

Energy—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Alick Buchanan-Smith, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Alastair Goodlad, Esq, MP
David Hunt, Esq, MP

Environment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Local Government—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction—John Patten, Esq, MP
Minister of State—The Lord Elton, TD
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Sir George Young, Bt, MP
Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
Richard Tracey, Esq, MP

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Young
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Timothy Raison, MP
Malcolm Rifkind, Esq, QC, MP
Timothy Renton, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Timothy Eggar, Esq, MP

Health and Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Health—The Rt. Hon. Barney Hayhoe, MP
Minister for Social Security—Antony Newton, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Ray Whitney, Esq, MP
The Baroness Trumpington
John Major, Esq, MP

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
David Waddington, Esq, QC, MP
Giles Shaw Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
David Mellor, Esq, MP
The Lord Glenarthur

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Havers, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC, MP

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hailsham of Saint Marylebone, CH

Management and Personnel Office—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—Richard Luce, Esq, MP

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Dr. Rhodes Boyson, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
The Lord Lyell
Richard Needham, Esq, MP

Paymaster General and Minister for Employment—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Richard Luce, Esq, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Gray of Contin
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Allan Stewart, Esq, MP
John MacKay, Esq, MP
Michael Ancram, Esq, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—The Rt. Hon. Leon Brittan, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Trade—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
Minister for Information Technology—Geoffrey Pattie, Esq, MP
Minister of State—The Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
John Butcher, Esq, MP
Lord Lucas of Chilworth
Michael Howard, Esq, QC, MP

Transport—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Mrs. Lynda Chalker, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
David Mitchell, Esq, MP
Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
The Earl of Caithness

Treasury—

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—John Moore, Esq, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
Donald Thompson, Esq, MP
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP
The Hon. Timothy Sainsbury, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
Michael Neubert, Esq, MP
Tony Durant, Esq, MP
Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP
The Hon. Mark Lennox-Boyd, MP
The Hon. Francis Maude, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Edwards, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
Mark Robinson, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—

LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Rt. Hon. The Duke of Northumberland, KG, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—John Cope, Esq, MP
COMPTROLLER—Carol Mather, Esq, MC, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—The Hon. Robert Boscawen, MC, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—The Earl of Swinton
LORDS IN WAITING— The Viscount Long, The Lord Skelmersdale, The Lord Brabazon of Tara, Viscount Davidson
BARONESS IN WAITING—The Baroness Hooper

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—Sir William van Straubenzee, MBE, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP
CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP
FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Ernest Armstrong, MP
SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL—
Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP, Ian Campbell, Esq, MP, Donald Coleman, Esq, MP, Patrick Cormack, Esq, MP, David Crouch, Esq, MP, Stan Crowther, Esq, MP, Miss Janet Fookes, MP, John Forrester, Esq, MP, Harry Gourlay, Esq, MP, Sir Philip Holland, MP, John Hunt, Esq, MP, David Knox, Esq, MP, James Lamond, Esq, MP, Ted Leadbitter, Esq, MP, Hugh McCartney, Esq, MP, Sir Anthony Meyer, MP, Michael Morris, Esq, MP, Sir Michael Shaw, MP, Michael Shersby, Esq, MP, John Spence, Esq, MP, Sir John Wells, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—
Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP, Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP, Sir Paul Bryan, DSO, MC, MP, Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP

SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION—R. B. Sands

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—W. A. Beaumont, OBE, AE
SPEAKER'S COUNSEL— G. E. Gammie, CB, H. Knorpel, CB
SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon T. Beeson
STAFF INSPECTOR—H. W. Bunkell
TRAINBEARER (PARLIAMENTARY)—D. J. Lord
DEPUTY TRAINBEARER (ADMINISTRATION)—P. L. Warwick
ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—T. D. Salmon

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—D. W. Robson

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—K. A. Bradshaw, CB
CLERK ASSISTANT—C. J. Boulton, CB
CLERK OF COMMITTEES—D. A. M. Pring, CB, MC
PRINCIPAL CLERKS—
J. H. Willcox (Public Bills)
R. S. Lankester (Select Committees)
D. W. Limon (Table Office)
H. M. Barclay (Private Bills)
M. T. Ryle (Journal Office)
J. F. Sweetman, TD (Overseas Office)
A. A. Barrett (Standing Committees)
C. B. Winnifrith (Select Committees)
W. R. McKay (Financial Committees)
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS—J. R. Rose, A. J. Hastings, R. J. Willoughby, S. A. L. Panton, R. B. Sands, G. Cubie, M. R. Jack, PhD, D. G. Millar, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig
SENIOR CLERKS—R. J. Rogers, A. Sandall, MLitt, M. H. Cooper, PhD, D. L. Natzler, D. J. Cairncross, E. P. Silk, Mrs. S. A. de Ste. Croix, A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, A. R. Gren, S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, D. F. Harrison, S. J. Priestley, C. P. R. Bennett, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans, R. I. S. Phillips, P. D. Brittain (acting), C. A. Larsen (acting), J. Hallowell (acting), J. B. Ingram (acting), P. D. Austwick (acting)
ASSISTANT CLERKS—R. G. James, Miss E. J. Baker, C. M. H. Wookey, Miss P. A. Helme, D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—E. F. Riddles
HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—C. L. Watson, K. J. Brown, G. E. Clayton, L. L. Kaye, I. C. Bryan, Miss R. J. Challis, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox
SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—I. S. Orton, Miss H. C. Beaumont, Miss J. Ward, R. A. Wilkins, P. R. Daley
EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright DEPUTY—B. Tidball ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis, J. Puricelli, Mrs. L. M. Nugent, K. B. Wood
EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—H. M. Barclay, J. M. Davies
REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—R. S. Lankester
TAXING OFFICER—H. M. Barclay
CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—R. A. Broomfield, P. G. Moon, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, Mrs. J. Pickett, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader, Miss J. Stevens (Temp.)

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Major G. V. S. Le Fanu
DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—Major P. N. W. Jennings
ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright
CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss M. Frampton, MBE
ASSISTANT CLERK IN CHARGE—D. W. Snell
ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—E. D. Palfrey, A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. J. Warren
PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—J. Blood
SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—G. H. Sargeant
THIRD PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—S. E. R. Skinner
HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE SECOND OFFICE KEEPER—M. Bryant
NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil
DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield
LIBRARY—
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS—H. J. Palmer, G. F. Lock
DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS—J. B. Poole, PhD, Miss J. B. Tanfield, S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, MI InfSc, Mrs. C. B. Andrews
SENIOR LIBRARY CLERKS—Miss E. K. Andrews, DPhil, Mrs. B. L. Miller, Mrs. J. M. Lourie, Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. C. Pond, PhD, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, Miss C. E. Nield, R. C. Clements, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Mrs. G. Allen (Temp.)
ASSISTANT LIBRARY CLERKS—Miss C. J. Gilmour, PhD, Miss M. Baber, C. M. Bowlby, Mrs. P. Carling (Temp.)
SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Miss M. R. O'Reilly, MBE, Miss R. Wheatman, ALA, Mrs. S. M. Withers, ALA
SENIOR INFORMATION CLERKS—Miss E. Osborn, Mrs. D. W. Clark, ALA, Mrs. E. R. Stones (Education Officer)
HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, J. A. Prince, MLS, ALA, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, ALA, M. Southgate, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss M. H. Fletcher, ALA, Miss J. Seaton, FLA, Miss G. C. Howarth, ALA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA, Miss A. Siswell, Mrs. E. A. Houghton, ALA, Ms. V. R. Cattell, Mrs. S. M. Hingley, ALA, Ms. A. Muir, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA
LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, Mrs. I. O. Stockton, ALA, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA, G. Haig, Ms. H. Armstrong, ALA, Mrs. J. A. P. Skipworth, Miss B. Mee, Miss G. L. Cooper, Miss S. Holland, LLA, B. Donnelly, Mrs. F. M. Ward
SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson
CHIEF OFFICE CLERK—T. H. Haclin, D. J. Plowright
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—J. F. Youle, P. R. Davis, J. S. Came, S. A. Wise, Mrs. P. A. Bozdan, Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA

VOTE OFFICE—
DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell
DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster
ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney
SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—C. J. Montgomery, C. D. Lister

SALE OFFICE—CHIEF OFFICE CLERK—C. C. Clarke, MBE

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—A. C. J. Poole
FEES OFFICE—
ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson
DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis
SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—G. P. Brown (Temp.)
ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—F. W. Brewer, A. R. Marskell, M. J. Barram, A. C. Langford, MBE (Temp.) Miss M. M. McColl (Temp.)
DEPUTY ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—
HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—K. E. Johnson, R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. J. Yexley, R. S. Young (Temp.), Mrs. N. Norman (Temp.), Mrs. G. Crowther (Temp.), D. A. Tucker (Temp.)
CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—Miss D. E. Johnson, Miss T. D. Ruewell (Temp.), Mrs. D. K. P. Simons (Temp.), Mrs. D. Hill, Miss P. Hurford (Temp.), Mrs. J. C. Ponting (Temp.), B. W. Palmer (Temp.), Miss J. Bell (Temp.)

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—
HEAD OF OFFICE—G. A. Roberts
DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb
ASSISTANT HEAD OF OFFICE—D. J. Mouat
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Mrs. S. Caird-Lawrence
HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Miss R. A. Cole
SUPERINTENDING CLERK—P. C. Kingsley
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner

COMPUTER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FIInfSc
ASSISTANT COMPUTER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER—Mrs. G. S. P. Smith

INTERNAL AUDITOR—Miss C. D. Stone, FCCA

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—K. S. Morgan
DEPUTY EDITOR—L. R. Johns
PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley
SENIOR ASSISTANT EDITORS—F. G. Brotherston, C. R. G. Watson, OBE
ASSISTANT EDITOR—P. Walker
DEPUTY ASSISTANT EDITORS—E. Holland, I. D. Church, J. Withers
COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—W. G. Garland, F. I. Williams, Miss V. Grainger, J. Ledgerwood, D. Crosswell, Miss C. Ritchie, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Mrs. A. Roberts, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland
REPORTERS—Mrs. E. J. Gregory, Mrs. P. Pratt, Miss V. A. Widgery, S. M. Hutchinson, J. Robinson, Miss C. Fogarty, Mrs. J. Ballard, Miss H. Thompson, Miss M. Babington, Miss C. G. Black, P. Oglethorpe, Miss C. Hanly, Miss A. Harris, J. Bonner, Miss J. K. Belcher, Miss J. A. Bradshaw
FIRST PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington
SECOND PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—Mrs. E. M. Bangay
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—Mrs. H. Stollery
CHIEF HANSARD ASSISTANT—D. J. Lawler
HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington
ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—H. J. Wellings

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA
PERSONNEL OFFICER—
PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn
BANQUETING SUPERVISOR—C. J. Griffiths
CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA
ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley
EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay
HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe
HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland
PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER (PSA)—W. H. Lewis, OBE
HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent I. K. Slessor
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—D. Todd
POSTMASTER—C. E. Tomkins
TRANSPORT MANAGER—Miss M. F. Ward

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 89**

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1985-86

House of Commons

Monday 16 December 1985

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

ENERGY

Scottish Coalfield

1. **Mr. Douglas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on visits by Ministers in his Department to pits in the Scottish coalfield.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. David Hunt): I was extremely impressed during my recent visit to the Scottish coalfield to hear of the measures being taken to reduce costs and improve productivity.

Mr. Douglas: Does the Minister accept that to a large extent those measures are related to providing good industrial relations? Will he note that while some improvements have been made by reinstating some of the miners sacked during the strike, more that 130 men face this Christmas having been out of work for two years? Is he aware that there is increasing suspicion, indeed evidence, that some of those out of work are unemployed because of their trade union associations? Will the Minister take steps to approach the coal board again in Scotland to ensure that those men who have been unjustifiably treated receive fair treatment?

Mr. Hunt: The reinstatement of sacked Scottish miners is a matter for the Scottish area. Comparisons vary between different cases, and are neither useful nor valid I understand that most of the dismissed miners in the Scottish area have been reinterviewed for reinstatement, and that more than 70 have been offered employment. Decisions following such reviews must be for area management, and those who have not been reinstated may take their case to an industrial tribunal.

Mr. Hannam: Will my hon. Friend confirm that investment in the Scottish fields has increased from £61 million during the five years before 1979 to £160 million in the five years since then? Does that not confirm that the Government may claim credit for the growth of the coal industry?

Mr. Hunt: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and it is a pleasure to respond to such a positive question. Investment in the Scottish coalfield has increased over the period my hon. Friend mentioned by 43 per cent. in real terms.

Mr. Home Robertson: Is the Minister aware that there is considerable public anxiety that so many victimised Scottish miners will face another new year out of work? When the Minister visited Monktonhall—I think he was beneath my constituency briefly — was his attention drawn to the fact that Monktonhall is the gateway to the Musselburgh bay coalfield, which is as big as any new coalfield which may be available in England or elsewhere? When will the Government make it possible to develop that new coalfield?

Mr. Hunt: Individual investment decisions are for local management. I wish that more Labour Members would pay tribute to what has been a remarkable turn round in the Scottish coalfield since the end of the sad political strike led by Mr. Scargill, which resulted in the number of producing faces in Scotland decreasing from 31 to 19. Last week output had returned to its pre-strike level of 95,000 tonnes a week. That is a creditable achievement.

Mr. Eadie: Is the Minister aware that no Labour Member will be reluctant to pay tribute to the activities of miners, whether in the Scottish or any other coalfield? Does he realise that he seems to move the goalposts every time he is asked a question about victimised miners? To

start with it was said that none had to be reinstated. Is he aware that it is time for a public inquiry into the management and administration of the NCB? Many victimised miners have not been reinstated because of victimisation or another reason? Is the Minister further aware that when he went beneath Monktonhall, he issued a press release and said how cynical Labour Members were about the future of Monktonhall? I hope that he was properly briefed, because if the peacock seam had never been developed, Monktonhall would have been in jeopardy.

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Member will be aware that the new face on which so much hope is being placed is to be started at the beginning of January and is in the Stairhead seam. Much is hoped of that development. No Conservative Member has said that no dismissed miner should get his job back. That is a matter on which individual management should decide. However, we should pay more attention to the real victimised miners. Fortunately, there are few now left, but there are still outrageous examples of intimidation of those men who, by their courage and determination, so impressed the country at the time.

Polkemmet Bing (Ministerial Visit)

2. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what action he has taken as a result of the Under-Secretary of State's visit on Tuesday 26 November to Polkemmet Bing, West Lothian.

Mr. David Hunt: Following my visit to Polkemmet Bing, I was assured by the NCB Scottish area officials and the environmental health officers from West Lothian district council, who attended with me, that everything possible was being done to overcome the serious situation.

Mr. Dalyell: I thank the Minister publicly, as I have privately, for making the detour there. Will he give this copper piping that I am holding, which I was given yesterday by a constituent, Mr. Alec Gibson, to his analysts, because if the sulphur emissions do that to copper, what do they do to the guts and intestines of my constituents? Will he provide resources for continuous 24-hour work to rectify this desperate problem? I saw the Bing yet again yesterday, and it is a serious health hazard.

Mr. Hunt: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the thanks that he has given so publicly. I checked with the local district council officials who attended with me whether the fumes were being carefully monitored so as to avoid any noxious fumes causing a deleterious impact on the local environment and people. I was assured that monitoring is taking place and is being carefully checked. As to 24-hour working, I understand that work cannot go any faster because of the safety considerations for the men who are trying to alleviate the problem. Naturally, I shall raise the hon. Gentleman's points with the coal board's chief scientist for Scotland.

Electricity Generation

3. **Mr. Proctor** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of United Kingdom electricity generation comes from *(a)* nuclear, *(b)* oil, *(c)* coal and *(d)* hydro sources; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Alastair Goodlad): For 1983 the proportions were 17·6 per cent. for nuclear, 7·3 per cent. for oil, 72·9 per cent. for coal and 2·2 per cent. for hydro. The proportions in 1984, which were distorted by the strike in the coal industry, were 18·6 per cent. for nuclear, 32·4 per cent. for oil, 46·5 per cent. for coal and 2·5 per cent. for hydro.

Mr. Proctor: In view of the need to get a better balance in electricity generation, and of the need to increase its nuclear proportion, and in the light of the disturbing comments in the newspapers this morning, will my hon. Friend assure the House that the nuclear industry has a proven, successful and safe track record?

Mr. Goodlad: I cannot comment on the reports in the newspapers, but I am delighted to confirm that the safety record of the nuclear industry is, as my hon. Friend says, excellent.

Mr. Donald Stewart: Is the Minister aware of the disappointment and anger in Scotland at the Government's half-hearted support for alternative sources of energy such as peat and wind, wave and hydro power, most of which have no adverse effects on the environment? Are the Government prepared to do something to investigate such alternative sources?

Mr. Goodlad: The right hon. Gentleman is right to say that there is an important role for alternative sources of energy, which is why substantial amounts of money have been committed by the Government to research into these matters, which the advisory committee on research and development under the chairmanship of Sir Sam Edwards said were properly directed in the circumstances, and of the right amount.

Dr. Michael Clark: As many countries are pressing ahead strongly with nuclear energy, and as our neighbours across the Channel are already producing about 60 per cent. of their electricity from nuclear sources, does my hon. Friend agree that our proportion of electricity produced from nuclear energy, at about 17 or 18 per cent., is very disappointing? What measures has my hon. Friend in hand to increase the percentages?

Mr. Goodlad: The level of nuclear generation is as my hon. Friend stated it. When the first and second generations of AGRs are fully operational, the proportion of electricity generated by nuclear stations should be about 25 per cent. I welcome that development. After that, the outcome of the Sizewell inquiry is important, and upon that I cannot predict or comment.

Mrs. Clwyd: The Minister cannot shelter behind his earlier statement that he cannot comment upon newspaper reports. Surely it is in the interests of all that nuclear power should not be developed further until we can be assured that the nuclear industry can dispose safely of its waste. The Select Committee on the Environment, whose leaked report is referred to in *The Times* today, has made this point. It is completely irresponsible of the Government to go ahead with any such development until they can give that assurance to the public.

Mr. Goodlad: I cannot comment in advance upon a Select Committee report which I understand is expected in the new year. The decision to continue reprocessing was taken by Parliament in 1978 when the hon. Lady's party was in government. Having regard to the national interest

and the total fuel cycle, no insuperable environmental problems have subsequently arisen which might lead to a reconsideration of this decision.

Mr. Sackville: I recognise the potential benefits of cheaper coal through opencast mining, but will my hon. Friend say something about his Department's environmental policy on opencast mining, particularly in the context of my constituency where three separate operations are being applied for, which potentially could cause very severe damage to the environment?

Mr. Goodlad: I know that my hon. Friend has taken a very close interest in this subject as it affects his constituency. Environmental problems are primarily a matter for the Department of the Environment, but I know that the National Coal Board has them very much in mind.

Mr. Eadie: Is the hon. Gentleman not being a little too optimistic about thermo-nuclear power generation? America, for example, will not commission any more nuclear power stations this century. As we always seem to fall in line with America on other matters, it is possible that we shall fall into line there? As for the hon. Gentleman's answer about alternative sources of energy, is he not being too optimistic about the spending on alternative sources of energy? It is about £14 million. We learnt on Friday from *Hansard* that we are spending, through Rubican and Young, £10·5 million on energy conservation advertising.

Mr. Goodlad: The Government attach great importance to energy conservation, as we do to alternative sources of energy. I said earlier that the advisory committee on research and development had said that the division of research funds for investigating alternative energy sources was appropriate. I am not responsible for what happens in the United States of America, but I have every confidence that the nuclear power programme will be as successful under this Government as it was under the hon. Gentleman's Government.

British Gas

4. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received regarding the reaction to the detailed proposals for the privatisation of British Gas and the proposed regulation of the corporation in future.

13. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what further representations he has received on the proposed privatisation of British Gas.

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Peter Walker): I continue to receive representations from various organisations and individuals regarding our proposals for the privatisation of British Gas.

Mr. Dykes: In a sense, is not the word "privatisation" wrong? Does my right hon. Friend agree that when this corporation is truly publicly owned by members of the public owning shares in it, they will have a greater sense of ownership than they do with a remote state corporation that is run by faceless bureaucrats? They will be able to identify with the corporation, which has provided a better and better service in recent years and does not need to be oppressed by an excessive regulatory system.

Mr. Walker: I very much look forward to the employees, managers and customers of British Gas having a direct participation in this industry.

Mr. Pike: Will the Secretary of State recognise that many people are concerned about the future of gas showrooms after privatisation, particularly about the future of showrooms such as Padiham in my constituency? They provide an essential service by selling goods and providing a point at which to pay bills and report faults. Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that these showrooms are kept open after privatisation?

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman knows that the existing management of British Gas has pursued a positive policy towards gas showrooms. The present management of British Gas will carry out the management of this industry after privatisation.

Sir Peter Emery: Will my right hon. Friend accept that since the publication of the Bill and the Second Reading debate a number of people who are very much concerned with the electricity industry are worried about the very considerable freedom that the gas industry will obtain after the Bill becomes law? They feel that it will work adversely against some of the controls which will still apply to the electricity industry. Has my right hon. Friend received such representations, and if so will he bear the matter in mind?

Mr. Walker: We shall certainly bear the matter in mind, but my hon. Friend has illustrated the fact that in certain markets where there has been fierce competition between gas, electricity and oil, that competition will continue, as it should in the interests of commerce and industry.

Mr. Mason: In view of the rumours that are rife in the coalfields about the privatisation of the coal industry, will the Secretary of State assure the House that he has no plans whatever of privatising any parts of that industry——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is about gas.

Mr. Rowlands: In view of the widespread observations and criticism of the draft British Gas licence that the Secretary of State issued last week, will the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that this is a tentative first draft, that he has not entered into any firm understanding or agreements with British Gas, and consequently that the licence can be the subject of substantial change?

Mr Walker: The joy of a parliamentary democracy and of entering a Committee stage is that everything is debatable. All I can say is that it is a very good draft, given that I drafted it myself.

Mr. Bruce: Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that there is genuine concern about the Government's proposals for dealing with a monopoly, promoting competition and ensuring protection for the consumer? Will he make it clear that the Standing Committee, which meets tomorrow, will discuss these issues with a genuinely open mind and will be prepared to accept serious, constructive and even major suggestions to amend the Bill in order to achieve the kind of safeguard which at present it appears to lack?

Mr. Walker: I very much hope that the Standing Committee will be very open minded to all the arguments that are put. I am sure the Opposition are hoping that the

same will happen to their arguments. As for competition, I doubt whether anyone can say that this Bill is not far better than anything that has existed previously.

Coal Industry

8. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any proposals to change the pattern of working hours or to make any changes in legislation concerning health, safety and working conditions in the coal industry.

Mr. Peter Walker: No, Sir.

Mr. Hardy: Will the Secretary of State check with the NCB on the current state of play of the board's preparations to press for changes in the working structure of the industry, such as a 10-hour production shift? Does he accept that in the coalfield areas, such as my own, where unemployment is now rising to 30 per cent., the idea of a 10-hour shift will not receive an ecstatic welcome?

Mr. Walker: As I clearly said in my reply, I have received no proposals for change, and if I do I shall consider them carefully. If there were to be such proposals, I would expect the unions concerned fully to put their representations and viewpoints, which I would consider carefully.

Mr. Woodall: The right hon. Gentleman has already changed the pattern of working hours for my constituents, particularly at the Kinsley drift mine, which is threatened with closure even though it was opened only in 1979. If that pit is closed, that will change working hours. What does the right hon. Gentleman intend to do about that?

Mr. Walker: We have agreed to modified procedures to consider any closures, which will be considered in the normal way.

Mr. Eadie: Although we welcome the right hon. Gentleman's statement on proposed safety legislation or regulations, does he accept that some hon. Members have associations with the unions and that they have heard disturbing rumours? We take the view that safety in the mining industry is something about which we cannot be complacent and that constant vigilance is required. I hope that the Secretary of State will keep his eye firmly fixed on any proposal to amend regulations or legislation that could result in hazards for miners working underground.

Mr. Walker: I fully share the hon. Gentleman's appreciation of the fact that in an industry such as mining the safety requirement provisions are vital, and I shall look at this in that light.

Energy Efficiency Programme

9. **Mr. Nicholls** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many industrial and commercial schemes under the Government's energy efficiency programme are now approved or under way.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Energy Efficiency Office runs the energy efficiency demonstration scheme, the monitoring and targeting programme and the energy efficency survey scheme, and there are many other initiatives aimed at helping industry and commerce. I am delighted to say that all these schemes have reached record levels during the past year and the Government aim to build on this success during Energy Efficiency Year.

Mr. Nicholls: I thank my right hon. Friend for that clearly encouraging reply, but does he agree that there is a continuing need for private investment and practical involvement in Energy Efficiency Year if the aims of the campaign are to be achieved?

Mr. Walker: Yes, I very much share that view. I know of no other area of the British economy where it is possible for us to improve our economic performance by £7 billion a year. We are way behind in the international league, and I hope that as a result of next year's activities, the preparations for which have been encouraging, we shall substantially improve our position.

Mr. Douglas: As one of the criteria for assessing the benefits of the energy efficiency scheme is the price of fuels, what view does the right hon. Gentleman take of the oil price over the next two to three months?

Mr. Walker: I should be foolish if I took any view, but I shall always be interested in the speculation and views of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Rowlands: One of the most important ways of improving energy efficiency is to improve insulation standards. Have the right hon. Gentleman and the Secretary of State for the Environment any proposals to put to the House about improving building regulations to cover insulation?

Mr. Walker: Building regulations can be examined, but existing insulation provisions ensure that it is very much to the benefit of any family to install basic draught proofing and insulation. I am delighted to say that we are doing much more to encourage a widespread voluntary movement to help those on lower incomes.

Coal Imports

10. **Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has been informed of the likely level of coal imports until the end of 1985 by the chairman of the National Coal Board.

Mr. Peter Walker: The chairman of the NCB is not responsible for coal imports. The increase in imports which has taken place this year has been influenced by contracts placed during the strike and by loss of confidence in the security of indigenous supplies. I hope that by improved performance we can return to the 1983 position, when Britain was a net exporter.

Mr. Eadie: We would expect the Secretary of State to be worried about coal imports, even this year, because of their effect on the prospects of the mining industry. Baron Marshall has made veiled threats today about coal imports in 1986, and is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there still persists, in circles of which we are both aware, the allegation that the NCB refused an order for £3 million of exports to Denmark? Can the right hon. Gentleman enlighten us about that allegation?

Mr. Walker: I have no details of anybody refusing an order at any sensible price. I am sure that the NCB would be eager to take advantage of such an opportunity, and the present chairman of the board has shown more interest than perhaps any of his predecessors in the possibilities for exports.

The main encouraging sign that we shall not need imports is that, for the first time in the history of the coal

industry, productivity last week totalled more than 3 tonnes per man shift. That encouraging trend and the improved efficiency of the industry will prevent the need for imports.

Mr. Rost: Now that the board needs to waste fewer of its resources on subsidising hopelessly high-cost coal production and can instead reallocate those resources to opening new, low-cost coalfields, will it not be a question of re-establishing our export orders, rather than having to import? British coal will be competitive again.

Mr. Walker: There is no doubt that in the next few years, with the high investment and improved productivity that are taking place, Britain can have the most efficient and successful coal industry in western Europe by a long way. That will open a range of new opportunities, including export opportunities.

Mr. Ryman: Is not the right hon. Gentleman far too complacent about the present state of the coal industry? Bearing in mind the high level of imports and the new colliery review procedure, which has not got under way and is not understood by the Department of Energy, the NCB or the NUM, it would be helpful if the right hon. Gentleman would tell the House when the new colliery review procedure, in so far as he knows anything about it, will begin its proceedings.

Mr. Walker: I hope that that will be done very soon. The finer points of detail were settled last week. I remind the hon. Gentleman of what I said in my original reply, namely that in 1983 Britain was a net exporter of coal. The effects of the strike and the insecurity and loss of supplies created the need for increased imports of coal. I hope that the performance of the industry will ensure that that need is eliminated.

Mr. Skinner: How can it make sense to read reports during the past few days of ships loaded with 110,000 tonnes of coal coming into the north-east at a time when Britain's non-oil trade deficit is well over £4,000 million?

Mr. Walker: I repeat that the strike, which was so enthusiastically supported by the hon. Gentleman, was the main reason for the large increase in imports.

British Gas

11. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what arrangements will be made for the pension fund of British Gas when it is privatised.

The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith): I understand from the corporation that there will be no change in the management of the funds or the benefits they provide.

Mr. Spencer: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the time has come for trade union leaders to stop indulging in scandalous scaremongering about this subject? Does he believe that that is in direct proportion to their fear that the privatisation of gas will be a roaring success?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: My hon. and learned Friend is absolutely right. Such talk about the pension fund is complete scaremongering. Those who indulge in it are trying to detract from the real benefits to the consumer, the employees and the management of that industry.

Mr. Eastham: If, as the Minister suggests, there will be real benefits after privatisation, can he tell the House whether gas will become cheaper?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman was unable to attend last week's debate. With the greater spur for efficiency that a privatised industry will undoubtedly create, there are no grounds for thinking that the price of gas will be higher than it would otherwise be.

Alternative Energy Sources

14. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he next proposes to have discussions with the European Community Council of Ministers about alternative sources of energy.

Mr. Goodlad: I am pleased to say that the Council of Ministers has, in recent months, agreed substantial new Community programmes on research and development and on the demonstration of new technologies in non-nuclear energy. A considerable proportion of the funds allocated to both programmes will be devoted to renewable energy sources, and my Department intends to encourage strong British participation.

Mr. Knox: Does my hon. Friend believe that the balance between Community and national research into alternative sources of energy is right? Should a larger proportion of it be undertaken on a Community basis?

Mr. Goodlad: The proportion is about right. Each member state has specific needs for which nationality funded research, development and demonstration is appropriate. Other matters of concern to the entire Community are suitable for Community action.

British Gas

15. **Mr. Portillo** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to publish a draft licence under which British Gas will operate after privatisation.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: As my hon. Friend will now be aware, the draft licence was made available to the House on Monday 9 December.

Mr. Portillo: I thank my right hon. Friend for making available the draft licence before the Second Reading debate last week. Has he had an opportunity to consider whether a specific duty in the Bill on the regulator to promote competition would help to strengthen the licence that he has produced?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: My hon. Friend must recognise that, unlike other industries that supply services or materials in the domestic market, there is no scope for providing two separate pipelines to two houses in the same street. It was in recognition of that fact that we drafted the Bill and licence in the way that we did. However, we shall have an opportunity to discuss the matter in Committee.

Mr. Hardy: Does the Minister accept that the draft licence hardly enlightens the House, since it is almost incomprehensible? Does he also accept that although those who will serve on the Committee might be pleased that the licence was published last week, they will still wish to know how much the Government expect to make from the sale of the British Gas Corporation.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman does not understand those simple mathematics. I look forward to debating the matter with him in the weeks ahead.

Mr. Rowlands: May we take it from the reply that the Secretary of State gave a few moments ago to our questions that this draft licence is a firm deal between the Secretary of State and Sir Denis Rooke and is not subject to any substantial change?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: It is a draft licence, which was put before the house to give hon. Members the opportunity to debate it. The House will have full opportunities to consider this important mater.

NCB (Enterprise) Ltd.

16. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his monitoring of the funds available to National Coal Board (Enterprise) Limited.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Government will continue to monitor closely the funds available to NCB (Enterprise). By the end of November £4·4 million had been committed in support of 222 projects, and £600,000 had been committed to help more than 40 enterprise agencies to start up or to expand.

Mr. Boyes: Does the right hon. Gentleman approve of money from NCB (Enterprise) Ltd. being used to study why industry does or does not go to former coal mining areas? If infrastructure problems were found, for example, would the right hon. Gentleman approve of road links with motorways being developed by NCB (Enterprise) money so that industries could see former mining villages as more attractive places in which to invest?

Mr. Walker: I understand that point. Obviously, expenditure on a road link would come from the designated programme of local authority and Government expenditure. There is nothing to stop NCB (Enterprise) Ltd. putting the importance of that development to those authorities. I know from my experience in the 1970s of the enormous benefit that was brought to the north-east by improvements in road communications.

Mr. Haynes: Why does the Secretary of State keep bragging at the Dispatch Box about the amount of money available for NCB (Enterprise) Ltd. with respect to pit closures? Is he aware that in my area, where there have been a number of pit closures, the people think that the right hon. Gentleman put the money in the safe, locked it up and purposely lost the key?

Mr. Walker: I am sorry that the Opposition are not delighted that, unlike what happened during the closures made by the Labour Government, a great deal of activity is now taking place.

Coal Industry

17. **Mrs. Currie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what improvements there have been in the last year in productivity in the coal industry.

Mr. Peter Walker: Overall deep-mined revenue output reached an all-time record high of over 3 tonnes per man shift in the week ending 30 November. This was the fourth successive week in which the industry's overall productivity record had been broken.

Mrs. Currie: I congratulate my right hon. Friend and all the Front-Bench team on this astonishing record-breaking activity in the coal industry. Is it not due substantially to the new incentive schemes and to much improved industrial relations in the industry, which gives the lie to everything that Arthur Scargill has been saying about the coal industry since he became president of the NUM?

Mr. Walker: Gratitude is certainly due to the men and management who have produced the coal. It is remarkable that in the last five years of the Labour Government the highest output figure was 2·28 tonnes per man shift. It is now 3 tonnes per man shift.

18. **Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, when he next meets the chairman of the National Coal Board, he will discuss industrial relations in the industry.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of the National Coal Board regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

Mr. Lofthouse: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that this increased production will not continue unless industrial relations are improved? Whatever the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) may have said, I do not recollect the industrial relations record being so low since nationalisation of the mining industry. Recently, the NCB chairman informed me that the position of sacked men differs from area to area, whether or not they have been made redundant. Men may have committed similar offences, but those who work in one area will get their jobs back, while those who work in another will not. Is that justice?

Mr. Hunt: I have been underground seven times in the past few months and been impressed by the way in which the men have come together after the strike. Continual talk of perpetuating divisions only damages a great industry that is shrugging off a disastrous political strike.

Mr. Dixon: Did the hon. Gentleman speak to the NCB chairman about the redundant mineworkers' payments scheme? I wrote to the Secretary of State on 23 August. The reply, on 11 September, said that the right hon. Gentleman was dealing urgently with the matter. Many miners in my constituency are worried about their future payments being jeopardised because of problems relating to national insurance contributions during the strike. When will the hon. Gentleman or the Secretary of State make a statement?

Mr. Hunt: The Government are carefully and urgently considering whether changes to the present legislation governing the redundant mineworkers' payments scheme would be appropriate given the failure of some mineworkers to make sufficient national insurance contributions during the strike to qualify for unemployment benefit during the benefit year 1986.

Mr. Eadie: The Minister has talked about the industry returning to normality in relation to consultation and conciliation. None of us would disagree about that. Does he think that it is helpful to return to consultation and conciliation when the chairman of the National Coal Board was responsible for holding up the new modified coal procedure closure agreement, as the NCB demanded that the unions should pay the full cost of any hearing relating

to that procedure? Does the hon. Gentleman realise that that is a departure from the history of the industry and that it will not help to restore good industrial relations if the chairman of the NCB continues to conduct his business in that aggressive way?

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman should not put such a one-sided view. It is true that at a meeting on 10 December between the National Coal Board and the unions the costs of the final stage of the review procedure were allocated. The board will meet the cost of the secretariat and administrative services and pay half the cost of the fees payable to the members of the new body. That is a good result. I understand that it has been agreed that the new body will consider the proposed closure of Horden at its first inquiry in January, probably in the second week, with Bates' being considered in the next week.

Industrial Energy Prices

20. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy that industrial energy prices reflect variations in mean temperature.

Mr. Goodlad: No, Sir. Prices are a matter for the industries concerned.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Has not industrial space heating grown into a major cost for industry? In so far as there is a clear variation in mean temperature levels between, for example, the north of England and Scotland and the south, is there not a justification for the Government to introduce an energy premium to help manufacturers in the north of England and Scotland who have to pay higher energy prices and who are now at a competitive disadvantage?

Mr. Goodlad: As I said, tariff structures and prices are a matter for the industries concerned. Tariffs for gas and electricity are structured to reflect the cost of supply, including, where appropriate, the main variations in costs caused by patterns of demand. It is unlikely that relating prices to temperatures would result in more accurate representation of costs, but I shall draw the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the attention of the chairmen of the Electricity Council and of the British Gas Corporation.

Mr. Bruce: Does the Minister acknowledge that, as the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) said, although industrial costs are not directly related to mean temperature, there is a component, and that in Scotland and the north of England there is real concern that there is not a fair opportunity even to compete on energy prices, given that the Scottish electricity boards do not negotiate industrial prices with their customers because the base price is less than that of the electricity boards in England and Wales? Does the Minister accept that all electricity boards should negotiate fair prices with their industrial customers, and that it should not be confined to the industries operating in England and Wales?

Mr. Goodlad: I shall draw the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the attention of the chairmen of the utilities concerned.

Oil Reserves

21. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of total recoverable reserves of oil in the United Kingdom land and waters; how much of this was discovered in the last five years; and how much oil has been recovered in the same period.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The latest estimate of total recoverable reserves of oil on the United Kingdom continental shelf is 2,000 million tonnes, of which 80 million tonnes were discovered in the past five years. Five hundred and fourteen million tonnes of oil were recovered over the same period.

Mr. Chapman: Is my right hon. Friend disappointed that only 80 million tonnes have been discovered in the past five years? In view of that, do the Government accept that our reserves will now fast run out, or is it still hoped that there are plenty of other reserves waiting to be discovered under our land or in our waters?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Our reserves will not fast run out because the reserve figure is based on reserves that are proven and probable. It excludes possible reserves, of which there are large quantities, and also much greater reserves that are still to be found. It is significant that in the past year, as in the first year of exploration for oil and gas, we are still making one discovery for every five wells drilled.

Coal Miners (National Insurance)

23. **Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement regarding the position of mineworkers who did not pay national insurance contributions during the last mining dispute.

Mr. Peter Walker: As I told the House on 25 November, I will make a statement as soon as conclusions have been reached on the details of any new scheme to cover the financial year 1986-87. In the meantime, I emphasise that the board is maintaining its policy of not making compulsorily redundant any man who wishes to stay in the industry.

Mr. McKay: It is disgraceful that the Government have not yet made a statement about the plight of miners who did not pay national insurance contributions during the dispute. Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that the safety net under which those miners have been working will end on 6 January, before the House returns after Christmas, and that if they continue working and suffer serious injury or illness they will not receive welfare benefit?

Mr. Walker: I recognise the importance of the point raised by the hon. Gentleman. It is a complicated and difficult situation, but I hope that a statement will be made shortly.

Margam Mine

24. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, when he next meets the chairman of the National Coal Board, he will discuss the current position regarding the proposed Margam deep mine project in south Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: At my right hon. Friend's meetings with the chairman of the NCB, all aspects of the coal industry are discussed, including proposals for new mines. My right hon. Friend has not yet received proposals for approval of the Margam project.

Mrs. Clwyd: Is the Minister aware that 11,000 jobs have been lost in the coal industry in south Wales since 1979 and that only 700 alternative jobs have been offered by NCB (Enterprise) Ltd.? Does he agree that there has been a great deal of misinformation about the Margam project? During the strike the NCB said that investment would go ahead, but that statement was totally untrue. Can the right hon. Gentleman explain how that deception occurred?

Mr. Hunt: No such deception has occurred. Planning permission has been granted by West Glamorgan county council for the Margam mine. However, as the hon. Lady will appreciate, decisions on the development of new mines and the extension of existing mines are matters for the National Coal Board. I have not yet received proposals for approval of the project at Margam or for the development at Carway Fawr, and I understand that it has not yet been decided whether it will be financially viable to proceed with them.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Research and Secretarial Allowances

37. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Lord Privy Seal what representations he has had from hon. Members on research and secretarial allowances.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I have answered a number of parliamentary questions and have discussed the matter with an all-party delegation.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does the Leader of the House agree that if there were improved secretarial and research allowances, some of his hon. Friends might not need to supplement their incomes by becoming consultants to companies such as those involved in the Channel tunnel development?

Mr. Biffen: I see no relationship between the two points. The hon. Lady often makes a reasonable point, but she is spoiling that this afternoon.

Members' Interests

38. **Mr. Winnick** asked the Lord Privy Seal what recent representations he has received about the extent of the requirement for hon. Members to disclose their interests; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: I have answered a number of parliamentary questions on this subject. As the hon. Gentleman will know, there is to be a debate tomorrow on the recent report by the Select Committee on Members' Interests.

Mr. Winnick: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that what was shown on the television programme "Newsnight" last week is bound to strengthen the view that the Register of Members' Interests should contain at least some details of the outside financial sources of hon. Members? Should not the register be strengthened by making it an obligation for all hon. Members to fill in the details? I am sure that the Leader of the House will recognise that there is also the question whether hon. Members who have financial links should be able to vote?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman raises many points that are either in the substantive motion or in the amendments to it for tomorrow's debate. I do not think that I should anticipate what might be said tomorrow.

Mr. Marlow: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is not unreasonable for hon. Members to be sponsored by trade unions? Has he any idea how many hon. Members are sponsored by trade unions? If it were necessary to oblige Members not to vote because they were sponsored by a business interest, would that not also apply to those sponsored by trade unions?

Mr. Biffen: Again, my hon. Friend is enticing me to anticipate what I might say tomorrow evening. Wherever an interest exists, I hope that it will be registered.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: May we have an absolute assurance that there will be a free vote tomorrow night?

Mr. Biffen: That is not my responsibility, but I expect that the House will behave as it always does on such occasions.

Computers

39. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will report on the progress in providing computer facilities for hon. Members in the House.

Mr. Biffen: Since 1983 hon. Members have been able to claim the costs of computers and word processors against the office, secretarial and research allowance. I understand that about a hundred Members have already taken advantage of that facility in order to purchase such equipment.

Mr. Boyes: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that that is not a sufficiently satisfactory approach to the matter? Should not all hon. Members who wish to have computers be issued with computers linked to a central resource mechanism, such as the Library? Is not the Government's attitude to modern technology so backward and sloppy that if the Leader of the House and his right hon. Friends were running a secondhand shop it would go bust in a fortnight?

Mr. Biffen: The principle of an office allowance being available for the purchase of such equipment is important. It is reviewed every four years. It would be unwise to suppose that just because some hon. Members find that facility of use, all hon. Members must or should.

Mr. Skinner: If computers are brought in, will the Leader of the House guarantee that they will not be linked to the telephones, because we have enough trouble as it is?

Mr. Biffen: I cannot give a categorical answer this afternoon, but I shall view the matter with the same sympathy as I extend to most of the suggestions that the hon. Gentleman makes.

CIVIL SERVICE

Scientific Civil Service

42. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Minister for the Civil Service what assessment he makes of current morale in the scientific Civic Service.

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): The scientific Civil Service is undergoing profound changes which we believe are essential, and

some anxieties have arisen from this, but I should like to commend the positive way in which scientists—and all civil servants — have responded to change and to acknowledge the valuable and increasingly efficient service that they provide.

Mr. Dalyell: Is the Minister aware that members of the Standing Committee on the Agriculture Bill—his own colleagues as much as mine—have had a great deal of contact with staff at agricultural research stations and with the Institution of Professional Civil Servants and others who represent them? Is he further aware that the picture that we have, if not one of chaos, is one of great and demoralising uncertainty? Are those people to be left to the MAFF accountants, or has the Minister some role in protecting people who have been good and imaginative servants of this country?

Mr. Luce: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's comments about the standard of service provided by those scientists. This is principally a matter for my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, but rationalisation is currently taking place in the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, which I believe affects the hon. Gentleman's constituency. I assure the hon. Gentleman that everything possible is being done at this stage to find alternative jobs for all the people working at Lasswade.

Mr. Latham: Is my hon. Friend aware of the low morale among the distinguished scientists of the British Geological Survey at Keyworth, many of whom are my constituents? Will he consider whether they should remain under the control of the Natural Environment Research Council, as they believe that in that body science is decreasing but administration is increasing?

Mr. Luce: I believe that the Civil Service has been losing some good scientists. For that reason, we have introduced a number of changes, including an additional pay allowance for some civil servants of that type so as to give priority to recruitment and retention.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: I appreciate the Minister's respect for the civil servants in his charge. Will he ensure that they receive the same respect from other members of the Government, notably the Prime Minister, who does not have a very high regard for civil servants? Does he agree that he has a great responsibility to ensure that the demoralisation of the Civil Service that has occurred in the past few years is ended with respect to pay as well as to other matters?

Mr. Luce: The right hon. Gentleman fails to acknowledge the extent of the change in the Civil Service that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has led and with which all Ministers have co-operated — indeed, advocated — fully. The change has led to vastly improved efficiency through the financial management initiative and various other improvements and efficiency schemes, the results of which are acknowledged by all of my colleagues.

Work Loads

43. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will indicate the change in work load for civil servants between June 1983 and June 1985 and the corresponding increase in productivity between the same two dates.

Mr. Luce: The annual reports by the Treasury to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on Civil Service manpower reductions, copies of which are in the Library, provide some indication of the effects on Civil Service manpower levels of changes in work load. These show a saving of nearly 20,000 posts between 1 April 1983 and 1 April 1985 from improved efficiency and more streamlined working.

Dr. Clark: I welcome the increased productivity of Civil Servants. Is it due in part to performance appraisal? Do civil servants in the Department of Education and Science participate in such performance appraisals? Is that not an example to teachers who reject appraisal?

Mr. Luce: I cannot answer for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science about the appraisal of teachers, but in the Civil Service we are putting ever more emphasis on performance assessment and on individuals' achievement in the job. The result is much more effective management, and it provides a good example.

Mr. Home Robertson: Further to what my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) said about the work load of civil servants in agricultural research and development, does the Minister agree that there has been a 41 per cent. cut in funding of the service in Scotland at the very time when there is an unprecedented need for research into alternative techniques, and that the result is impossible strain on people working in the Department?

Mr. Luce: The details of that matter are for my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, but there is careful monitoring of the work load on civil servants in all Departments. When a special case is made out—as, for example, with Customs and Excise or the Inland Revenue—adjustments can be made.

Mr. Hardy: Is the Minister aware that the burden on DHSS and Department of Employment staff, especially in the coalfields, leads one to the view that the Government might be asking too much from conscientious officials?

Mr. Luce: I have no doubt about the remarkable job being done by a pared down Civil Service under considerable pressures because of the efficiency changes. There is constant monitoring of the efforts made by civil servants and their work load, and adjustments can be made.

Mr. Skinner: Can the Minister explain this bizarre contradiction? He mentioned a reduction of 20,000 in Civil Service manpower. It cost £1·2 million to run 10 Downing street when the Labour Prime Minister left, but it costs £3·8 million in 1984-85? Does he agree that there are more civil servants in 10 Downing street now—some with beards and some probably economists—in direct contradiction of everything for which the Prime Minister stands for everybody else? There is no rate capping at 10 Downing street.

Mr. Luce: There are civil servants at 10 Downing street, just as there are everywhere else, and they are of the highest calibre. We have rightly reduced Civil Service manpower by 20 per cent. in the past six years. We have asked the Civil Service to become more efficient and more streamlined. It has become more professional.

Mr. Viggers: Does my hon. Friend agree that if DHSS staff are under pressure — as they are — we need a simpler system? We look forward to hearing a statement on a simpler system later today.

Mr. Luce: That is why we emphasised the need for more efficient systems and a more streamlined service. That is what we are working towards.

Dr. McDonald: The Minister's reply to that last question will not do. Is he aware that the Chief Auditor's report shows that one in three supplementary benefit claims is mistakenly administered because of enormous pressures on DHSS staff? Is he further aware that the White Paper, which is shortly to be announced, will put enormous pressure on DHSS staff? It will not reduce their work load it will increase it, partly because of administration of what was called the social fund.

Will the Minister consult his colleagues to ensure that more DHSS staff are recruited to cope with the enormous increase in their work? Will he also ensure that the gap is not made up by increasing temporary staff, in the light of the forthcoming White Paper?

Mr. Luce: All those questions should be put to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services. We continually monitor the work load of the Civil Service and take that into account when examining the size of each Department.

Social Security White Paper

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Social Services (Mr. Norman Fowler): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement on the Social Security White Paper which I am publishing today.

In June the Government published a Green Paper which set out in detail the case for change, the Government's objectives for social security and our proposals for achieving them. That Green Paper marked a further stage in the process of review and public consultation which began two years ago in the autumn of 1983.

The Government have four main aims. We want to see a simpler system of social security which provides a better service to the public. By common consent, social security at present is too complex. There are some 30 benefits, each with separate and frequently conflicting rules of entitlement, and supplementary benefit alone requires almost 40,000 staff to administer it.

We want to see more people looking forward to greater independence in retirement. Only half the work force currently have occupational pensions of their own. Our plans extend not only to occupational pensions but, for the first time, provide a new right to personal pensions.

We want a system which is financially secure. As the Government Actuary's report, published with the White Paper, demonstrates, the future cost of the state earnings-related pension scheme will grow substantially—at the same time as the ratio of contributors to pensioners worsens. The Government believe that this problem must be tackled now.

Above all, we want to see more effective help going to those who most need it. More than half of those living on the lowest incomes today are in families with children. This includes both families where the parents are unemployed and low-income working families. Added to this people can still find themselves with less income in work than if they were unemployed. Others can find that a pay rise in work can actually make them worse off. The Government believe that urgent action is necessary to tackle these problems.

One of the major priorities of the Government's proposals is to make better provision for low-income working families with children. Accordingly, we propose to abolish the present family income supplement and to introduce a new benefit, family credit.

Family credit is designed to ensure that families with children will be better off in work. It will be based on take-home or net pay—rather than gross earnings, as with family income supplement—so that the worst effects of the poverty trap are eliminated.

We expect that, compared with family income supplement, family credit will give help to an extra 200,000 families. In other words, twice as many low income families with children will benefit from the new scheme. Family credit will be paid through the pay packet, but it should be emphasised that child benefit will be paid in addition and that that payment will go, as now, direct to the mothers.

We also intend to bring extra support to families who are not in work. This will be achieved through the new income support scheme. A family premium—a special higher level of benefit—will be paid on top of the basic income support rate and on top of the rates for individual children. One of the groups who will most gain from this change will be unemployed families with children.

The income support scheme will replace supplementary benefit. The regular extra payments now made on the basis of detailed individual assessment will be absorbed into the main rates of benefit. As well as a premium for families with children, there will be an additional premium for lone parents and premiums for pensioners and the long-term sick and disabled. At the same time, the capital rule, which at present is an inflexible £3,000 cut off, will be substantiall eased, and we will also ease the earnings rules for lone parents, disabled people and long-term unemployed families.

While the broad pattern of income support will remain as set out in the Green Paper, we have modified our proposals in the light of consultations in two significant ways.

First, the income support rate will still be based on age divisions at 18 and 25 for single people. However, in order to help young families with children in particular, we now intend to have the same rate for all couples over 18.

Secondly, we intend to increase the help for families with more than one disabled child. The Green Paper proposed a double family premium where there was one disabled child or more. We have now decided to pay the extra premium for each disabled child in a household.

This last change will reinforce the special attention which we give to disabled people in our proposals. They will benefit from the premium in income support and from a higher earnings disregard. Overall, disabled people on low incomes will benefit significantly from the proposals.

However well designed the income support scheme may be, it cannot anticipate every special or emergency need. These needs will be dealt with by the social fund.

Instead of the present small universal maternity and death grants—which have both remained at the same value for over 15 years—proper help will be available from the fund to all low income families, not just those on supplementary benefit. The grant for funeral expenses will ensure that the full cost of the funeral can be met, and it is planned that the maternity grant should be set at about £75. Grants will also be given for community care purposes; for example, to help someone leaving a long-stay hospital. In addition, the fund will provide loans to help claimants cope with items other than normal weekly needs.

The main structure of our housing benefit proposals has been acknowledged as an important simplification of the scheme. Treating employed and unemployed people alike, and so getting rid of two separate systems in housing benefit, has been particularly welcomed.

We shall go ahead with this, but I intend, in response to consultations, to make two significant changes to the Green Paper proposals. First, I recognise the anxieties expressed about the effect of a single taper for rent and rates on owner-occupiers, particularly pensioners. I also recognise the concern of local authorities that a single taper would create administrative difficulties for them. We shall therefore keep separate tapers for rent and rates, and this will still be a substantial simplification compared with the six tapers in the present system.

Secondly, although the general power to run local housing benefit schemes will be ended, local authorities will retain their power to grant extra benefit to individual

[Mr. Norman Fowler]

claimants in exceptional circumstances. I have also decided that they should retain their power to give special treatment to war pensioners.

As we made clear in the Green Paper, we believe that the basis on which help is provided with rates needs to be changed. At present, around 7 million householders receive help with some or all of their rates bill, and up to 3 million householders pay no rates. We stand by the principle that everyone should make a contribution towards the cost of his local services. The White Paper therefore reaffirms the proposal that everyone should pay at least 20 per cent. of his rates, but the proposals which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will be bringing forward shortly on the reform of local taxation may affect the way this contribution is made.

The Government will be carrying forward the proposals for directing widows' benefits to those who need them most and for making maternity allowance more flexible and more closely related to recent work. The new lump sum payment of £1,000 to widows will be tax-free and will be ignored when considering help with funeral expenses. The White Paper also proposes that maternity allowances, like statutory sick pay, should be paid through employers, and a consultation document will be published shortly on this.

On timing, we shall move to the first April uprating in 1987 and at that time we shall introduce other changes like statutory maternity allowance and the new system of help with maternity and funeral costs. The main structural changes to income-related benefits and the other elements of the social fund will be introduced in April 1988. This recognises the arguments of employers and local authorities that the timetable must allow them to make proper preparations.

As far as income-related benefits are concerned, a technical annex is published with the White Paper. The figures show the possible distributional effects of the changes, but these can be no more than illustrative. The actual position at the time of change will depend, among other things, on the exact benefit rates decided for April 1988, and the illustrative figures take no account of any changes resulting from the reform of rates.

As far as pensions policy is concerned, the Government Actuary's report, published with the White Paper, shows that if no action is taken, total pension costs will increase from under £15·5 billion to nearly £49 billion a year provided that the basic pension is uprated by prices. If, as some urge, the basic pension is uprated in line with earnings, the total pension cost increases to nearly £73 billion, which would require a national insurance contribution of 27·5 per cent. The cost of SERPS alone will increase from barely £200 million today to £25·5 billion.

The Government cannot ignore the vast pension bill which is being handed down to our children. In the consultation a number of important organisations recognised that case but argued that, rather than completely replacing SERPS, the costs could be reduced by modifying its provisions. In testing whether a policy of modifying SERPS would be acceptable, the Government have two major objectives. First, we want to see the future cost of SERPS substantially reduced. Secondly, and even more fundamentally, we want to see many more people with their own pension. It is on the basis that both of those objectives can be achieved that the Government are prepared to change the proposals from those put forward in the Green Paper.

The Government propose to modify the scheme so that costs in the next century can be afforded. As with the Green Paper proposals, the Government recognise the particular needs of those nearest retirement. The SERPS changes will not affect anyone retiring this century, nor anyone widowed this century. There will also be a transitional period as the new scheme comes into effect fully in 2010. The basic pension is entirely unaffected by the proposals, and we will continue fully to protect its value.

The changes to SERPS are that occupational schemes contracted out of the state scheme should be responsible for inflation-proofing guaranteed minimum pensions in payment up to 3 per cent. a year; SERPS pensions should be based on a lifetime's earnings, not on the best 20 years as now, but special protection will be built in for women who have breaks in work to bring up families and for those who become disabled and people looking after them; SERPS pensions should be calculated on 20 per cent. of earnings rather than 25 per cent.; and widows and widowers over 65 should be allowed to inherit half their spouse's SERPS rights, rather than the full amount as now.

However, policy on SERPS is only part of the Government's pensions strategy. Our central aim is to provide many more people with their own pension. The White Paper puts forward a six point plan to achieve that. First, a special incentive will be given to encourage the setting up a new occupational pension schemes. That will consist of a reduction, or rebate, on national insurance contributions. An extra 2 per cent. rebate will be added to the existing rebate, making a total incentive of almost 8 per cent. That special rebate will last for five years.

Secondly, for the first time, every employee will be able to take a personal pension, whether or not his employer runs an occupational scheme. The holder of a personal pension will also receive the special national insurance incentive and his contributions will qualify for tax relief.

Thirdly, for the first time, employers will be able to contract out of the state scheme by guaranteeing a level of contribution to an occupational scheme — rather than accept the unlimited liability of promising a "final salary" pension. Those new arrangements will also open the way for more industry-wide schemes.

Fourthly, building societies, banks and unit trusts will be able to provide personal pension savings schemes, as well as group schemes.

Fifthly, all members of occupational pension schemes will in future have the right to pay additional voluntary contributions in order to boost their income in retirement.

Sixthly, people with personal pensions will be fully covered by the new investor protection arrangements to be made for all financial services.

The changes build on top of the reforms introduced by the Social Security Act 1985 which protect the rights of early leavers. The White Paper proposes that that protection will be extended to all members of schemes leaving after two years rather than five years, as now. Anyone changing jobs will be able to transfer all his rights into a personal pension.

The effect of the White Paper proposals will be to direct substantially more help to low income families with

children, and to provide more help for disabled people on low incomes. We will take new steps to increase the spread of occupational pensions and give everyone the right to have a personal pension. We will provide a simpler and more effective benefit structure, and have now embarked on the biggest computer project of its kind in Western Europe.

Following the White Paper, the Government will introduce comprehensive legislation early in the new year. The aim will be to achieve a modern social security system directing help where that help is needed.

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): Is the Secretary of State aware that, following the humiliating rebuff that he received from the Green Paper consultation, we welcome the fact that the Government have been forced, by near unanimous opposition, to back off from a few of their most damaging original proposals? Is he also aware that 1·75 million more people will lose from this revised package than will gain and that it is much less about reform than about cuts totalling around £750 million? Is he aware that the changes proposed today can be expected to have little impact on the unprecedented 80 to 90 per cent. opposition registered during the consultation period and the near-unanimous hostility of the CBI, the pension and insurance industries, the churches, the women's institutes, the poverty lobby and the Law Society?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, after six months of fudging on the figures and denial of information we know is available, the nation is still not being told in this White Paper the total size of the cuts in this package, or even the actual new benefit rates? Is he aware that to supply illustrative benefit rates only is wholly unacceptable when the Government have no commitment to maintain them, and when all the new benefit levels could, and should, have been set out at 1985 cash levels for the purposes of genuine comparison with the present position? Is he aware that even on his own illustrative figures, 3,800,000 households will lose benefit under these proposals, including 2·25 million pensioners? I do not know why the Secretary of State is shaking his head, because this is shown by his figures.

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that nearly 500,000 will lose more than £5 a week and that 1·25 million households, including nearly 500,000 pensioners, will lose more than £3 a week? Is he aware that while we welcome the fact that the Government have been forced to back down from abolishing SERPS by the implacable hostility of everyone except the Institute of Directors and the Monday Club, who are the Secretary of State's sole admirers, we utterly condemn the proposed emasculation of SERPS? That will chop £12 billion, which is almost 50 per cent., off the value of pensions in the year 2033, with accumulative figures in the years up to that date. It will throw millions of elderly people back into means-tested poverty, and it is wholly unnecessary when the Government's pensions Actuary has pronounced that the funding of the existing SERPS scheme is perfectly sound.

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the abolition of the best-20-years rule will gravely disadvantage all those who are prevented from achieving a full working life—the long-term unemployed, mothers, the disabled, and the millions who care for the long-term sick and elderly? Is he further aware that his proposal to calculate SERPS pensions as only 20 per cent. of earnings will leave millions of low-paid workers with inadequate pensions? Is he aware that his proposal to cut widow's benefit in half is harsh and unfair, when in a few months' time, the Chancellor will be handing out far bigger sums in tax reliefs to much richer sections of the population?

On housing benefit, while the Secretary of State has been only too anxious to make expedient concessions to pensioner owner occupiers who are Tory voters, is it not sheer political prejudice that he has at the same time actually worsened, compared with the Green Paper, the position of occupational pensioners who rent accommodation, by raising the rent taper from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent.? How can he possibly justify requiring all households, including pensioners and the poorest on supplementary benefit, to pay 20 per cent. towards their rates bills? Is he aware that this is the first time ever that any Government, by their own intervention, have forced millions of claimants below the poverty line? Is he aware that this makes nonsense of his claim to be targeting more help on the very poorest? It shows that he is targeting cuts on the very poorest.

On the new so-called income support scheme, will the Secretary of State confirm that the Government still intend to refuse to cover mortgage interest payments for families on the dole, which means that there will be much less money for food and other essentials and which in many cases will almost certainly lead to eviction and homelessness.

On the so-called social fund — one of the most objectionable elements of the whole package—why has the Secretary of State, who claims to listen to public opinion, taken no notice of the intense and unanimous opposition to the replacement of grants by means tests and to the halving of the budget for essential household items, which will mean that hundreds of thousands of pensioners and poor families will go without? Why is he insisting upon pushing families below the poverty line—that is what will happen—by recovering social fund payments through deductions from future supplementary benefit?

On family credit, why has the Secretary of State actually increased the taper to 70 per cent. compared with only 50 per cent. for family income supplement, which was bad enough, when this will greatly worsen the poverty trap? Why has he taken no account of the unanimous opposition to paying this new benefit to the man and not the woman with the main responsibility for family care?

Does it not expose the politics of this Government when their much trumpeted review of the welfare state ends with benefit cuts of £750 million for the most needy, when at the same time this same Government have handed out £2 billion to the richest 2 per cent. of the population on over £30,000 a year? Indeed, what justification is there for cuts in national insurance benefits when people have earned their entitlement to full benefit and have a right to it and when any private insurance company which reneged on its obligations—as the Secretary of State is doing—would be taken to court and charged with bad faith and breach of contract?

There is no political mandate for this package. Not one of the Secretary of State's proposals commands national majority support. When this is put to the British people, as it now must be at the next general election, it will be one of the central reasons why this Government are swept from power.

Mr. Fowler: That is a typically foolish response from the hon. Gentleman. It shows that he has mostly not even listened to the statement, and when he has listened to it he has not understood it. The hon. Gentleman has made a series of assertions, most of which are completely inaccurate. Let me try to take the hon. Gentleman through his proposals. I make absolutely no apology for taking consultation seriously. That is why we embarked upon the consultation exercise in 1983 and published a Green Paper. As for cost, the purpose of the exercise is to make better use of resources.

The hon. Gentleman said that the figures are only illustrative. They can, of course, be only illustrative. It is impossible to work out the effect of changes following the uprating in April 1988. One cannot work out the changes. For example, without rates reform one is unable to show the effect upon single pensioners. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) may find that amusing, but rates reform clearly has an effect and impact upon single pensioners. The Green Paper on that will be issued next month, so the hon. Gentleman has only to wait.

As for benefit areas, these proposals will provide more help—not less—for 200,000 low-income families with children and for disabled people. They provide an extension of occupational pensions, a right to personal pensions and a simplification of the system. In the benefit areas themselves, the support for low-income working families with children will increase family credit by an estimated additional £200 million a year at this stage. Changes from supplementary benefit to income support are not intended to reduce help, and there will be no cash losers as a result of that change. the White Paper makes it clear that we expect spending on housing benefits to be reduced by about £450 million, as I said previously, but that must be compared with the areas where increases will take place.

As to modification of SERPS, the hon. Member must look at the Government Actuary's figures at the end of the White Paper. They show that there will be a very substantial increase in the cost of SERPS. On the basis of the hon. Gentleman's own policies—with an earnings uprating in basic pensions—the cost will go up to £73 billion, and that will mean a national insurance contribution of 27·5 per cent. The hon. Gentleman says that he wants to fight the election on issues of this kind. I welcome that challenge, but he will have to produce a policy, and at present the Labour party has none.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): Will my right hon. Friend assure the House and the country that this scheme will meet the four-point "window test"—first, that all genuinely needy people will be helped; secondly, that the scheme will not actively discourage persons from standing on their own feet or taking jobs where and when they may be available; thirdly, that the scheme will neither bankrupt the country nor be the despair of future taxpayers; and, forthly, that the desperately needed streamlining of the social security system is being accomplished?

Mr. Fowler: I can satisfy my hon. Friend on those points. The proposals themselves will provide more help, particularly for low-income families and the disabled. If the Leader of the Opposition understood my point, I am sure he would also support the fact that we are tackling not only the unemployment trap but the poverty trap. That is precisely the point that my hon. Friend made. Above all, we are seeking to introduce a modern social security system, which means that the system itself must be simplified.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Is the Secretary of State aware that the alliance believes that this White Paper contains the same intrinsic flaws as the Green Paper? It does nothing constructive to integrate the taxation system with the benefits system; it does nothing to establish modern, minimum standards-of-living requirements for those on benefit; and it does nothing to remedy the financial plight of elderly pensioners who are relying on supplementary pensions. The White Paper raises the additional spectre of the nightmare of constitutional clashes with the courts by investing in the Secretary of State massive devolved powers that he will arrogate to himself in the way that made Mr. Corton a household name in recent weeks.

Secondly, the lack of an independent tribunal system for the social fund is guaranteed to bring the right hon. Gentleman into conflict with the courts.

I appeal to the Secretary of State: he has announced that some of the changes are not to be introduced until 1988, so he has time. Why does he not use that time to have all-party talks to try to get a consensus on tax, pensions and benefits? I warn him that if the mechanism for paying benefits is not agreed and is not likely to survive an election, we are on course for financial uncertainty and administrative chaos.

Mr. Fowler: I am always an optimist, but, with the best will in the world, it seems to me that all-party talks involving the hon. Member for Oldham, West are unlikely to provide a consensus on social security policy.

I share the aspirations of the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on tax and social security. Family credit is an important step in that direction and it will provide more support for the families about which he and I are concerned.

There will be full and comprehensive legislation on our proposals. No previous Government have spent more time consulting the public and seeking to involve the public and organisations in the making of policy. This exercise started in 1983. It is now time not for more consultation, but for action.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many people throughout the country will welcome the assistance to be given to low-income families and that any a fair-minded person must agree that that as SERPS is not funded—it is a pay-as-you-go scheme—it is ludicrous to think that future taxpayers could suffer the burden if SERPS were not altered. By what amount does my right hon. Friend think that the projected £25 billion cost of SERPS will be reduced by his proposals?

With personal pensions for employees, will there be any change in the national insurance contributions of self-employed people who take out pensions?

Mr. Fowler: There will be no change for the self-employed.

My hon. Friend is right to say that SERPS is a pay-as-you-go scheme and not a funded insurance scheme. The result of the changes that I am proposing will be that by the year 2033 the cost will have come down from a

projected £25 billion to about £13 billion. We shall have reduced the emerging costs by about half. We shall also have protected fully the interests of those who are nearer retirement. That is why I said that those who are retiring in this century will not be affected by our changes.

Mrs. Renée Short (Wolverhampton, North-East): The Secretary of State will recall that the Select Committee on Social Services examined the proposals in his Green paper. It is usual for the Chairman of the Select Committee to have a note from the Secretary of State before statements are made, but I have not had such a note.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the number of staff involved in operating the present system. What changes will be made? Will the number of staff be increased or reduced?

Housing benefit and supplementary benefit were introduced by this Government; they are now to be changed radically. What guarantee do we have that the right hon. Gentleman has got it right this time? In view of the criticisms made by many of the witnesses who appeared before the Select Committee, I think that there will be great anxiety about the Government's proposals.

The right hon. Gentleman said that family credit will be provided for the very poor, and he referred to 200,000 families. What about the rest of the very poor? There are more than 3 million unemployed people, many of whom have families. What will be done to help them?

The Secretary of State said that local authorities will be able to give extra housing benefit in certain circumstances. Will he provide the resources for local authorities to give that help? If so, how much will he provide?

I remind the Secretary of State——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I know that the hon. Lady is the Chairman of the Select Committee, but it is unfair to treat this as a debate.

Mrs. Short: I have only one more sentence, Mr. Speaker. I remind the Secretary of State that whatever consensus about pensions, housing benefits and the rest existed previously, he has now destroyed it.

Mr. Fowler: Local authorities have always had to provide the resources for local schemes, and that will continue to be the case.

I apologise if no note has reached the hon. Lady as Chairman of the Select Committee. It is on its way to her and I hope that it will arrive in due course.

With the simplification of the system and the computer strategy, there will ultimately be a substantial reduction in staff requirements.

I remind the hon. Lady that the Government have examined an income support scheme in more detail than have any previous Government. The last major review of this sort, back in the 1940s, left that area to one side. We have tried to distinguish between income support, which is the overwhelming support, and the residual support for special needs and such matters, which will be taken up through the social fund.

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): As an erstwhile critic of the abolition of SERPS, perhaps I may be forgiven for expressing particular pleasure at the content of one part of my right hon. Friend's statement. Is it not clear from what he has said that, by the various inducements that are to be built up to persuade people to move to occupational pension schemes or individual personal pensions, the time will come in the not-too-distant future when the need for SERPS will have receded to the point where it is no more than a residual scheme? In retrospect, is that not far better than abolition?

As my right hon. Friend has a highly saleable proposition, will he undertake, with, I hope, the support of all his ministerial colleagues, the marketing of the scheme? Some of us feel that it is a step forward in our aim of achieving a property-owning democracy which could be equal to the sale of council houses—and we all know how successful that policy has been.

Mr. Fowler: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, whose knowledge and independence on pensions policy I very much respect. My hon. Friend is right. Our proposals will, I hope, mean that it will be the exception for those reaching retirement age not to have a pension of their own. The Government and I are entirely in favour of extending occupational and personal pensions to the maximum number of people. That is what the public want and that is what the Government are about.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that when I questioned him on his Green Paper, I asked him about the effects of his proposals on the number of poor. I return to that question: if the White Paper is implemented, will there be more poor people or fewer?

Will the right hon. Gentleman give the House his estimate of the savings or, as we would say, the cuts in public expenditure over the next two years leading up to the general election?

Mr. Fowler: The straight answer to the hon. Gentleman is that there will be fewer in terms of the poor, and that is the whole purpose behind the proposals that we are setting out. The hon. Gentleman will see from the White Paper that we seek to direct extra help to low-income families — a subject on which the hon. Gentleman has special expertise and knowledge — as well as to disabled people on low incomes. Regarding public spending, as I have said before, the purpose of the exercise is to make better use of resources. The major savings on SERPS are not immediate but will come in the next century. In the immediate future, I repeat that there will be increases in public spending for family credit. There will be equality for income support and supplementary benefit and spending on housing benefit will be reduced.

Mr. Roy Galley (Halifax): The flexibility that my right hon. Friend showed during the consultation process will be appreciated and welcomed throughout the country. Despite the rumblings from Opposition Members, will he confirm that the majority of low-income families with children will benefit from the proposals? Will he give more details about the modifications to the family credit proposals and will he tell us the facts on which is based the calculation that 200,000 more families will benefit under family credit?

Mr. Fowler: I confirm what my hon. Friend has said. In the inquiry leading up to the Green Paper the problems of the poorest—those with the lowest incomes—were clearly defined. During the past 20 years the number of low-income families with children has increased. On the basis of that diagnosis we sought to develop a new policy. Family income supplement was an attempt to deal with the

[Mr. Fowler]

circumstances of the early 1970s, but it did not work and led to the unemployment and poverty traps. That is why we have developed family credit. We have made several changes to family credit such as the change from 13 weeks to five weeks, which will ease the administration of the scheme.

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): In view of the difficulties experienced by the disabled housewife and mother, will the Secretary of State reconsider his position on the treatment of the old HNCIB?

Mr. Fowler: I believe that that is dealt with by the severe disablement allowance. However, in addition to our proposals we are carrying out a survey on the needs of disabled people to help Governments to form realistic and new policies for the disabled. I believe that that will be welcomed.

Dr. Brian Mawhinney (Peterborough): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the help with funeral costs available to the low-paid will be in the form of grants rather than loans? Will he also confirm that in setting the premiums for elderly people the personal heating allowance will be taken into account?

Mr. Fowler: I give assurances on both points. The financial resources for heating additions will be in the income support rates. Funeral expenses will be in the form of grants, not loans.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Why does the hon. Gentleman not come clean and admit that the damaging implications of these changes, without proper disclosure of figures, are not likely to be appreciable until after the next general election, which is now nearly certain to happen before April 1987?

Mr. Fowler: I have produced a technical annex that is full of illustrative figures. However, I repeat to the hon. Gentleman that with the best will in the world it is impossible to show with those figures what the exact benefits will be in April 1987.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that on BBC radio this morning the Opposition spokesman alleged categorically that the longer-term funding of the present system was no problem, even without increased taxation? Will my right hon. Friend give the lie to that allegation?

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Member for Oldham, West constantly quotes the Government Actuary in support of his case. The hon. Gentleman should read with more care what the Government Actuary said, not only in the current report attached to the White Paper, which I accept the hon. Gentleman did not have the benefit of seeing before he spoke this morning, but in several reports. As the hon. Gentleman knows, SERPS will increase the value of pensions. There will be an increase of about £4 million for pensioners, and the hon. Gentleman should know that the ratio of contributors to the pensions will worsen. The public should understand that under Labour's policy, with the earnings uprating, the total cost of pensions would rise to £73 billion which would mean a national insurance contribution of 27·5 per cent. That is what the Labour party propose.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must take into account the fact that this is a Private Member's day and that there is a further statement to follow. I will allow questions to continue for another 10 minutes, and if hon. Members put their questions briefly, I hope that most will be able to contribute.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that, even on his inadequate illustrative figures, 7 million mothers and 12 million children will be worse off because of changes in child benefit, 3·8 million people, including 2 million pensioners, will be worse off because of changes in housing and supplementary benefit, and half the population will be worse off because because of his scheme? Will he tell us the truth? As a result of the White Paper, which brings a black Christmas for claimants, by how much does he intend to cut supplementary benefit before 1988 and by how much does he plan to cut the social security budget after 1988?

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Member knows that that is not the case. His questions show all the signs of a supplementary question rehearsed before he had the opportunity to read the White Paper.

Mr. Roger Freeman (Kettering): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his proposals on personal pensions will be warmly welcomed by many people who wish to stay in occupational pension schemes but who wish to make additional provision through personal pensions? Will he confirm that the Government will consider the revenue restrictions on additional voluntary contributions so that the full amount—up to 15 per cent. of salary—will apply to personal pensions contributions.

Mr. Fowler: Yes. In the legislation to follow we seek to provide everyone with the right to a personal pension irrespective of whether they are in a scheme at present. That is an important step forward. Those people will benefit from the special national insurance incentive that I have announced and they will benefit from tax relief. Those points will be welcomed by industry and the public.

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): I thank my right hon. Friend for responding to representations to preserve the special position of war widows.

Mr. Fowler: We listened to representations, and we believe that it is right to make an exception in the case of war pensions.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Will the Secretary of State say whether it is the Government's intention to remove the right of students to claim supplementary benefit during the long vacation and their right to claim housing benefit? Does he agree that that would cause them considerable hardship? Will he confirm that it is not the Government's intention to enact the proposals through secondary legislation but that the Government will wait for statutory powers?

Mr. Fowler: As the Green Paper made clear, we want a change in the supplementary benefit arrangements for students. We would prefer a system whereby the support for students goes through grants, not supplementary benefit and housing benefit. We shall try to develop that principle. The hon. Gentleman will see when it is introduced that the legislation is comprehensive and that many of the fears that have been whipped up about it are unfounded.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley (Surrey, South-West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that all those who genuinely seek to meet real need effectively with resources will welcome his announcement that maternity and death grants will be made available at realistic levels to those in need, whether in or out of work?

Mr. Fowler: That is right. The maternity grant and the death grant have been unchanged for between 15 and 20 years. That position cannot remotely be defended. We are trying to give realistic and proper help to those who need it for funeral expenses and maternity expenses.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): Will the Secretary of State concede that the sort of social security system that will result from his announcement will not be essentially fairer but will be essentially meaner? Does he accept that that will happen because he is trying to redistribute income in our society within definitions of income bands that have been drawn tightly between what he regards as the deserving and the undeserving poor? Do his illustrative figures not show that 2 million pensioners will lose at least £1 a week and that more than 10 per cent. of them will lose more than £5 a week?

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Gentleman is probably quoting from the second set of tables. The basis for those tables is the position before the reform has any effect. It requires a little imagination to understand that there will be an impact on single pensioners. I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman that the system will be less fair. When he has had more time to study the White Paper, he will accept that it will direct help more effectively to those people, notably low-income families, who by any definition are most in need.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): In welcoming extra help for the disabled, may I ask my right hon. Friend to clarify when families with more than one disabled child can expect to benefit from the proposals?

Mr. Fowler: That part of the proposals will come into effect in April 1988, with the majority of the proposals that we shall introduce and with the new pension arrangements.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): Does the Secretary of State accept that the changes that he has proposed for SERPS and the guaranteed occupational pension schemes will mean a turning back of the clock for manual workers and a reduction in pension rights? Is not his estimate of a 27·5 per cent. contribution rate blatant scaremongering?

Mr. Fowler: I do not accept that it is blatant scaremongering. I have tried to quote the estimate put forward by the Government Actuary, as the hon. Member for Oldham, West did on the radio this morning. I have not simply pulled the figure out of the air. Does the hon. Gentleman share the aspirations of the Government to extend pensions for individuals through occupational schemes and through personal pensions? The inquiry showed clearly that the majority of people want their own pensions, and that is what we shall try to provide.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Will my right hon. Friend and my hon. Friend the Minister of State accept that the Select Committee on Social Services, of which I am the longest-serving Conservative Member, is grateful for the fact that he has listened to the views expressed by the thousands of people who communicated with him and to the views of the Select Committee? Will he also accept that his views on SERPS are welcome and the fact that he has amended his original views is widely appreciated? Although I do not wish to be controversial in what I say now, will he tell the House whether he is intending to be a Scrooge or a Father Christmas in his announcement? I believe that he intends to be a Father Christmas.

Mr. Fowler: I cannot win with a comparison of that sort. I am trying to be fair. I pay tribute to the work of the Select Committee on Social Services, which we took fully into account.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): However hard the chairman of the Conservative party tries to dress up the White Paper, will not the British people soon come to see it for what it is: a charter for more cuts, more means testing and more misery? Does the Secretary of State understand that the absence of the Prime Minister and most of his Cabinet colleagues this afternoon shows that they do not regard the White Paper as a new Beveridge plan, but are ashamed of it and do not wish to be associated with it publicly?

Mr. Fowler: I do not see many prominent figures on the Opposition Front Bench. For example, I have no idea who the man with the beard is. The hon. Gentleman had better be a little more cautious in his statements. I am content to allow the public to judge the proposals. They will judge them side by side with the proposals put forward by the hon. Member for Oldham, West on the abolition of mortgage tax relief. We look forward to the further development of those proposals.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): Will my right hon. Friend remind us of who is paying for all this? In contrast to the comments made by the Opposition about losers, does he agree that since everyone is a taxpayer —whether through income tax, tax on savings, or VAT — we shall all gain from an improved, streamlined social security system?

Mr. Fowler: My hon. Friend is right. It is also worth remembering that we are talking about a budget of more than £41 billion a year. That is an increase of about 30 per cent. in real terms since 1979. More than half of the increase represents a real increase in benefits.

Westland

4.28 pm

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Leon Brittan): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

For some months now Westland plc has been in serious financial difficulties and has been seeking an association with an external partner or partners. Negotiations with United Technologies commenced in September 1985 and led to a proposal from Fiat and United Technologies.

At the suggestion of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, the Government agreed that my right hon. Friend should explore the possibility of an alternative association with Aerospatiale, MBB and Agusta becoming available to Westland. An initial proposal emerged and, while it was being produced, the national armaments directors of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy made a recommendation that certain helicopter requirements should in future be met solely from aircraft designed and built in Europe. For the United Kingdom, this recommendation represented a substantial extension to the Government's policy agreed with our European allies in 1978 and of our general approach to defence procurement as set out in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1985".

The existence of the national armaments directors' recommendation was regarded by Westland as a major obstacle to the United Technologies-Fiat option, which it at all times preferred. In view of the urgent necessity for a deal to be concluded quickly, the Government decided that from 13 December they would not be bound by the national armaments directors' recommendation unless Westland had by then received a firm offer from the three European companies, which the board would recommend to its shareholders. The Government's intention was to give time for the completion of a firm offer by the European companies to Westland, but to remove any politically imposed obstacle facing Westland if such an offer were not made in time or was unacceptable to Westland.

At the end of last week British Aerospace announced that it was prepared to provide a quarter of the funds offered by the European consortium. The Governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy also agreed, but on an entirely provisional basis, that if the European offer were accepted they would meet their requirements in each of the three main helicopter classes by a single collaborative solution.

Westland plc announced on Friday evening that agreement had been reached in principle whereby United Technologies and Fiat will between them take a minority shareholding in Westland. The view of the board of Westland was that the European offer which was finally received was neither firm enough nor attractive enough for the board to be able to recommend it to its shareholders. Accordingly, Her Majesty's Government are not bound by the national armaments directors' recommendation. Full details of the United Technologies-Fiat agreement and of a capital reorganisation of Westland will be announced by the company shortly. As part of the proposed arrangements, Westland will take a licence from the Sikorsky division of United Technologies to manufacture, develop and sell the Blackhawk helicopter.

United Technologies was at all times fully aware that there was currently no Ministry of Defence requirement and no provision in the defence budget to buy the Blackhawk helicopter or any other comparable helicopter. Westland has welcomed the agreement as a private sector solution to its present financial difficulties which offers firm prospects of long-term viability and continues the close co-operation between Westland and Sikorsky, which has existed for several decades, and which led to the production under licence of the successful Wessex, Whirlwind and Sea King helicopters. Westland intends to continue with the Anglo-Italian EH101 programme, and to continue to take part in feasibility studies on a developed version of the A129 and on the NH90. United Technologies has assured Westland that it will continue to maintain a helicopter design and development capability in the United Kingdom.

The Government have ensured that Westland had an alternative European-based offer to consider, but, as a private sector company, it is for Westland to decide the best route to follow to secure its future and that of its employees.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. John Smith.

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East) *rose*——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Afterwards.

Mr. Skinner: It is very important.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure it is.

Mr. Skinner: Will the Secretary of State for Defence make his statment, because there are two conflicting views?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. John Smith.

Mr. John Smith: Surely the Secretary of State is not seeking to pretend that there have not been fundamental disagreements, going right to the heart of Government policy, between himself and the Secretary of State for Defence, which have been advertised in the extraordinary public wrangling in recent days? Is there still any concept of collective responsibility in the Government?

Why did the Government refuse to help Westland many months ago when it asked for help? Would it not have been wise to support Britain's only helicopter manufacturer to keep a vital stake in the markets for our industry? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman telling the House that Britain accepted a recommendation by the national armaments directors only a short time ago, only to have that undertaking unilaterally withdrawn today, apparently only because Westland's board wants to accept the United States' offer? Should our defence policy be decided by the interests of a private sector company?

Is it not revealing that the Secretary of State for Defence —perhaps belatedly, but certainly vigorously—has been fighting for the concept of national interest, while the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has been defending the ideologically motivated non-interventionist stance of his party? Is it not the case that, as usually happens when the Prime Minister intervenes, party ideology has once again triumphed over the national interest?

Can the Secretary of State say why we should not believe the Secretary of State for Defence when he tells

us that the United States deal will lead to a high-tech British company being reduced to metal bashing, and when he tells us that the deal may prejudice future European defence co-operation, especially on major helicopter projects? Is it not clear that United Technologies wants to find a way into the European market and that, instead of fighting for European industry, the Government are helping to open up American access to it? Does the research and design independence of Westland rest only on the assurance given by United Technologies? Is it not sad that the Government should assist Westland's chairman to find—I quote his recent statement—

"a private sector solution to a private sector problem"

when what is desperately needed is a national solution to a national problem?

Will the Secretary of State intervene to defer a decision for at least a few weeks so that the future of a vital British industry is decided in an atmosphere of calm deliberation, with all the relevant information available, and with proper attention being paid to the national defence and manufacturing interests? Surely, when a great deal of Government money has already been invested in this company, and when thousands of jobs are possibly at stake—let alone the independence of a major British industrial interest—it is not enough for the Government to wash their hands of responsibility and leave a matter of such national consequence to a shareholders' meeting next Thursday, which will take place in the shadow of the threat of liquidation.

Mr. Brittan: On the right hon. Gentleman's first point, I assure him that my statement was made on behalf of the Government as a whole—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) alleged that the Government had refused help for Westland. The Government have taken the view that it would be far preferable for Westland to be able to find a solution to the problems that it faces without recourse to the taxpayer. That seems to be a reasonable position to take. It is clear that Westland has been able to do so.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman is misinformed on the question of the joint recommendation of the national armaments directors, and I am glad to be able to correct him. He was wrong in saying that Britain had accepted the recommendation. The recommendation was placed on the table and was never agreed to by the United Kingdom Government. The fact that it was on the table was, in effect, a pistol at the head of Sikorsky and Westland, preventing them from pursuing their preferred solution. None the less, the Government believed that the inquiries which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence was pursuing with a view to obtaining an offer from European countries were such that they should be pursued to the point at which a decision could be taken freely by the company.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East is wholly misconceived in his suggestion that ideology is involved. It is not. There is concern for the welfare of Westland and the jobs of the people employed there. The right hon. Gentleman is also wholly misconceived and is picking up a cheap cliché in suggesting that the role of Westland, if the proposed deal goes through, is as he says. United Technologies has assured Westland that it will continue to maintain a helicopter design and development capability in the United Kingdom. What is more, Westland, which has responsibility in difficult circumstances and is under extreme pressure of time, for which the right hon. and learned Gentleman does not allow at all, believes that the maintenance of such a capability would have been less certain if it had accepted the European consortium's proposals.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that there is a need to convey to the armaments directors of Europe an understanding that Westland is a European helicopter company? Does he also accept that nobody in Europe, particularly the chairman of Aerospatiale, has a right to say that such a company would stop Westland getting contracts in NATO? Will my right hon. and learned Friend make it clear to everybody in Europe that, with Sikorsky in the arrangement, it will be the same as it has always been, and that the content of Westland helicopters will remain 90 per cent. European?

Mr. Brittan: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is a gross over-simplification to present the choice as being between Europe and the United States. Westland is deeply involved, and will continue to be involved, with Europe. That has been made abundantly clear. The United States companies are also involved with Europe. As for Aerospatiale, the House will understand why Westland views the remark that has been quoted from the head of that company as having all the objectivity of a remark made by someone who had been doing his best to undermine and supplant the Westland Indian deal.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The right hon. and learned Gentleman's statement will be welcomed. Bearing in mind that the Government's indecision has been at the heart of many of Westland's long-term problems, what steps is the right hon. and learned Gentleman taking to make sure that the Cabinet is together on the issue and that Westland is not being treated as a ministerial plaything? Will he confirm that Westland's relationship with Sikorsky is not new, but stretches back over 40 years of fruitful co-operation? Will he also confirm that the EH101 participative deal is not threatened by the statement, but is perhaps enhanced by it? Will he give a clear undertaking to the House that Westland will not be penalised over the deal because it has put some individual Cabinet Ministers' noses out of joint?

Mr. Brittan: Of course the Government would not behave in the irresponsible way that the hon. Gentleman suggests. It would be the duty of all members of the Government to ensure that orders were placed for helicopters that were needed, in the right way, irrespective of any such unworthy considerations. The Government are committed to the EH101. Westland is also committed to it, and United Technologies has said that it will not interfere in any way and will assist in its promotion in north America. The president of Agusta, with which EH101 is being developed, confirmed on Saturday that his company will continue to co-operate with Westland on the programme.

The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) is right in the general points that he made. Four of Westland's

[Mr. Brittan]

most successful projects since the war have been developments of original Sikorsky designs—Dragonfly, Wessex, Whirlwind, Sea King and its Army version, the Commando. Westland has sold over 1,200 of those aircraft. Its association with Sikorsky goes back to 1947. The three collaborative projects undertaken with Aerospatiale have been less successful.

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that there is great admiration on both sides of the House for Sir John Cuckney, the head of the firm that is now Westland? Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that to many of us a more European-oriented solution might have been preferable? Will he assure us that, whether or not that be so, the best helicopters, for both maritime and land use, will be available to our armed forces?

Mr. Brittan: I am sure that the latter is the case. The Government thought it right that the possibility of a European offer should be explored. That is why, at a meeting in my Department with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, I readily agreed that he should explore that possibility. It was explored and put forward. The company took the view that it was not sufficiently firm or attractive for it to abandon its previously preferred option. It is worth pointing out that the European possibility arose late in the day, at a time when the company was under great financial pressure.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): Is it not a strange constitutional position when on Sunday we hear the Secretary of State for Defence giving one view on the radio, and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry giving a different view in the House the following day? As someone who has served in the Royal Air Force, I believe that the Secretary of State for Defence was speaking on behalf of the RAF and not on behalf of monetary or ideological considerations.

Mr. Brittan: The House will have heard what the right hon. Gentleman has said and his constitutional analysis. The statement that I am making is on behalf of the Government.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall that for months many of us have been trying to remind Her Majesty's Government of the imminent problems of Westland, and in particular of the necessity of meeting air staff target 404 of the Royal Air Force for medium-lift helicopters with a Westland aeroplane? Was it not unrealistic of the Ministry of Defence to imagine that at the 11th hour it could impose a shotgun European marriage on Westland, when a European long-term helicopter strategy, though necessary, is bound to take a long time to concert?

Mr. Brittan: I shall draw my hon. Friend's remarks to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Is the Secretary of State aware that while he is saying that he is speaking for the Government, the faces on the Government Front Bench show a different view? That shows the disunity of the Government on the subject. The right hon. and learned Gentleman talks about what the chairman of Westland has said, but how far have the employees and the trade unions been consulted? If that is done, I think he will find that they have a different opinion and that they would support the Secretary of State for Defence for a European solution, because that offers a better long-term future than the American proposal. Is he not aware — perhaps it is because of his lack of knowledge of industry—that the Government are once more selling out for short-term proposals, rather than guaranteeing a long-term future for the British helicopter industry?

Mr. Brittan: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman is right. I would hesitate to arbitrate between him and the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), but I suspect that when it comes to what the people of Yeovil who work for the firm would prefer, the hon. Member for Yeovil may know more about it.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the thousands of people who work for Westland in and around the west country are much less interested in which is the best solution than in the fact that the company has been saved from receivership? Will he use his influence to ensure that the otherwise friendly relations between Westland and its biggest customer, the Ministry of Defence, are restored and perpetuated?

Mr. Brittan: I agree with everything that my hon. Friend has said and wish to use my influence in that direction.

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that his hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) is right? For 18 months Government and Opposition Back Benchers, the all-party group, the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) have been pleading that action should be taken on the matter. If, for once, the Ministers had listened to the Back Benchers, they would not have been embarrassed, as they are today. Aviation is far too important to the economy of the country for it to be the subject of bickering and delay by Front-Bench spokesmen.

Mr. Brittan: The attempt to make a party issue of the matter by the Opposition Front Bench is also perhaps a reflection of real concern. The question of proper defence procurement is not easy, and it is unfair to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence for the hon. Gentleman to castigate him in that way, when he has made major efforts and been extremely successful in securing value for money for the armed forces over an enormous range of activities. The House and the country owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): In the light of the new situation, what is the position on the licence arrangements to build the Blackhawk helicopter already entered into with Shorts? Does that arrangement still exist, and if so, what will be the effect on any arrangements made with Westland in the future?

Mr. Brittan: The arrangement envisaged with Shorts was entirely dependent upon the possibility of the Blackhawk being selected by the Ministry of Defence for AST 404. That has not happened, so that arrangement does not stand.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On 19 November I was taken round Westland at Yeovil, as many of my colleagues

have been. Those of us from other parts of the country will recognise the seriousness and size of the problem. May I repeat the question asked by my right hon. and learned Friend the member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith)? What assurance is there that Sikorsky will keep the high technology and research in Britain? May we have a factual answer?

Mr. Brittan: I have already given the assurance that the hon. Gentleman has asked for, and stated clearly what United Technologies has said. That is absolutely clear. All I can say to the hon. Gentleman is that if he is talking about alternatives, he might like to ask what assurances he thinks the French, Germans and Italians, all of whom have been regarded as competitors to Westland, would give in the same direction.

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the American connection with Westland would be a way for the Rolls-Royce turbo meca 322 helicopter engine, currently being developed on the borders of my constituency, to gain access to the large and profitable north American market?

Mr. Brittan: I agree that that is a most attractive prospect.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman not ashamed of himself? How can he conclude that the British technology will remain in this country? Does he not realise that Sikorsky could eat Westland for breakfast? That would not be the case with the other Europeans, because none of them is big enough. Surely the Government should have been pushing ahead with our European partners? An example is Agusta, with the EH101, which has been on the go for some time. Who are the patriots in this country? Do they sit on the Government side, or on the Opposition side of the House?

Mr. Brittan: I think that the hon. Gentleman must have overlooked the answer that I gave to the question on the EH101, in which I made it clear that that was going ahead, and that the president of Agusta had said that it was. The NH90 development is still at an early stage. There is no doubt that it will continue to go ahead with United Technologies.

Mr. Jim Spicer (Dorset, West): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the facts about Westland were known months ago? If, at that time, the Europeans, who are now bidding so furiously to get in on the act, had been in, we might have seen a viable alternative. My constituents and Westland have a bird in the hand, and it is worth two in the bush.

Mr. Brittan: I can well understand how my hon. Friend and his constituents feel about the bird in the hand. It is difficult to speculate about what might have happened in other circumstances some months ago, but the plain fact is that the European consortium did not exist, showed no signs of existing and had no interest in the matter until a few weeks ago.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): Will the Secretary of State join in the congratulations of most of us on the Opposition Benches to his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence for trying to get the European option?

Mr. Brittan: I very happily join in the congratulations that the hon. Gentleman, with motives that one might suspect, invites me to confirm. As I said earlier, it was I who readily agreed that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence should see whether a European solution was possible. In a short time my right hon. Friend succeeded in bringing together to a remarkable extent an offer which, in the end, the company did not feel was sufficiently firm or attractive. The Government's desire that it should be pursued is evidenced by the fact that it was the Government's decision that my right hon. Friend should pursue it. He achieved a considerable success in a short time, in making it possible for Westland to consider that option.

Mr. Michael Marshall (Arundel): I understand the complexity of the issue and want to consider carefully what my right hon. and learned Friend has said, but does he accept that GEC, as well as British Aerospace, made an offer to bring forward the European proposal? That matter causes some of us concern, as the offer was apparently rejected within 24 hours. Does my right hon. and learned Friend think that the matter should be looked at with care?

Mr. Brittan: With regard to the speed with which the matter was considered, the broad outline of the proposals being put forward by the Europeans was clear long before last Friday, so it is not entirely accurate to regard the proposal as having been rejected within 24 hours. The proposals put forward on behalf of the European consortium last Friday did not include any participation whatsoever by GEC. The interest on the part of GEC has emerged since then. It is fair to say that although GEC is entitled, even at this late hour, to say what it wishes, at no stage during the well known and well publicised difficulties of Westland did GEC lift a finger to help.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Why does the Department of Trade and Industry assume responsibility for the company when it is so reliant on defence procurement? Most of the order book is supplied by the Secretary of State for Defence, in orders that his Department gives to the company. Surely the Ministry of Defence should have been the lead Department in taking decisions, if necessary, on the future of the company. Why did the right hon. and learned Gentleman not recognise that his was the junior role?

Mr. Brittan: The decisions that I have announced were taken collectively. As the hon. Gentleman is interested in responsibility, he will know perfectly well that whereas the Ministry of Defence is a major customer, the Department of Trade and Industry is the sponsoring Department for the aerospace industry. There is nothing new in that.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that many with an interest in defence will feel that, for whatever reason, we have ended up with the third best solution? Is it not pretty obvious that the European defence and aviation industries must work out their common aims and co-operate to try to achieve them? I fear that my right hon. and learned Friend's statement is steaming slowly in the wrong direction.

Mr. Brittan: I share my hon. Friend's enthusiasm for European co-operation. A British company with European competitors was faced with the prospect of extinction, and it had an imperative duty to prevent that. It is because of

[Mr. Brittan]

the shared concern about the merits of European co-operation that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State examined whether an alternative was available in the time. The company has taken the view that it was not.

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): Why was it left to the Secretary of State for Defence to make the suggestion and then pursue it on behalf of the Government if the right hon. and learned Gentleman's Department is the sponsoring Department not only for the aerospace industry but for British industry as a whole? Why did his Department not come in earlier and explore the possibilities of an alternative to the present solution? What did his Department do during the months when the firm was known to be in difficulties?

Mr. Brittan: The short answer to the hon. Gentleman is that there was on the table, at an advanced stage of negotiation, a deal that would rescue the company. My Department was intimately involved in removing some of the obstacles that stood in the way of such a rescue. That is the correct role of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): While the European approach undoubtedly offers the best political solution to the problem, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the plight of Westland has been known for many months and that there have been negotiations since June this year to find a partner? The company can hardly be blamed if it has picked up a real offer from the table. It ill behoves the managing director of the company in the United Kingdom that is richest in cash to say now that the deal is not in the interests of the United Kingdom when, with all the cash at its disposal, it could have come in much earlier. At the moment, the plan is for United Technologies and Fiat to take over a 30 per cent. shareholding. What would be Her Majesty's Government's view if that shareholding were to be increased to a majority shareholding?

Mr. Brittan: That is a hypothetical question, which I cannot be expected to answer. I can well understand my hon. Friend's comments about the other matters, although I would not wish to join in them.

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): Great confusion has been caused today by the Secretary of State's statement and by many of the reports that we have been reading about his colleague, the Secretary of State for Defence. May I remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman that several months ago a deputation met the then Minister of State for Defence Procurement to talk about the serious situation in the industry. He said that there were difficulties sorting out the type of aircraft that was required, yet we learned this weekend that the Ministry of Defence was thinking about placing an order for six helicopters. Will the Secretary of State explain why the Ministry can now place an order for six helicopters? If he cannot, will he ask his colleague the Secretary of State for Defence to make a statement? What guarantees can be given to the work force, which has had little say in all the paper transactions? Will the Minister go to the trade unions and give them some assurances?

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman will know that his last points are matters for the company. He mentioned the proposal that six extra Sea Kings should be purchased by the United Kingdom Government. That order would have been financed out of savings obtained by merging the A129 mark II and PAH2 light attack helicopters. Such a rationalisation may not be achieved, but, if it can be, Westland's link with Sikorsky and Fiat would not prevent it.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for at last calling a Member who has many constituents working at Westlands. Does my right hon. and learned Friend realise that what matters most is the future of Westlands and the jobs that will be kept there? One of the factors in favour of the Sikorsky deal is the future production of the Blackhawk helicopter. There are rumours in my constituency that Blackhawk production at Yeovil will be below 50 per cent. of total production. Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm this rumour?

Mr. Brittan: I cannot confirm that. I can confirm, however, that it is the intention of United Technologies that there should be substantial manufacture of Blackhawk in the United Kingdom. One reason for Westland preferring the Sikorsky deal is that the company compared that firm commitment by United Technologies with an interim provision from the European companies simply for extended subcontracting work in the United Kingdom. There would be more substantial production work with Blackhawk. The possibility of a European helicopter being built in the United Kingdom in the more distant future is very doubtful.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): If there has been a great national interest at stake for the last few months, Westland is the victim, not the villain of the piece, as it has been seeking calm. Indeed, Westland was told by the Government and by other companies in this country to do what happens to turkeys at Christmas. It would have been better if two distinguished members of the Government, one involved in defence and the other in trade and industry, had got together beforehand to discover what was best for Westland. Would it not have been better to launch Westland on the free market, which I believe is an important aspect of the Government's policy?

Mr. Brittan: The matter is being left to the free market. The solution being put forward by Westland involves the private sector rescue of a private sector company, at no cost to the Exchequer. It is perfectly reasonable for the Government to explore the possibility of another offer being put to Westland and to allow the company to choose which is best. That is what the Government have done, and that is in line with the view of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark).

Mr. Robert Jackson (Wantage): Is my right hon. and learned Friend worried about the knock-on effects of the decision, and the way in which it has been presented, on any future European defence collaboration?

Mr. Brittan: That is a matter which the Government must consider. The statement made by the president of Agusta about continued collaboration on the EH101 gives one reason to believe that some things said in the heat of the moment by certain of our European competitors might assume different proportions when matters continue in a more leisurely way.

Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells): Can my right hon. and learned Friend say whether United Technologies

has agreed to limit its stake in Westlands to 29·9 per cent., or whether that might be a prelude to a full bid in due course? Does he think that it is important that Britain's only helicopter manufacturer should not come under foreign control, with a consequential loss of business in avionics and associated weapons systems?

Mr. Brittan: I am advised that the proposals of Sikorsky and Fiat — one must not forget that two companies are involved, not one—is for an initial 29·9 per cent. stake, with an option to acquire further shares to bring the holding up to 35 or 40 per cent., but not to exceed that figure. The full details for which the Opposition are thirsting will be made public by the company in a few days.

My hon. Friend will be aware that a vast amount of avionics is currently produced by United Kingdom manufacturers for American concerns, and avionics will not be put at risk in the way that my hon. Friend fears.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Further to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory), will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the control of Westland will remain in the United Kingdom and that there have been no discussions to suggest that it should move elsewhere at a later stage?

Mr. Brittan: That is correct.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that during all the exchanges that have taken place, it has been perfectly clear that the Secretary of State for Defence has disagreed with practically everything that he has been telling us? The Secretary of State for Defence has been more concerned with national issues than has the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who has been willing to see British interests given over to the United States.

Mr. Brittan: I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. I have made it clear that it is Westland's view that the proposals which it is now commending to its shareholders are in the company's best interests.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Can my right hon. and learned Friend tell the House why the Government rejected approaches from Westland earlier this year? He has not answered the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark). Why must the Government have a public debate between the Secretary of State for Defence and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry? When a foreign power takes an interest in a vital, strategic industry in this country the opportunities for exports are reduced, and that must be against the national interests.

Mr. Brittan: I do not agree with my hon. Friend on his general proposition. Westland's view that its prospects for exports are enhanced is a reasonable one, but the House will have to wait to see what happens.

The answer to my hon. Friend's first point is perfectly clear. The Government did not favour a solution to Westland's problem which involved the taxpayer paying for the company.

Mr. John Smith: Why has the Secretary of State waited until almost the last question of the term to reveal the important information that US Technologies has an option to increase its holding to 40 per cent.?

Mr. Brittan: United Technologies.

Mr. Smith: If the Secretary of State is going to make a fuss about getting the tiny details right, perhaps he could have helped us by supplying the information at the outset. The Secretary of State tried to tell the House that there was a small minority interest being taken, but hon. Members have now extracted from him, as one would take a bad tooth from a bad mouth, the fact that the holding could increase to 40 per cent. That is a shocking disclosure, because the Secretary of State knows that 40 per cent. equals control of the company.

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. and learned Gentleman could not have made a worse point, as I did not mention any figures at all until I was asked to do so. I made it clear at that stage that there are many other details in relation to the proposal which will be disclosed by the company in a matter of days. That is an entirely reasonable course of action.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will have noticed that throughout the whole series of questions and answers the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry did not even consult the Secretary of State for Defence——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Even if that is true it is nothing to do with me.

Mr. Skinner: I know that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What is the point of order for me?

Mr. Skinner: I was just giving a little background, Mr. Speaker. The point of order is quite clear. It is very rare that Ministers come along giving opposite points of view, but in this case it is clear that they do not even speak to each other. As there are clearly two points of view, should not the Secretary of State for Defence have the chance to put the alternative point of view?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Private Notice Questions

5.11 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I should be grateful for your advice. I had understood that a private notice question was a private matter and not for public dissemination. Was it in order for the Labour Front Bench spokesman to make it known in the press last Saturday that he intended to put down a private notice question, and for the fact and perhaps some of the text of the question to be revealed in the Press Association tapes this morning?

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): He is still wet behind the ears.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The point of order is for me, not for the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

I frequently read in the press at weekends that a question is to be asked about a particular matter in Parliament the following week. I think that that is perfectly in order, but it is not in order to refer to a private notice question which may or may not have been sent in.

Ministerial Statements

5.12 pm

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May we have your advice on what seems to be a genuine constitutional predicament?

With regard to today's statement, there are two Departments with clear responsibilities. Until now, all statements on the subject in question have been made by the Secretary of State for Defence. Today, however, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has told the House that he has taken over responsibility at the Dispatch Box as the head of the sponsoring Department, but that any questions related to defence arising from his statement have to be referred to the Secretary of State for Defence. As the Secretary of State for Defence, who has dismissed the agreement as "metal-bashing", has had to sit beside his colleague in silence and humiliation and listen to an announcement that an agreement by national armaments directors——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is this a point of order for me?

Mr. Williams: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have been told that national armaments directors of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy have agreed that certain helicopter requirements should in future be met solely from aircraft designed and built in Europe. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said that that agreement "represented a substantial extension to the Government's policy . . . and of our general approach to defence procurement as set out in the 1985 Statement on the Defence Estimates".
As that agreement has apparently been set aside purely at the request of the Westland board, would it not be appropriate now to have a statement from the Secretary of State for Defence on the defence aspects of the matter?

Mr. Speaker: It might have been more appropriate if the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) had been called last from the Front Bench. None of that is a matter for me.

Questions to Ministers

5.14 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The matter that I wish to raise is not a matter of Members' interests, although it may at first seem to be so. It relates to the rights of Members to table questions. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I have an interest in defence contracts, and particularly in excess profits by defence contractors. Accordingly, I attempted to table a series of questions this morning. One of them was—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that if he goes to the Table Office and seeks advice it is not in order for him to raise in the Chamber with me the questions that he raised there.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: As I understand it, Mr. Speaker—I have also taken advice on this—you have ultimate responsibility for the decisions of the Table Office.

Mr. Speaker: I do not answer for these matters in the Chamber. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to raise matters of this kind with me, he should do so in the normal way. I was not present at the discussions and I cannot possibly say what went on. As the hon. Gentleman has raised the matter, I can tell him that I now know that he spent some time in the Table Office this morning discussing whether he could put down certain questions, but that is all that I know.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: There are many precedents in the House of Members coming to the Chamber to press the case for questions which they were refused the right to table, by the Table Office. I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to consider the implications of certain questions that I was not allowed to table. My point of order is not long. I wonder whether you might care——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is becoming increasingly expert in procedural matters. He should know that the matter that he raises is firmly pointed to in "Erskine May" as follows:

"When a question has been refused and the Member concerned wishes to make representations to the Speaker on the matter, the practice is for these to be made privately to the Speaker and not raised by way of a point of order in the House."

SCOTTISH AFFAIRS

Ordered,

That the matter of the recommendations of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council concerning higher education in Scotland, being a matter relating exclusively to Scotland, be referred to the Scottish Grand Committee for its consideration.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the Representation of the People (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1985 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Scientific Research

5.15 pm

Mr. T. H. H. Skeet (Bedfordshire, North): I beg to move,

That this House acknowledges that the prosperity of Britain in a competitive world depends upon keeping pace with technology in a variety of fields, that the achievement of this goal requires the injection of greater funds into the scientific infrastructure comprising universities, research councils, laboratories and polytechnics, that a closer interface between universities and industries is fundamental to the evolution of a future industrial strategy, and that international collaboration for major research projects is essential to further the development of expensive basic research; that, while welcoming the initiative of Her Majesty's Government in associating Britain, France and Italy in the ISIS neutron spallation source facilities, Eureka and other ventures, nevertheless would regret any steps taken to lower the United Kingdom subscription to the high energy particle physics facility CERN; acknowledges that only the maintenance of an environment for successful research in the United Kingdom will prevent the migration abroad of the ablest scientists and innovators; considers that a mechanism must be found for harnessing for civil use the fruits of defence research; and concludes that, while the private sector should be encouraged to invest more funds in research and development, there remains a continuing need for further public funds to maintain the thrust of basic, strategic and applied research in a number of fields such as microelectronics, biotechnology, information technology and robotics, because to a very large extent the employment and standard of living of tomorrow depends upon the research undertaken by the community today.

It is becoming customary for the House, even after two major statements, further to curtail the time left to debate a private Member's motion. On this occasion, the time has been cut down to one hour and 45 minutes. I hope that when the subject of this debate is discussed in the future adequate time will be provided by the Government to cover the points that Members would have liked to raise today.

Paragraph 26 of the Select Committee report on the future of the science budget shows the comparative performance of various industrial states in relation to Government funding for research and development. The performance of the United Kingdom is not encouraging. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to provide clarification today. In volume II, paragraph 40, Sir David Phillips stated in evidence that he was

"instituting a review of the way in which particular branches of science are funded in this country and in Germany, France, Netherlands, the United States and Japan. This review . . . is being conducted by the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University".

Can my hon. Friend the Minister tell us the outcome of that review?

International figures reflect not just inadequate funding but a shortage of scientific staff. I illustrate the point by giving the number of scientists and engineers in research and development in four major countries. In the United States, the figure is 660,700 or 0·62 per cent. of the labour force. In Japan it is 463,062 or 0·76 per cent. of the labour force. In West Germany it is 121,978 or 0·41 per cent. of the labour force. In the United Kingdom, it is even lower, at 86,500 or 0·33 per cent. of the labour force. Science and technology cannot possibly advance adequately if there are insufficient engineers and scientists to see that the advances are made.

The performance figures also reflect a paucity of technological management. This was highlighted by Sir Edwin Nixon, chairman of IBM (UK), in the *Financial Times* recently. He said:

"The country could improve its trade performance by means of better industrial management, by more appropriate education programmes, by improving work practices and a better application of technology in industry."

According to a recent report, local firms are reluctant to use information technology such as electronic mail. A recent National Economic Development Office report entitled "Strategy for construction and R and D" criticised the construction industry for its inadequate use of technical information and the inadequate funding of research and development. We should bear in mind the answer of Sir David Phillips which appears in the second volume, paragraph 31 of the report. He said:

"I . . . commend to you the over-riding importance of deciding whether or not the future of this country requires a declining investment in science, basic, strategic and applied, and science education, or whether it does not need a different approach."

To summarise the three points I have made, we fall down on an international comparison of investment in the basic sciences. We fall down on the shortage of scientists and engineers compared with some of the leading industrial states. Technological management in the United Kingdom is inadequate and this caused the chairman of IBM UK to make the cryptic remarks which appeared recently in the *Financial Times*.

International collaboration is essential for large research projects. I have discovered that as the European market is conterminous but not integrated, collaboration is fundamental both to smooth frontiers and to match the achievements of the United States which has formed a highly integrated collection of states within a customs union. It is surprising when the population figures are compared between the EC, the United States and Japan, the EEC represents the greatest industrial block in size but it has the least favourable performance on high technology. The EC, if one takes the 12 states, has a population of 320 million, the United States a population of 237 million and Japan 120 million, yet it would appear that the success of the world market in technology is in reverse order. Withdrawal from commitments without agreement would reduce Britain's triple A rating as a research partner in international projects. International collaboration in high energy particle physics is the only way of remaining in this branch of science thus the migration of physicists can be expected as Britain has signalled its departure from the leading role it has chosen in the centre of excellence at Geneva.

It is significant that, while the ABRC has agreed with Kendrew to a 25 per cent. cut in the CERN subscription from 1989, it has not prompted a similar response from any other member state, they have decided to go ahead in full with their subscription rates. The threatened reduction of interest in CERN, together with the abandonment of UNESCO and the belated support for the deep ocean drilling programme, are not likely to commend the foresight of the United Kingdom negotiators. It is incredible that with the new neutron spallation source in Oxfordshire and the synchrotron radiation source in Cheshire together with the impressive United Kingdom performance in CERN that this time has been chosen to diminish our subscriptions to CERN and specially considering the opportunities arising out of the strategic defence initiative. This technology includes the building and operation of particle accelerators and the production and control of high energy particle beams. Surely, with the

[Mr. T. H. H. Skeet]

SDI appearing on the horizon the Government should be prepared to go ahead with the full subscription rates beyond 1989.

Mr. Robert Jackson (Wantage): Does my hon. Friend agree that if particle physics figures too large in the present allocation for science the answer may be not to reduce the allocation for high energy particle physics but rather to increase the allocation for science in general?

Mr. Skeet: Yes, but when one has a centre of excellence where a great deal of work has been put in by the engineers and scientists of the united Kingdom, and where one has an advantage on the world stage, it is futile to throw it away.

The Department of Education and Science has recently been apprised by the ABRC of the serious brain drain of outstanding talent among chemists and biochemists. It is inconceivable that this occasion should be chosen to disrupt the operations of the best example of European co-operation and thus accelerate this brain drain. The miners' strike cost this country no less than £5 billion. It would require but a tiny fraction of that sum to support this and many other fruitful branches of science.

There are numerous examples of other collaborative efforts and these will include CERN. There are 13 European nations associated with CERN and it is financed in the United Kingdom through SERC. Eleven countries are associated with the European Space Agency, which is funded through the MOD, the DTI and SERC. The ISIS neutron spallation source in Chiltern, Oxfordshire involves the United Kingdom, France and Italy. The European incoherent scatter facility is situated in Norway and involves that country, Sweden, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom. The EUREKA programme involves 18 European nations and concentrates on information technology telecommunications, robotics, materials, biotechnology, marine technology and a number of other disciplines. Finally, Esprit is funded by the Commission itself.

When one considers the state of our technology in the United Kingdom one would like to think that of the 10 projects which have been set forth in the EUREKA programme we in the United Kingdom have more than three places in consortia. That is, first, in the creation of European standards for personal educational microcomputers, secondly in high performance cutting and welding lasers and thirdly in medical diagnostic kits for certain social diseases. If the United Kingdom had the ball more at its feet it would have got more out of the EUREKA programme — although I agree that the programme is largely pushed by the French.

European collaboration is significant and important but industrial collaboration with the universities' laboratories and polytechnics — the scientific infrastructure of this country — is necessary to secure the objectives of improved living standards and fuller employment. There is a trend to encourage closer collaboration between the 45 universities of the United Kingdom and industry rather than to persist with the development of research institutions which were, and will continue to be the traditional practice of the Agriculture and Food Research Council and NERC but to a lesser extent the Medical Research Council.

The argument for this policy has been portrayed by Professor Sir John Kingman, former chairman of SERC. He said:

"We believe that research activity on the whole is best carried out in universities where it can influence the teaching activities and more generally the spirit of research can communicate itself to the younger generation."

I fully agree with that. It will involve further rationalisation of research councils. Who will pay for the restructuring which is recognised as being in the interest of universities? I agree with the report that restructuring does not represent the proper use of the science budget. The money required could be used for other branches of science.

The close interface between universities and industry is best demonstrated by the development of science parks in the United Kingdom. There are now 30 and the leading example is perhaps the science park at Cambridge. Initiatives at universities with an eye to later commercial advantage are illustrated by work on the optic computer at the Heriot-Watt university at Edinburgh. The additional revenue thus secured is not sufficient, however, to make up for the loss of grant during the past five years. We also have the Prudential-backed South Bank technopark at the South Bank polytechnic, which is designed to accommodate some 100 technology companies and is due to come into operation in 1987. The Government's innovation grants have helped in that connection.

The House has heard two statements today. One concerned the future of social security and the other concerned the future of a company which might be a key industry in the United Kingdom. These will illustrate the point I am about to make. National investment in research and development is utterly insufficient. Dr. Roberts, the independent member of the ABRC, said at paragraph 32 in the second volume of the report:

"I do not believe we will improve the economic strength of this country by spending more on social security".

Having read that part of the report with some care, I thought that it was a good idea to examine the public expenditure plans for 1985-86. Expenditure on health and personal social services works out at £16·4 billion and expenditure on social security totals £40 billion. Added together, they represent 42 per cent. of total public expenditure — £134 billion — or 47 per cent. of the revised figure. Wealth-creating expenditure amounts to only £21 billion, or 16 per cent.

Research and development for 1986-87 reaches only £4·6 billion. It is a minuscule sum, and half of that will go on defence research and development. We hope to expand the economy and provide employment for future generations. To achieve that we must spend a certain amount on social security but we are certainly not spending enough on the technological industries that will provide the jobs of tomorrow and the money to pay for them.

Civil research and development is accorded a low rating in the United Kingdom because of a paucity of funds. Expenditure on almost everything continues to expand — energy, agriculture, social services and defence — but expenditure on research has been level funded. The only tribute that I can pay to my right hon. Friend the Minister is that he made a little extra money become available in the autumn statement for science. I dare say that he gave ABRC all that it asked for. It is not asking for more, but it is obvious to anybody who studies this subject that the United Kingdom requires much more than appears to be

the case. The cost of equipment has advanced ahead of the rate of inflation and commissions from Government Departments have fallen drastically.

The unfortunate repercussions have fallen on the science budget as illustrated by Sir David Phillips saying at paragraph 37 of the report that genetic engineering and protein engineering depend on the purchase of expensive materials such as enzymes and radio-isotopes. It has been reckoned that the expenses of an individual researcher used to amount to about £1,000 whereas now he requires between £7,000 and £8,000. The Government have not compensated for that increase adequately.

I strongly believe that private industry could do more. It is in industry's interests to participate, but its contribution varies from industry to industry. The Green Paper admits that no substantial part of established public funding responsibilities can be substituted by private finance. Some industries such as the pharmaceutical industry have always made a significant contribution. It is agreeable to find that the Wellcome Trust proposes to double its support for medical research in Britain from £22 million to £45 million. Other companies and enterprises may suggest what can be done, but much research is abstract and will not receive any immediate payment, so it is unlikely to be supported entirely by the private sector.

Expenditure on defence research and development is significant. Out of total research and development expenditure of £4·6 billion in 1986-87, civil research represents £2·2 billion and defence research and development £2·3 billion. The money spent on defence research and development has climbed by 22 per cent. between 1972 and 1983, but expenditure on civil research and development rose by only 2 per cent. in real terms over the same period. That is all the more extraordinary since defence activities account for only a small part of British exports — about 3 per cent. Defence research and development rarely stimulates a commercial advance. Industry's financing of research and development rose by only 0·9 per cent. in Britain between 1967 and 1982 whereas it rose by roughly 4 per cent. in the United States, 5·9 per cent. in France and the Federal Republic of Germany and by 9·8 per cent. in Japan.

Professor Sir John Kingman, who is now the Vice Chancellor of Bristol university, said:

"we ought either to shift the balance, or alternatively find a mechanism by which defence investment can have more interconnection with the civil and in particular academic research."

We have made a move in this direction in the Alvey programme, associating the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Trade and Industry and SERC. Surely more could be done in that regard. In paragraph 15 of the report, Sir David Phillips said:

"In the current round of the annual review of Government research and development . . . an attempt is made to break down the Ministry of Defence expenditure."

What is the Ministry of Defence's expenditure? Has the breakdown been done? Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will let me know and also say what part of the expenditure goes on "research". It will then be possible to calculate how much can be applied to civilian research. I suspect that well below 10 per cent. is spent on research and that therefore the size of the spin-offs is limited. I bend to my hon. Friend's further knowledge and hope that he will be able to give an answer.

I conclude with a few words about the structural position. I am bearing in mind that other hon. Members wish to take part in the debate, which must end at 7 o'clock. I recommend the merger of the Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development and the ABRC. There can be no justification for having two bodies. I appreciate the skills in ACARD, but all the services could be discharged by the ABRC, into which it could merge.

Better co-ordination between the research councils and the chief scientists of the Ministries is required. Although associated on the ABRC it has been the withdrawal of the departmental commissionings that has caused disruption to research councils and universities in recent years. If there were more co-ordination and if the left hand knew more about what the right hand was doing the research councils would not be in such difficulties. NERC, it seems, may be suffering administrative rather than scientific problems.

We are in an age of mergers and I recommend another — between the University Grants Committee and the National Advisory Body into a new higher education council which deals with polytechnics. There is a need for such a council, which could eradicate the difference between the two sectors. The polytechnics are making a big mark in their contribution to industry. I do not want polytechnics to be at a disadvantage compared with the universities which have that traditional role.

The Department of Education and Science has other responsibilities than education. It has to look after youth and, of course, science. Its performance in science matters has not been satisfactory in the last few years.

We should consider establishing a new structure which is accountable for science. That would give it the prominence that it deserves in a modern industrial state. It would signal a new approach by Government and ensure that firms were structured to withstand competitive forces.

Britain is only at the beginning of change. I do not go as far as to suggest that we should have a Ministry for science. However, I suggest that that should be considered. We are discussing a major subject — the future of science; the future of our exports and employment. All that is based on the technology discovered today and implemented by industry tomorrow. That technology will do much to guarantee jobs and a good standard of living, yet today's debate, crucial as it is, is crammed into such a short period. It must end in one and a quarter hours.

5.42 pm

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): I shall make a brief intervention because this is a short, but important, debate. I congratulate the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Mr. Skeet) on giving the House the opportunity to debate this subject. It is notable, but not surprising, that he chose this subject. The House and the country will be grateful to him.

I welcome the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) to the Front Bench. We are pleased to see him and look forward to great things from him, particularly in science matters.

Most hon. Members will agree with the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North about the importance of science. We share his disappointment, and that of one committee after another, about low expenditure on basic and applied scientific research in the United Kingdom. We are particularly weak in civil research and development. Much of the public funding of research and development is on defence. There is wide agreement that something should

[Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth]

be done about that, and I congratulate the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North on his suggestions for tackling the problems.

It is a pity that the funds bandied around in takeover bids in the City and the spare cash on the capital market are not being channelled into companies' research and development programmes.

I have a suggestion that might spotlight the problem. We should make it a statutory requirement for all companies to publish the amount that they spend on research and development and the percentage of sales and turnover that it represents. That would help hon. Members and others who are interested to analyse the amount of research and development that is taking place and to put pressure on companies to spend more on scientific developments.

The Government's expenditure pattern is low compared with that of other countries in terms of percentage of gross domestic product per head of population. It is worrying that it is only one side of the analysis. Percentage of GDP is one thing, but we must also take into account the size of GDP. Our GDP is lower than that of most of our competitors, such as Japan, Germany and America. That means that in volume terms the comparison is even worse. The comparison between the United Kingdom and our major industrial competitors, such as Japan, West Germany, and other European countries is deeply disturbing.

We are particularly worried about what the Government are spending. The autumn statement gave the new science budget allocations of £614 million for 1986-87, £628 million for 1987-88 and £647 million for 1988-89. The figures represent an increase of about £15 million in 1986-87 and a further £15 million in 1987-88 and in 1988-89.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): Far from the amount spent on science research and development reflecting the total gross domestic product, the reverse is true. If we want to keep in the forefront of nations, we should be spending a higher proportion of our GDP on research and development instead of spending only that which seems reasonable compared with expenditure by other countries.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: I agree.

The figures that I mentioned amount to a cash increase of 7·5 per cent. which, on the basis of the Treasury's lower inflation forecasts, is designed to maintain level funding in real terms over the next few years.

The increased funding amounts only to what the Advisory Body for Research Councils calculates as the minimum required. Taking account of past erosion and future costs of the research councils, the ABRC recommends total increases of £15 million, £30 million and £40 million—a total of £85 million. That would allow for a 1 per cent. per annum real growth in the science budget over the next three years. That modest and minimal claim is substantially less than that suggested by the Education, Science and Arts Committee report, "The Future of the Science Budget", which recommends a 3 per cent. increase. Those are modest sums compared with what many hon. Members would like to see.

The only future for Britain is one in which we have highly professional, high technology-based industry and commerce with a highly educated and qualified work force, in which we have high value added, in which we are beating our competitors and in which we are carrying out research across the board on the frontiers of science.

It is palpably obvious that major countries, such as America, Japan, West Germany, France and Italy, are overtaking us substantially in one sphere after another. Unless the Government give a lead with budgets, industry will not be prepared to respond with civil research and development. Therefore, the Government have an enormous responsibility to do something about the current position.

In addition, we all want to see some of the money that the Government spend on defence research and development having a spin-off in the commercial sphere. As the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North said, we need a much bigger spin-off than we get at present. Will the Government consider establishing a company, possibly under the British Technology Group, to promote civilian exploitation of defence research and development? It may be difficult, for official secrets reasons, to exploit some of the research and development in the defence sphere, but if there were a much better mechanism, under the umbrella of the British Technology Group, it might be possible for much more to be done.

Mr. Jackson *rose*——

Mr. Wrigglesworth: I have only a few minutes. I prefer to allow the hon. Gentleman to make his points during his own speech.

The Government can do a number of things, and I have mentioned some of them. I agree with the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North about merging the ABRC and the ACARD and having a council for science policy. There is a great deal to commend that and a wide spectrum of opinion would be in favour of it. We can improve the operation of the Alvey project by increasing its size and possibly making small firms contribute only 10 per cent. towards their projects in order to give them an advantage. The Government should consider the various suggestions that have been made.

At the end of the day it comes back to a matter of political will. What vision do the Government have of the future of our industry and technology? What vision do they have for Britain's future? Do they see Britain having a low-paid, low-skilled economy, or do they see it as a country in which we carry on the professional and academic excellence of the past? Over the past few years there have been precious few signs, from the amount of money that the Government have contributed to scientific research and development, that they are intent on making Britain one of the world leaders in science and technology. I hope that the Minister will reassure not only hon. Members but the scientific community outside and industry generally that the Government will move much more strongly in that direction in future.

5.53 pm

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Mr. Skeet) on being successful in the ballot—something that in 26 years I have never succeeded in doing—and on picking a topic of major importance which is much greater than one would believe from the 0·2 per cent. of the Back Benchers of the House of Commons who are present. That is particularly unfortunate.

As this is meant to be a debate, I should like to take up a point made by the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth). He referred specifically to the need to have industry and commerce record on their annual balance sheets what they spend on research and development, either as a percentage of their turnover or the actual amount. He obviously missed a question that I put down to my hon. Friend the Minister for Information Technology the other day in which I urged that that should be legally enforceable, as it is in a number of American and European states. I am afraid that I got a pretty dusty answer, so perhaps we can unite to try to ensure that that is done. After all, it is a simple matter. It would be helpful to everybody and keep industry more on its toes.

This debate is not just an academic exercise; it is about the creation of wealth—so that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services can come to the Dispatch Box and announce the giving away of the tens of billions of pounds which are necessary in social welfare today. Unless industry can create the necessary wealth, all that falls to the ground. It is imperative that the Government understand that the future of Britain's industrial and manufacturing base can be sustained, and the base itself will grow only, if pure research and industrial research and the development of that research are not just helped but are positively assisted and encouraged by the Government so as to ensure that industry places greater emphasis on it. Research needs a lead and an incentive from the Government and from each Department in individual sectors in their sponsorship in the different areas of industry.

I wish that I could tell the House that Britain has a fine record in that area, but exactly the opposite is the case. In the financial year 1984-85 the United States spent over $110 billion on research and development—$66 billion coming from the private sector and $44 billion from Government. Europe spent only $50 billion—$25 billion coming from Governments and $25 billion from industry. Germany, France and the United Kingdom made up 83 per cent. Britain's paltry contribution was about $15·8 billion —$9·1 billion coming from the private sector. But Japan spent $24 billion—$18 billion from the private sector and $6 billion from Government. When we consider expenditure per capita, the British and European position becomes much worse. America spends $535 per head, Japan $351 per head, Europe $227 per head—and it is much less in the United Kingdom.

The trend is terrifying. Britain is getting worse. If one takes 1975 as the base of 100, Europe progresses between 1975 and 1983 from 100 to 128 and the United States from 100 to 141, and Japan nearly doubles from 100 to 183. How can we possibly expect to stay in the lead and to be able to create the industrial strength that we want for industry if the contributions of Government and industry are falling so far behind? I am not a pure monetarist. That is why I am not sitting on the Treasury Bench. But this is an area outside monetarism where Governments should be giving a lead and where there is an absolute demand.

Surely we should be able to compete with what the French are doing. However, the *New Scientist* on 18 October said:

"As the French government begins to prepare for a general election . . . it remains committed to a significant increase in funding for research and development . . . announced that spending by governmentt departmens on R and D will reach a total of 42·5 billion francs. With an anticipated inflation rate of 4 per cent., this translates into a planned real growth of 4·2 per cent. — and compares with the zero growth that is being imposed on public spending . . . the government is proposing that tax credits on the new research and development efforts of industrial companies be raised from 25 to 50 per cent."

Why can we not emulate that? In real terms, research and development in Britain is on a downward trend. The Government must get their priorities right. It is little use the Exchequer providing hundreds of millions of pounds to train and retrain the unemployed if industry is contracting and therefore unable to provide the jobs. Surely the need for industrial expansion is accepted by everyone, including the Government.

The Government should have industrial expansion as one of their major objectives in dealing with unemployment. That is where the new jobs can be provided. They will be provided not by attempting to regenerate old and dying industries, but by the new industries, the new technologies, the new developments and the new sciences—those areas in which, I am sorry to say, we are too often overtaken by Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and America. It will only be through new technology and discovery, with proper development, that jobs will be created.

The Government must not turn away from supporting basic research which, on the whole, they support quite well. We must ensure that we put our knowledge to use in industry more quickly than other countries that make use of our technology and expertise through our brain drain. We must increase our efforts in engineering research. The link between fundamental scientific research and its application in engineering and marketing is essential. Our industrial development has so often been behind our inventions.

There is a real need for the Department of Education and Science to co-operate with the Department of Trade and Industry to ensure that our tax structure provides incentives for industrial development. I do not necessarily mean providing money from the taxpayer, but allowing industry to use its money for such development through a tax policy designed to encourage such use.

In September, I was elected chairman of the science and technology committee of the North Atlantic Assembly—a group of 16 nations working in concert on science and technology. During its last meeting, resolutions were passed to attempt to deal with the problems of technological transfer and the duplication of expenditure on science and technology within the Alliance. The total amount spent within the Alliance is about $200 billion per annum. A conservative estimate is that between 18 and 30 per cent. of that expenditure is duplicated. Why can we not get together to try to cut the amount of duplication? I accept that duplication cannot be eradicated altogether because there will be competition and areas where it is impossible to co-operate. However, if we could cut duplication by just 25 per cent., the minimum we would obtain for additional expenditure on research and development would be $16 billion. Let us think what that would mean in real terms. Let us think what that would mean in advancement in research and development within industry.

Has the Minister considered the resolutions passed by the Alliance? They were:

[Sir Peter Emery]

"to consider the added expense, in terms of effort and resources, of the disagreement on technology transfer policies, and to assess the savings and benefits of reaching a compromise on these policies".

Have we done that? If not, why not? They continued:

"to consult with the United States in a reappraisal of the Military Critical Technologies List in order to decrease restrictions on technologies which are already available outside the United States"—

but which, of course, are actually still restricted by the United States, which is absolute nonsense—

"to consider the creation, in each Alliance nation, of a Technology Transfer Bureau to assume overall responsibility for dealing with high-technology exports, and to report their views to the Assembly."

The Alliance wants to achieve greater co-operation between its member nations.

Those are ordinary, sensible and businesslike recommendations. Perhaps they are too ordinary and too businesslike, but they should be taken up by the Government. I hope that the Minister will assure me that that will happen.

Today saw the launching of Industry Year 1986. Five Ministers of the Crown, together with a number of Members of Parliament — some of whom are in the Chamber — spoke about the need for the creation of growth. That was an excellent and necessary thing to do. However, in pushing forward the need for Industry Year, no policy is more important than trying to move our young people towards the realisation that within industry science, technology and research are just as important as they are in universities and that they exist for the creation of wealth for the whole nation. That is the note on which I began my speech, and that is the only way that the need for research and development can be sold to the nation.

6.7 pm

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): I congratulate the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Mr. Skeet) on his choice of subject for the debate. It is a matter of extreme importance to the nation. I agree not only with the hon. Gentleman but with the hon. Members for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) and for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth). This is a matter on which we are all united.

I have only one small quarrel with the terms of the motion which is where it states:

"a mechanism must be found for harnessing for civil use the fruits of defence research."

I would go further than that and suggest that we should spend more on civil research and allow some of that to spin off to defence. The proportion of our expenditure on research and development that is devoted to defence is far too high. Although the Secretary of State for Education and Science says that Britain compares reasonably favourably with other countries in research and development, he forgets to mention that a high proportion of that expenditure is devoted to defence.

I especially agree with the part of the motion that states:

"the employment and standard of living of tomorrow depends upon the research undertaken by the community today."

I was in Italy earlier this year — in, of all places, Palermo — and all the lamp standards carried a notice stating:

"In affare, non vincerete le battiglie di domani con la technologia di ieri."

That means

"In business matters we do not win the battles of tomorrow with the technology of yesterday."

That is exactly what the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North said.

Many hon. Members have visited the Secretary of State for Education and Science and have received the same comment, that we are now a poor nation and cannot therefore be expected to spend so much on research and development, but it is the other way round—the poorer we become, the more we must spend to return to our past position. We should not be cheese-paring, because by spending money on scientific research we are planting the seedcorn for the future. That is important, and the Secretary of State's attitude is short-sighted.

It is not a question of undertaking research only where scientific development can be applied. The hon. Gentleman was right in saying that we should consider not only applied science but basic science. We were strong on basic science, which involves research and development which at the time does not seem to have an application. It is also excellent to undertake research and development for application, but it is necessary to do scientific research, even if one does not see the fruits of it immediately. For that reason, we must be involved in particle physics. The Germans are good at it, and we should play a bigger part in CERN. We have fallen behind the United States of America, the USSR, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and France, and we may even be behind South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. I hope not.

Last week the *London Standard* published a large paragraph on "Medical research sacrificed". The vice chancellor of London university, Lord Flowers, talking about cuts in General Medical Council expenditure, said:

"if spending cuts continue Britain will no longer be able to maintain acceptable standards of teaching for its doctors . . . Research is being sacrificed in order to protect patient care and teaching."

By that he means that patient care and teaching cost so much that the Government do not believe that they can afford to spend any more on research and development. In other words, the necessity to treat patients is being made the enemy of more research. We should not accept that.

That is having a disastrous effect on our young academics and our universities. I have an interest, as I have a son who is a science university lecturer. He cannot obtain a permanent post, and he will undoubtedly go abroad. He could be useful to the United States, European countries and other parts of the world. That step will be emulated by many young men and women whom we cannot afford to lose. I plead with the Government to take today's debate seriously. It has not been attended by a large number of hon. Members, but there are present those who over the years have shown an interest in the matter. Again I commend the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North for introducing the subject and asking the Government to take our comments seriously.

6.14 pm

Mr. Ian Lloyd (Havant): All hon. Members are grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Mr. Skeet) for introducing the debate, which is of the greatest significance. As the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Dr. Miller) said, these debates bring to the Chamber the same small, dedicated, interested and enthusiastic group of hon. Members, among whom there is a great deal of agreement.

For some time my hon. Friend and I have been propagating the idea that we need an office of technology

assessment. I shall not deal with that now, but when I see that the matter again falls to us to consider, I wonder whether we need an office of indifference assessment. That would be more to the point. Scientists have a right to complain. They may complain that we do not understand, but they can remedy that, as we can. However, they have a legitimate complaint if they feel that we do not care, which is something that they cannot and should not attempt to forgive. We are a small group, and we must do our best.

My hon. Friend and I disagree about having a Minister for Science, but when the subject is discussed at national level or in the House, we experience the lack of a Minister to fight this corner with energy and determination, which it needs. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will fulfill that role and that he will rise rapidly to the Cabinet, where alone this fight can be carried out. That is where it must be fought and won.

I want to discuss the interesting contrast between two or three reports on the subject which have been published recently. The report of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils on science and public expenditure 1985 is of great significance. It is a staggering document, as most hon. Members present will appreciate. There is no time to go into it in detail, but I wish to draw attention to some phrases in it. The report states that the council is

"unable to fund ⅓ of the Alpha quality research proposals from higher education",

that the

"council cannot afford the instrumentation necessary for this kind of research",

and that it

"cannot meet the agreed share of the cost of collaborative research with industry in information technology."

Lord Stockton suddenly latched on to the importance of information technology in his fascinating speech in the other place recently, and we welcomed that.

Molecular biology is a subject of immense significance today. The report states that it

"can only be given ½ the funds it needs to buy top priority state of the art equipment."

That shows the tremendous increase in the real cost of science.

Natural Environment Research Council projects are

"underfunded to the point of ineffectiveness."

The research councils have lost 2,000 staff since 1981-82. The Science and Engineering Research Council has lost 70 posts, and redeployed 250. "Big" science has fallen from taking up 70 per cent. to 40 per cent. of the budget, but there is no time to enter into that controversy. The Medical Research Council has lost 228 posts. The NERC has lost 450 posts to date. It will lose 300 in 1985-86, and 600 between 1986 and 1990, and so it goes on.

We hear such phrases as

"The well-found laboratory no longer exists",

and

"It is difficult for the most outstanding research scientists to secure research appointments."

Another phrase, used by the hon. Member for East Kilbride, refers to

"The exodus of outstanding young scientists from the United Kingdom."

This is dangerous and is something which no Government, of whatever party, dare neglect. We neglect it at our peril. Another phrase is:

"Parliament, the Government and the country are complacent."

That criticism is not without considerable substance. If it is true, we have cause to look to our laurels, in this place, in the Government and in the country.

The conclusions of the report are of the utmost importance. It says:

"Year by year reduction may appear to be modest, but the cumulative effect may be that by 1990 the UK's science base could be 10 per cent. smaller than in 1980."

It refers to a steady attrition that has

"squeezed out investment in many new and growing areas of science, crucial to developing the industries of tomorrow."

I think that this is now virtually common ground between every hon. Member here. I await with great interest to hear what the Government say.

In reply to the general case, we often hear that we are a poor country and that we do not have the funds, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has said. Where do funds come from? The House gives us an unrivalled perspective from which to comment on that interesting question. We have just heard that some £5,000 million was wasted on the miners' strike. Perhaps that was unavoidable or a distribution or wasting of resources that could not have been diverted into expenditure on science. Be that as it may, we should look at some of the other points, such as the great industrial subsidy market where, as we know, we seldom look at figures with fewer than eight noughts on the end. We pass them with an aplomb that would do credit to someone who has just won the pools. We see projects such as Nimrod, with nine noughts on the end, or the De Lorean sportscar, with eight noughts on the end. We see vast sums lost in the naval dockyards year after year.

Perhaps most interesting and significant of the lot, because it is in the context of the comment made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North on the balance between expenditure on the welfare state and expenditure on science and the seedcorn is the extraordinarily interesting document just issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General which disclosed that, as a result of the strike in Newcastle, some £170 million has just disappeared. No one knows where it has gone. The Comptroller and Auditor General does not know, although he can guess. However, he knows the scale of the sum.

We know that the Science and Engineering Council is asking for about £40 million to £50 million just to stabilise the situation. That is a large sum in scientific terms, but by comparison with some of the sums with the eight or nine noughts at the end, which we often pass on the Estimates on the nod, or sometimes discuss, it is, to use an old word, peanuts.

Mr. Jackson: In the catalogue of alternatives, will my hon. Friend consider the following proposition from the latest Government annual general review:

"the UK Government comes bottom or next to bottom of the R and D league of the six major European Community nations in all areas except Defence, where it is top."?

Mr. Lloyd: That is an interesting and important point. We realise that there is an imbalance between research and development on defence and that in the civil sector, and the Government have been making valiant and interesting efforts to move the results of research, wherever possible and wherever security is not involved, out of defence and into the civil sector, more of which must be done.

However, that does not address or solve the problem of the basic allocation of resources as a percentage of research and development. I share the view that has been expressed twice already, that this is where our real wealth

[Mr. Lloyd]

will once again be created—if we restore the standards, quality and effectiveness of our basic science. An interesting point has been made, not only by Sir John Kingman but during the debate in the other place on the history of the ESPRIT programme and new technology. It was made by my noble Friend Lord Stockton, who said that the distinction between basic science and applied science was difficult to draw. Drawing artificial distinctions and saying that we will do this here and not that there can lead to great difficulties and destroy the standards that we are trying to achieve.

I draw attention to a point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North about Japan. We are constantly being asked to look at the Japanese example to see what we can learn from Japan. I looked at a recent United Nations report on this, and the trends are staggering. I can give figures only in billion yens, because those figures are given in the report, but in the years 1965, 1970, 1975 and 1979, the Japanese GNP, which is after all what we are trying to emulate, is where the wealth is coming from. One reads, as I did this morning, that Japan has one of the largest net overseas investments of any country, not excluding the United States.

If that is the case, how is it done? Expenditure on research and development for the same years, starting in 1965 and coming up to 1979, was 486 billion yen, 1,300 billion yen, 2,900 billion yen, 4,608 billion yen and finally, planned for the present, 2·5 to 3 per cent. of GNP. That is the background, that is the challenge that we are facing, and we have no real alternative but to look seriously again at the scale and direction of national resources that we are deploying. It is only by that redeployment that we shall achieve the swing round that is the common objective of all parties and of all hon. Members. Only by achieving that shall we create a base on which the wealth of Britain towards the end of this century and the beginning of the 21st century will be acceptable, defensible and worth achieving.

6.27 pm

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): I shall add to what the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Mr. Skeet) said, but say something about the use of technology for disabled people. Some 21 years ago, I had my first Adjournment debate on this subject, and the man whom I mentioned on that occasion was the oldest surviving respiratory polio victim in the world. He is still living but he is completely paralysed, unable to breathe, speaks by throat breathing but from his bed exports hospital beds, by the application of technology.

I should have been happier if the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North had said something about the quality of life and independence for the disabled by the careful application of technology. We talk about NASA and the space age, but last July I saw a wheelchair made of carbon fibre which an old lady could pick up, easily put on a bus or in the boot of a car and help her aged husband to go all around the place. She gave him mobility and access, both of which were the product of advanced work in space.

We have an example in the House of a fallout from technology, used by my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley), who has applied the techniques of Palantype typing, which may be in use in the Chamber today, to turn the symbols into words that are readable on a visual display unit. This means that my right hon. Friend can follow the proceedings in this House. This technology was evolved at Southampton university. It involves a substantial amount of word and language use and micro-circuitry of the highest order. That kind of technology will eventually be of value to everybody in our society.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North for moving this motion. I believe, however, that a committee ought to be formed to investigate the application of technology to the disabled. By raising the quality of life of the disabled and the frail elderly, it is possible that we should save money. I have linked this subject on many occasions with various motions. This is technically possible, economically sound and morally right.

6.30 pm

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): Once again a debate on science policy has run out of time before all hon. Members have had an opportunity to speak. I am particularly sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), who has followed science policy for many years and who failed to catch your eye last time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has been unble to speak in this debate. It is a clear indication that we shall need to hold another debate on science policy in six months or so.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Mr. Skeet), as have other hon. Members, upon his selection of this topic. He has followed with enterprise and effectiveness his role as chairman of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, an admirable body which he is revivifying. It has an important part to play in securing for science and technology the attention of the House and the country, which science so badly needs.

I welcome to the Treasury Bench the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden). I am sure that there is plenty in this subject to provide ample scope for his considerable talents, particularly his diplomatic talents — much needed in a topic of burning concern to science at the present time.

In the six months since our last debate there has been little progress on science policy. The Science and Engineering Research Council's corporate plan is to be published tomorrow. It will highlight the areas of strategic research in science and engineering that are essential to the future industrial development of this country. These opportunities are being seized by other countries—the United States and Japan and also Germany and France. However, this country is still neglecting them.

The grant for the first year that was sought by the Advisory Board for the Research Councils—a minimal increase of £15 million in the science vote—was agreed by the Government. For that small mercy we give thanks. One leg of the dual support system has been jacked up by one peg, but the other leg has been jacked down several pegs by continuing cuts in the funding of higher education. There has been a 2 per cent. a year reduction in the funding of universities. That is incomprehensible in the face of the need and the opportunity to build up skilled manpower and research. No doubt in the future, as in the past, the cuts will fall disproportionately upon research activity.

On the relative decline of support for British science —therefore, of British science itself—there have been two new important sources of information since June. The ABRC approached 40 leading research groups—those

most likely to attract such funds as are available. Nineteen of those groups had been selected by the University Grants Committee as potential recipients for the additional equipment funds. Yet in this privileged group the survey found grave concern about increasing losses overseas not only of their most talented students and post-doctoral research workers but of their outstanding senior scientists. The litany of complaints that they listed is familiar to all those who visit research laboratories and universities: that there are more posts overseas and better pay, prospects and facilities, and that there is aggressive recruiting by United States' universities and industry and greater receptiveness by American industry of new ideas. That is contrasted with the frustration of not getting research grants and the resistance to new ideas that is found in Government and industry in this country. The provision of research equipment, central facilities, like the nuclear structure facility, and well-funded, well-staffed research groups, like molecular biology at Cambridge, demonstrate that proper support for science works in this country, and that we should do more.

In June the Secretary of State doubted the 30 per cent. increase, in real terms, in Federal Government support for basic research in science and engineering in universities and colleges in the United States. He agreed that figure with me in correspondence, but he pointed out that it had followed a long period of decline. What has happened in Britain? There has been evidence of a brain drain, and that evidence helped with the first £15 million. At Easter there will be the results of a more thorough survey by the Royal Society into the brain drain. Its report will be available in ample time for the Secretary of State for Education and Science to raise his sights at the next public expenditure round.

There is no need to wait to see evidence of the decline. There has been a further instalment of Irvine and Martins' analysis of publications and citations, bringing the story up to 1982. Of particular interest is the record in particular sciences. I refer to one technology in which I am particularly interested. Heading the areas of decline in applied science is metallurgy, with a 34 per cent. decrease in the share of publications from the United Kingdom between 1977 and 1982. With cause and effect flowing in both directions, this is mirrored in the British Steel Corporation's cut in research and development, in real terms, of 45 per cent. since the Government took office in 1979, with the surrender of all basic research and of recruitment of new blood into the BSC laboratories. That has inevitably resulted in the loss of competitiveness of the higher grade steels that are produced by that industry.

In the light of that kind of evidence, which is accumulating, we should reappraise the targets for the science budget. Level funding makes no provision for sophistication. Sophistication is difficult to measure, but the 2 per cent. per annum put forward by the ABRC is at least a step. However, a constant share of a rising gross domestic product, growing in the long term at 3 per cent. per annum, is the least that the present Government might hope to be able to maintain. The need to catch up in science and technology however, is a factor that we must introduce into the argument. From its peak in 1972, research council expenditure, in real terms, in this country has fallen by 10 per cent., while the GDP has risen by 25 per cent. Therefore, both to match the United States' increase since 1981 and to achieve past shares of GDP in the United Kingdom, a 30 to 40 per cent. increase in research council expenditure on basic and strategic research and development seems to me to be the kind of target for which the scientific community should start to lobby.

That recovery should be followed by more modest growth, but with a big step up in the minimum number of years in which it can be achieved. The United States achieved the 30 per cent. increase in four years. We should begin to plan the phasing of the increase that can be efficiently absorbed by this country without recreating all the demographic bulges that followed the expansion of the universities in the 1960s and 1970s but that can be managed within the more modest and limited increase to which we are referring for the research councils.

The research councils and the ABRC have to lobby within the impact that can be achieved on this Government. But they also have to contribute to shaping public opinion and expectations. We are not talking about pay increases for scientists and technologists. We are talking about the science and the technology that are needed to put Britain into a competitive position among the industrial nations. There is an acute pay problem in the universities and in education generally, but that is a separate issue with which we are not dealing in this debate.

There is also mis-spending and misallocation of money and, more important, of scarce scientific manpower, of which the most horrific example is the strategic defence initiative. Star wars simply will not work technologically. The computing side, which holds it all together, is best documented, and it shows that, however fast the optical computers may be, the software problems remain and they are insoluble.

Professor David Parnas of the University of Victoria, who resigned from the SDI advisory committees, is a recognised world expert who continues to be active in naval research in the United States. He has described the difficulties clearly involved in writing and debugging a vast software system that can never be tested in operation. It is as if one were suddenly to switch on for the first time all the computers of all the airlines in the world without having given them a trial run, and expect them to work. SDI poses a comparable problem.

There has been widespread protest among computer scientists, yet the Government have ignored and overridden them. Artificial intelligence, automatic programming and other software developments pleaded in aid in the SDI will not ease the problem. To divert this vast effort into a field that cannot work is a poor way of developing techniques that are useful in systems that can work.

A much more difficult field is CERN, where the particle physicists and machines at Geneva and elsewhere work so brilliantly. It would be quite wrong to interpret the intention of the Kendrew report as cutting off Britian's interest in particle physics. However, there is a general feeling among scientists that, even with budget increases, particle physics would be getting too large a share.

There are also clear long-term problems in relation to decision making in particle physics research, on the machines, the accelerators and individual experiments. As a result, particle physicists may expect to see through only two experiments in a working lifetime.

The Kendrew report set out a negotiating position, and it is up to Ministers, particularly the hon. Member for

[Dr. Jeremy Bray]

Buckingham, to carry out the negotiations. In doing so, I hope that he will keep in close touch with working physicists.

I urge two particular directions that should be explored. The first is wider international collaboration. In the post-Geneva atmosphere, there ought to be some scope for the redrawing of national programmes and time scales between Europe, the United States and the Soviet Union. The super-powers will retain their own activities as insurance against any unexpected discoveries of fundamental military or economic importance. But they will also collaborate, and they have an interest in involving Europe in that collaboration.

The other direction in which I encourage the Minister to seek the advice of scientists is the unbundling of the vast range of experimental technique that goes into the particle accelerators and the experiments that use them. Ministers should encourage the particle physicists to seek allies in other sciences. The techniques in instrumentation, computing, pattern recognition, materials, and so on, are potentially applicable not only in industry — although that is important — but in other sciences. It will cost more than a dedicated technique, but a shared technique will cost less to any one science.

I am talking not about spin-off, but about synergy from considering with other scientists the fundamental problems of experiments and the best way of tackling them. This is a long-term development and aid, but particle physics needs to take account of horizons beyond 1990. If the Minister can hold out a perspective beyond then in the further years up to the end of the century, he may find it somewhat easier to negotiate the transition with other countries and with CERN.

The rationalisation of United Kingdom space interests is welcome, but it could become a sink for low-grade imitative technology if scientific research is not given a sufficient role within it. The continuing attrition of agricultural research is utterly deplorable in the face of the problems that we see worldwide, and the much greater problems that will arise at the end of this century and into the next when the population of the world doubles. That is the time scale in which we shall need the results of the plant genetic engineering that is now becoming possible.

The machinery of government remains as undeveloped now as it was in June, but we look forward to hearing from the Minister what use he is making of it.

6.45 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. George Walden): My hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Mr. Skeet) has done us all a service by proposing the motion. The need to maintain the debate on a high level is obviously self-evident, and my hon. Friend did us another service by the serious and thoughtful quality of his contribution. I am personally grateful to my hon. Friend for giving me, as a relative newcomer to this subject, the chance to listen to the seasoned — sometimes highly seasoned — advice of experienced Members on all sides of the House. The debate also takes place against the background of the recent Select Committee report, about which I shall say more later.

The motion suggests, quite rightly, that without a sound research and development capability our economy, and all that depends on it, will suffer considerably. Some hon. Members — if I caught their drift — seemed to imply that the Government were blind to all this. Through the UGC and the research councils, the Department provides more than £1 billion every year for research, but no one is complacent about the needs of science — certainly not the Government.

It was because of this recognition of the importance of the science base to future economic prosperity and their concern about evidence of a new brain drain of British scientists that the Government injected an additional £15 million into next year's science budget, representing a 2·5 per cent. cash increase. The addition is not for one year only. It will be carried forward in the baseline. Similarly, we have increased from £7 million to £10 million the amount available to the UGC next year and in 1987-88 for its selective equipment scheme, which aims to equip the best university research groups in the country to state of the art standards. The £10 million scheme will be carried forward into 1988-89.

The general equipment grant for the universities for the 1986-87 academic year will be £95 million, representing a cash increase of 5·2 per cent. over the current academic year. Additionally, the Computer Board for the Universities is to receive an increase of £1 million in 1986-87 and £2 million in each of the following years to enhance the joint academic computing network. We have today announced our decisions on the allocation of the additional £15 million for the science budget, taking account of recommendations put forward by the Advisory Board for the Research Councils. Copies of the board's advice have been placed in the Library.

In its advice the board says that it recognises that the additional sums will make a valuable contribution to sustaining the science base. The House will note that the addition of £15 million to the science budget in 1986-87 corresponds exactly to the bid for that year which the board puts forward in its advice "Science and Public Expenditure", which was published in June. The board recommends further additions in subsequent years. Clearly it will be important to consider these carefully in next year's public expenditure survey in the light of further information which the board has promised about costs of research, international comparisons and the health of Britain's science base — and, I may add, in the light of some of the concerns voiced in today's debate.

Mr. Skeet: We heard all about this in the autumn statement, and I am grateful for that. We have heard today that we are well behind almost every other nation in civil research and development. The Government must put a strong foot forward and do something about this. Are they prepared to do so?

Mr. Walden: I was about to discuss the larger issues in the short time that is available, but I am grateful to my hon. Friend for reminding me of them.

The Government have no illusions. We recognise that the scientists regard themselves as seriously constrained within existing financial provision. The problem, in a sense, is simple. Of its nature, science grows — new fields open up and new perspectives beckon. The costs of undertaking scientific research grow, notably because advances in technology — themselves usually based on advances in fundamental knowledge — lead to increasingly sophisticated and expensive scientific

equipment and materials. The growth of science has been described as "exponential" in the strict sense of the term. The growth of resources, I do not have to remind hon. Members, is not, but the Government recognise the pressures on the budgets of the research councils and the universities.

At the same time, let us not over-dramatise these pressures. The Government's provision for the 1986-87 scientific budget represents an increase in simple cash terms of more than 60 per cent. — £275 million — compared with the science budget in 1979-80. Measured against average inflation in the economy at large, this cash increase translates into a real terms increase of 8·5 per cent. — a far from ignoble record considering the competing demands in this period on the public purse.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will extra funds be provided in coming years for the new blood scheme?

Mr. Walden: I shall cover that point in my further remarks.

No Government could afford to go on year after year underwriting a continuing real increase in the resources devoted to science. Indeed, the growth in the science budget began to level off in mid 1970s.

Mr. Jackson *rose*——

Mr. Walden: I am sorry, but I have very little time in which to discuss many points.

If I have any criticism of the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North it is that it seems to suggest that we should maintain support for all existing commitments—domestic and international—and support all new areas, or perhaps I have interpreted him exponentially. I wonder whether that is really possible. All developed countries—not just the United Kingdom—are having to face the problem of the inexorably growing costs of maintaining their science and technology base. In the United Kingdom we have evidence from the ABRC and from the Education, Science and Arts Committee of this House which suggests that overall our research councils' costs are growing at 3 per cent. per annum above the rate of inflation. If we were to cover those costs and the costs of meeting all new scientific opportunities, it would imply that science took a progressively larger share of our national wealth. That could scarcely be affordable in the long term. The only serious alternative must be selectivity —identifying fields and groups of researchers that hold out particular promise and concentrating resources on them.

We know from experience that, in the past, there have been serious weaknesses in terms of organisation, management and attitudes, which are only beginning to be properly tackled under this Government. I shall give the House an example of managerial weakness. It may surprise the House to know that we still have no up-to-date information about the scale and the distribution among the various areas of research activity funded through the UGC in the universities. We have no clear picture of how much is going on already and where. The overall estimate of some £600 million, which appears in the Cabinet Office's annual review of research and development, is based on a 15-year-old survey. The Department has funded a research project to provide up-to-date figures, the findings of which should be available early next year.

It seems equally remarkable that the UGC's allocation of resources to universities for research has traditionally taken no account of the strengths and weaknesses of different institutions or of the need for greater concentration of resources as science has become more capital intensive.

In all those areas, new attitudes are now emerging. The University Grants Committee is now moving towards a more selective deployment of general research funds. The research councils are producing five-year corporate plans involving the reshaping of programmes to reflect current as opposed to historical—priorities. I am glad to note that the Science and Engineering Research Council's first corporate plan is to be published tomorrow. Much more emphasis is being put on directed or centrally co-ordinated programmes in areas identified as being of particular strategic importance. The Economic and Social Reasearch Council has recently taken action to try to improve the appalling PhD completion rates of some of the students supported on ESRC grants. Generally, the research councils are becoming more priority-conscious and rigorous in their management.

I do not pretend that the changes that some of the new attitudes involve can be effected painlessly without some sacrifices in interesting areas of research or hardship for individuals, whether scientists or laboratory cleaners, but indiscriminate scattering of resources would be worse in the long run—worse for science, worse for employment and worse for the country as a whole.

I should like to respond to the remarks made on both sides of the House about CERN. I note the constructive attitude of the hon. Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray).

The Kendrew report of United Kingdom participation in high energy particle physics, which has been mentioned by several hon. Members, is a prime example of the inescapability of priorities. The review, which was jointly funded by the ABRC and the SERC, was established in early 1984 and published its report in June this year. The report made a number of recommendations, the main one being that United Kingdom expenditure on particle physics should be reduced by 25 per cent. by 1991 and that the funds thereby released should be reallocated to other areas of basic science.

That recommendation was not made because the review group considered that United Kingdom particle physics was in any way deficient; on the contrary, as hon. Members have said, it reported that the United Kingdom was making a significant contribution to what is an exciting field of research. The recommendation was not made because CERN had disappointed our expectations — in fact it is a brilliant example of what can be achieved by European collaboration in science.

What led the group to its conclusion was its judgment of the correct priority to be given to particle physics relative to other areas of science. I point out to my hon. friend the Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson) that in the group's view 10 per cent. of the science budget was too great a proportion for any one area, no matter how excellent.

I am sure that hon. Members agree that it would not be right to make a hasty judgment. For this reason, one of the first visits that I made after assuming my present appointment was to CERN, to see the laboratory for myself. I add that no one who has had the opportunity to visit CERN could fail to be impressed with the extraordinary work being done there or the capabilities and the enthusiasm of the scientists doing it.

[Mr. Walden]

The very success of CERN, however, poses a dilemma. It shows that in this area of fundamental science Europe can lead the world, but it also shows that given the resources we could do the same in other areas. CERN is a challenge, as well as a success. It challenges us to repeat the performance in other areas. CERN is a model of what can be achieved, but only if we are willing to adapt ourselves to the needs and pressures of the time.

Perhaps some figures will illustrate the dilemma. In 1984-85, not only was the CERN subscription 6·5 per cent of the total science budget, and over 12 per cent. of the SERC expenditure, but it represented more than 60 per cent. of the international subscriptions paid by the SERC. However, other, less expensive, areas of international collaboration, involving the sharing of expensive facilities, serve a larger scientific community and a wider range of scientific research. That is the view of Sir John Kendrew and his team. It is no use cultivating the illusion that Sir John Kendrew is a Treasury Minister; he is a Nobel laureate and the Government value his report and his advice.

The Government consider that the possibility of achieving significant savings from particle physics, and hence from CERN, needs to be examined seriously. Surely any organisation of the size and complexity of CERN, which has been in existence for over a quarter of a century, could benefit from a major review. I am therefore undertaking a round of bilateral consultations with Ministers of science in CERN member states, to explore with them their reactions to our idea of a joint independent review of the organisation. I stress that the Government remain firmly attached—this matter has arisen during the debate—to European collaboration in science, as has been shown by our recent actions.

Mr. Skeet: Will my hon. Friend confirm that he will move only by consent, and not unilaterally, on CERN?

Mr. Walden: Our aim is to engage in consultations to achieve a joint independent review. I believe that that is a reasonable objective.

I should like to have said more about defence versus civilian research. I will simply note that the Government are keeping a close and critical eye on all departmental research programmes and on the balance of such programmes.

I am sorry that it will not be possible to respond to all the points made in the debate, particularly those made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North, who initiated the debate. I should mention that we still await the advice of the ABRC on international comparisons, and we shall study them closely when they come. The restructuring costs of the councils, which are a heavy burden, have to some extent been alleviated by the new money that my right hon. Friend has found for them.

On the question of the——

It being Seven o'clock, the proceedings lapsed, pursuant to Standing Order No. 6 (Arrangement of public business).

Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill *(By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.

7 pm

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Banff and Buchan): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I suggest that the motion to refer the Bill to a Joint Committee of both Houses should be debated with the motion for Second Reading.

Mr. McQuarrie: I place on record at the outset the fact that this is the first opportunity that I or any hon. Member has had to discuss the Bill. It has been said by the Scottish National party in my constituency that the Bill could have been discussed or promoted earlier. To set the record straight, I should make it clear that it has not been possible to discuss the Bill in the House until this evening. I accept that the SNP in my constituency and its prospective parliamentary candidate have shown an ignorance of parliamentary procedure in suggesting otherwise.

If the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes)—later supported by the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Wilson)—had not tabled a blocking motion on 10 July this year, the order would have been passed a long time ago. The hon. Member for Dundee, East, who is not in his place, despite his opposition to the Bill, has told his party in my constituency that he supported the trustees' proposals, but his action on 29 October clearly proved that his support was certainly not for this scheme or for the Peterhead harbour trustees. It is an example of the double standards to which we have become accustomed from the SNP in Scotland. It says one thing in my constituency and the opposite in other places. I do not blame the hon. Member for Dundee, East if he wishes to support the harbour board in his constituency, but he should not mislead my constituents who wish to see the scheme approved and welcome the progress that the Peterhead harbour board has made.

This is a Bill to confirm a provisional order made by the Secretary of State under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936, after a local inquiry by commissioners, in pursuance of the Act. The order is promoted by the harbour trustees of Peterhead who are charged by statute with managing the fishing harbours at Peterhead in my constituency.

The inquiry into the provisions of the draft order was held in Peterhead from 1 to 15 May 1985 on 11 sitting days, before commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State under section 3 of the 1936 Act. The commissioners were Lord Hughes, as chairman, the Earl of Balfour, Lady Sempill and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown). The commissioners heard full and lengthy arguments for and against the order and found unanimously in favour of the scheme. The procedure at the inquiry was regular, according to law and parliamentary procedure and practice. The order, as modified in accordance with the the commissioners' recommendations, forms the schedule to the Bill.

The object of the order is to authorise harbour works which will calm the water in the existing harbours and provide additional berthing spaces for the fishing vessels.

The fishing harbours at Peterhead have become the pre-eminent port in Europe for landings of white fish. I should like to illustrate the increase in trade. The number of boxes landed at Peterhead increased from 300,000 in 1970 to 2,109,000 in the year up to March 1985. In addition, Peterhead has become an important port for the export of grain and other bulk cargoes and serves its own hinterland of grain producers in the north-east of Scotland.

Unfortunately, though acceptably, the increase in trade at Peterhead harbour has led to severe congestion in the fishing vessels' area in the harbour. At weekends particularly, vessels frequently have to berth six or seven deep from the quay wall, which makes the servicing of vessels difficult and inefficient and causes a safety hazard. The harbours are too often crowded and many vessels that use Peterhead as their home port have to be turned away.

Another problem is that steel-hulled boats have to berth alongside wooden-hulled boats, which causes considerable damage to the fishing vessels. The problem is even greater because of the excessive wave motion in the existing harbour which provides inadequate shelter for fishing vessels. The trustees have had to take that fact into consideration in putting forward their proposals.

Another important factor is that the Peterhead harbour trustees do not conduct any oil-related business in the port. That has been made clear in order to allay the fears of companies and other harbour authorities which are involved in that industry and feel that there is a threat to their business. It must be said that the trustees at Peterhead also have no intention of engaging in that business when the development has been completed.

The additional berthing space is required primarily for fishing vessels and general cargo boats. The oil supply boats are served either in the adjacent Bay of Refuge, which is not under the management of the Peterhead harbour trustees, or at the harbour in Aberdeen where the oil-berthing capacity is far greater and the facilities more suitable. Therefore, it cannot be said that the scheme proposed by the Peterhead harbour trustees will result in a loss of business for Aberdeen where the oil work is being carried out.

The draft order, together with the plans and sections of the proposals, were deposited at the Scottish Office and elsewhere, pursuant to the 1936 Act, in March 1984. Ten petitions were lodged against the draft order, but three were withdrawn before the public inquiry. The remaining seven can be grouped according to the nature of their objections.

The first group could be the Peterhead bay authority, which is responsible for the management of the adjacent harbour—the Peterhead Bay of Refuge—and the north of Scotland hydro-electric board, which have both complained that the proposed works would have a detrimental effect on the safe manoeuvring of tankers in the Bay of Refuge. The commissioners, in submitting their report to the Secretary of State for Scotland, said:

"We consider that the proposed harbour extension would bring considerable benefit to the operation of the existing fishing harbour and would not prejudice the operation of the Peterhead bay harbour, and in particular the manoeuvring of tankers in the bay, especially if there is a reversion to the size of tanker which, with one exception, was used prior to the end of the coal strike."

The commissioners add, in relation to the report from the Department of Transport and the statement to the inquiry by Captain Fellingham:

"In any event, we heard a considerable amount of technical evidence addressed by both the promoters and the objectors. We were much more impressed by the evidence of the promoters and we had no hesitation in accepting it."

The second group of objectors comprised the Aberdeen harbour board, the Aberdeen Stevedoring Company, the Dundee port authority and the Forth ports authority, which appeared jointly before the inquiry to complain that the works were unnecessary and would remove trade from their ports. The commissioners said:

"We are further of the view that the ports of Aberdeen, Dundee and the Forth ports harbour authority as to what is proposed at Peterhead has limited foundation, but to allay some of the fears we propose to delete from the order lines 29 to 32 on page 4 which would have permitted the construction of the roll-on, roll-off facility. We would add that it is no part of our function to amend the dock labour scheme, and we cannot stultify beneficial development at non-dock labour scheme ports on the grounds that it might provide unfair competition to harbours which are within the scheme."

The final group of objectors comprised Mr. Thomas Chalmers and 17 others, residents of homes in Peterhead adjacent to the proposed works, who complained that the work would be detrimental to amenity and their houses. In the report to the Secretary of State the commissioners stated:

"We have paid considerable attention to the objections of those living in the near vicinity of the proposed works but consider that any loss of amenity to them is insufficient ground for preventing the proposed development from going ahead. We propose however to impose conditions to minimise the loss of amenity by restricting the height of the wall on the proposed new south breakwater to 6·2 metres above the ordnance datum; by restricting the height of any buildings on the proposed north quay to the level of the existing retaining wall; by restricting the hours during which blasting and drilling operations can be conducted to the period between 8 am and 6 pm or half an hour before sunrise to half an hour after sunset whichever period is the shorter; and by prohibiting such work during Saturdays and Sundays; by imposing measures for the control of noise and the restriction of vibration caused by blasting and drilling operations as offered by the promoters; and by providing for compensation for any physical damage caused by such operations under the Land Compensation (Scotland) Act 1973".

Although the commissioners ruled in this manner, I felt that I had an obligation to my constituents to pursue the matter, as I was aware that they were not wholly satisfied with the result of the inquiry.

I had a meeting with Mr. Stanley Anderson, the consulting engineer concerned with the Peterhead harbour trustees' proposals, to secure information on the other matters raised by those objectors. On being questioned about the grain operations, Mr. Anderson informed me that they had been occurring at Peterhead for more than 10 years—a matter of which I was aware and which I accepted as being true. He told me that the trustees had guaranteed that they would ensure the use of the most modern methods and equipment for loading grain on to the boats. He added that, in the early stages of the development, the grain would be loaded on to the new south quay, which would remove the boats from such close proximity to the houses. Mr. Anderson pointed out also that the companies that acted as stevedores are private contractors and that, in the interests of the objectors, the trustees would lay down instructions on the method of loading the grain to minimise any inconvenience to them.

In paragraph 4 of the petition, the objectors expressed concern at the possible increase in vehicular traffic during and after the development period. Although I accepted that there was bound to be an increase during the construction period, I believed that the limitations and restrictions

[Mr. McQuarrie]

placed by the commissioners in their report would reduce that traffic. As for traffic after the development, I established that the trustees' proposals for a readjustment of the traffic system, which would have to be approved by the Grampian regional council, would result in considerably less traffic using Lodge walk and Harbour street than at present. Grampian regional council, which had originally petitioned against the order but later withdrew its objection, in its petition, said:

"Your petitioners in general support the proposals by the trustees and do not object to them as such".

In paragraph 6 of the petition the same group of objectors expressed worry that, in the area of the seaward site of Harbour street and Lodge walk and adjacent to the lifeboat station, buildings and other structures would be erected which would restrict their present view of the sea.

I was satisfied that the restrictions placed by the commissioners would provide safeguards, but, in addition, Mr. Anderson guaranteed that the trustees had undertaken that no structures would be erected above the existing parapet level. It was pointed out also that any proposals for quayside structures would have to be approved by the planning committee of the Banff and Buchan district council and that full opportunities would be afforded at all stages for the residents to make representations if they thought it necessary.

The final part of the petition of these objectors is concerned with the loss of amenity ground on the seaward side of Harbour street and Lodge walk which was of benefit to the residents of Peterhead and the objectors. The petition showed that the ground was owned by Banff and Buchan district council. I am advised that that amenity area, with the seats, will be retained in an acceptable form. That undertaking has been given by the Peterhead harbour trustees. Banff and Buchan district council raised no objections to the trustees' proposals. I understand that the local authority approved them. Given those assurances and the further protection that will be available to my constituents, I am certain that any future representations that they make will be sincerely considered by the Peterhead harbour trustees.

All those petitions were carefully considered by the Parliamentary Commissioners before the report submitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland. In the normal course of events, the Bill would have been presented to Parliament and passed all stages without trouble. That was not to be, as the Aberdeen harbour board presented a petition praying that the confirming Bill be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament. It is interesting to place on record that, of all the objectors who had been heard at the public inquiry, only the Aberdeen harbour board could not accept the commissioners' findings. Even the Dundee port authority had no further petition, despite the fact that the hon. Member for Dundee, East, in his usual arrogant manner, had chosen to oppose the Bill on his own account. No member of the Dundee harbour board appeared in person before the public inquiry.

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his description of my signature to a motion to the House of Commons as "arrogant". Is he aware that I signed the motion in direct response to a request by the chief executive of my port authority?

Mr. McQuarrie: That may well be, but the hon. Member for Dundee, East was not in his place when I discussed earlier the fact that he had assured the constituency and the parliamentary candidate in Banff and Buchan that he was supporting the Peterhead harbour trustees. I refer the hon. Gentleman to a copy of the *Buchan Observer* in which the parliamentary candidate clearly stated that he had approached the hon. Member for Dundee, East who had given him an assurance that he would support the Peterhead harbour trustees' proposal.

Mr. Wilson: That is wrong.

Mr. McQuarrie: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for confirming that the information conveyed in the *Buchan Observer* by the prospective parliamentary candidate for Banff and Buchan is wrong.

It is an insult to the commissioners for the Aberdeen harbour board to pursue this matter further after the most careful consideration of its pleadings at the inquiry. Having read Mr. John Russell Turner's evidence to the inquiry, which is in pages 992 to 1138 of the proceedings, I can see the reason for the persistence. Mr. Turner is the general manager of the Aberdeen harbour board. During his evidence it was perfectly clear that he was adopting a dictatorial and evasive attitude to the Parliamentary Commissioners. It was the old story—"Whatever I say is right and whatever you say is wrong." One has only to read the evidence to gain a clear impression that Mr. Turner was determined, by any action he could take, to prevent the Peterhead trustees from successfully promoting the Bill.

Having carried out considerable research into the money that has been spent at Aberdeen harbour over the years, and the authority for carrying out that work, I asked myself: how has the Aberdeen harbour board the effrontery to petition against the Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill when it has carried out over many years a works programme without asking for parliamentary approval? Should not the Aberdeen harbour board have been subjected to the same parliamentary scrutiny as the Peterhead harbour trustees?

Mr. Gerald Malone (Aberdeen, South): An important point must be clarified. The Aberdeen harbour board has spent considerable sums. It has invested to improve existing port facilities, not to carry out enormous expansion such as is proposed by the Bill. That is the distinction. I am sure that my hon. Friend does not want to be unfair. I think it is best that he should know that that was the purpose of the expenditure.

Mr. McQuarrie: I am grateful to my hon,. Friend for making that point, but he must accept that, in the past few years, the work in Aberdeen has been carried out with sole purpose of extending the harbour facilities — *[Interruption.]* — and carrying out new works. The Aberdeen harbour board has spent money on tidal works and improvements in the harbour area.

Harbour boards generally have the power to dredge the harbour and carry out maintenance and improvement work. However, the power is usually confined to the lands belonging to the harbour board. If a board wishes to carry out tidal work, it requires parliamentary authority because the seabed belongs to the Crown and the harbour work extending into tidal waters interferes with the rights of navigation.

It appears that the Aberdeen harbour board relies for its powers on the provisions of the Aberdeen Harbour Confirmation Act 1960. It may be relying on section 69 of that Act, which confers power on the board

"on or in relation to any lands for the time being vested in them or in relation to any other property belonging to them leased, let, hired or loaned to the Board."

Notwithstanding the wide wording of section 69(1)(*a*) of the Act, it says that the powers apply only to the land and may not be exercised in tidal waters. It seems that any tidal work and development in the Aberdeen harbour before and during Mr. Turner's tenure as general manager may have been carried out unlawfully and should have been investigated by the Secretary of State.

I shall deal with some of the matters raised in the new petition of the Aberdeen harbour board after the public inquiry. It repeats what was said in the earlier petition and at the inquiry. In paragraph 4, the Aberdeen harbour board admits that the commissioners have found in favour of the order. Why can it not accept the report by the appointed parliamentary body, which gave it a full hearing? If the Aberdeen harbour board suggests that the order is wrong in principle, Mr. Turner's evidence did not prove that. On the contrary, he made a case for it, as can be seen from his cross-examination by counsel and the commissioners.

The theme of the new petition is based on many statements that are not new, and I shall deal with some of them. First, there is a complaint about the non-existence of the national dock labour scheme, which the Aberdeen harbour board said would give Peterhead an unfair advantage over Aberdeen. The national dock labour scheme has been in existence since 1942, and this is the first time that Aberdeen has suggested that it is adversely affected.

It became clear from Mr. Turner's evidence to the inquiry that he wanted to be rid of the scheme in Aberdeen because it was killing the fishing trade in that harbour. Some 67,000 boxes of fish are landed each day — Monday to Saturday — at Peterhead compared with 3,400 boxes at Aberdeen. That includes 428 boxes that have been consigned from other ports in Scotland. As the Peterhead order is mainly for the fishing vessels, there should be no need to prove the case further.

In addition, it was clear from Mr. Turner's evidence that fishing is responsible for only 10 per cent. of the revenue at Aberdeen harbour. That must be a serious loss-making operation, and it proves the evidence brought out during the public inquiry that the fishermen are voting with their feet and staying away from Aberdeen.*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) seems to think that he is in the Chamber for a laugh. He never comes in for a serious debate. It would serve him better in his position in the shadow Cabinet if he listened to what is said by hon. Members.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian) *rose*——

Mr. McQuarrie: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman.

It will be most interesting to know how much of the total loss at Aberdeen is accounted for by the loss-making fishing trade. Mr. Turner was unable to give that information when he was pressed by the chairman of the commissioners, who suggested that he was trying to steal the fishing vessels away from Peterhead.

Paragraph 7 of the new petition submits that at Aberdeen harbour and elsewhere in Scotland more than sufficient harbour facilities already exist, which are better located and well suited to meet the requirements of the type of shipping that could be expected to make use of the facilities that could be afforded by the proposed work. The simple question is: where and how suitable are they? My constituency covers the largest fishing area in the United Kingdom. There are nice harbours at Portsoy, Whitehills, Banff, Macduff, Gardenstown and Fraserburgh. Fraserburgh did not oppose the confirmation order although it would have had most to lose from it. All those harbours are efficient and busy. Fraserburgh commissioners have just promoted two parliamentary orders in the House for increased fishing and grain facilities.

None of those harbours could cope with the trade that is carried out at Peterhead and none has the same difficulties as Peterhead in accommodating the fishing vessels that use the harbours. Mr. Turner in his evidence stated that half a million tonnes of traffic would be at risk if the Peterhead order is approved. That is the total traffic passing through Aberdeen, and it is farcical to make such a suggestion. In cross-examination, Mr. Turner accepted that that was all guesswork, scaremongering and had no foundation—*[Interruption.]* Look at the record.

If, as Aberdeen's petition states, there are adequate facilities there and in other ports, why did Mr. Turner tell the inquiry that the board has plans for further extensions costing millions of pounds over the next 10 years? Is that just another reason for his opposition to the Peterhead proposals, with the Big Brother attitude —"Don't do as I do, do as I tell you"?

On the matter of the grain trade, I shall confine myself to the latest figures from J R Crabtree, which are an update on the Entwhistle report that was referred to at the public inquiry. Between August and March 1984-85, Peterhead handled 143,079 tonnes compared with Aberdeen's 9,089 tonnes. In April, Peterhead had 7,687 tonnes and Aberdeen had nil. In May, Peterhead had 3,146 tonnes and Aberdeen had 5,889. In June, Peterhead had 553 tonnes, Aberdeen nil. That brought the total for the period to 154,565 tonnes for Peterhead and 14,978 tonnes for Aberdeen. In the current period, covering August, September and October 1985, Peterhead and Aberdeen had no grain traffic in August. In September, Peterhead had 14,042 tonnes, Aberdeen nil. In October, Peterhead had 31,395 tonnes, Aberdeen nil. For those three months, Peterhead had 45,437 tonnes of barley exports, Aberdeen nil.

It is interesting to compare other ports which, according to the Aberdeen harbour board, handle barley exports. In the same period for the 1985-86 totals, Montrose handled 20,570 tonnes, Dundee 9,738 tonnes and Leith 18,467 tonnes. Therefore, it is clear that neither Aberdeen nor any other Scottish port can match Peterhead for the handling of barley for export. That fully justifies the Bill.

Oil-related works were also mentioned in the new petition. Much discussion took place at the public inquiry about what Peterhead might do in the future which could affect Aberdeen. Mr. Turner was not prepared to say that Peterhead had no intention of taking on any oil-related work. That was made clear by Mr. Tom Buchan, the chairman of the Peterhead trustees, in his evidence to the inquiry. In his evidence Mr. Buchan said:

"Well, as far as the trustees are concerned there is a gentleman's agreement, an operating agreement between the two bodies that we don't touch oil vessels—we have had many approaches over the years from various companies to use the

[Mr. McQuarrie]

fishing port as an oil base and that has been refused, and I see no reason why the Peterhead harbour trustees should change their mind in the future."

If that was not a good enough undertaking for Mr. Turner and the Aberdeen harbour board, apparently nothing will satisfy them in their efforts to thwart the passing of the Bill.

I refer to Aberdeen harbour board's plan for a Peterhead harbour extension, which it said would be acceptable. I have with me some drawings, which I now exhibit to the House. I was unable to bring the whole bundle to the House because it is more than 3 ft in length. Those drawings were presented by the Peterhead harbour trustees to the public inquiry. They were accepted by the commissioners, who reported back to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The drawings were compiled by the trustees' consulting engineers. I am sure that the House will agree that it does not require an experienced person to see that they involved a great deal of time and money. As I said, those drawings were considered and approved by the commissioners at the public inquiry.

I also have a cutting from *The Press and Journal*, a daily newspaper that is circulated widely in Scotland, especially in the Grampian region. It is dated 25 October and headed, "Harbour plan unveiled." It is a report from Mr. Bob Kennedy, the fishing editor. The article states that the Aberdeen harbour board unveiled plans for an alternative scheme to that proposed by the Peterhead harbour trustees. The drawing illustrated in the article is all that has been issued. No technical details have been set out, nor were prior consultations held with the Peterhead harbour trustees. Mr. Tom Buchan is quoted in the article as saying:

"It is a bit like me having a garage plan turned down by the planning authority and then my neighbour presenting me with his own ideas."

Mr. Turner, general manager of the Aberdeen harbour board, suggests that it was endeavouring to help, not hinder; but in the article he goes on to admit that ideally Aberdeen harbour board would not want a new development at Peterhead and that it had used considerable expertise to prepare the alternative plan. As none of the harbour trustees at Peterhead has seen the scheme, other than in *The Press and Journal* article, let us look at how expert it is.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): Has not the hon. Gentleman put his finger on the problem? At the initial inquiry, and since then, despite determined efforts by Aberdeen harbour board, the Peterhead trustees have never been allowed to see the alternative scheme. I have evidence from the Peterhead trustees' parliamentary agents that no agreement could be reached. Would it not be better if the trustees looked seriously at the scheme instead of dismissing it in a cavalier way, as the hon. Gentleman seems to be doing?

Mr. McQuarrie: I cannot accept what the hon. Gentleman says. I have checked thoroughly. The Peterhead harbour trustees were not advised of the scheme until they saw it in *The Press and Journal* on 25 October. There has been no discussion on the matter.

Mr. Malone: This is an important point. If I am called, I shall make the point that Aberdeen harbour board has been keen to compromise. I do not want my hon. Friend to be wrong on a matter of fact. The question was put by the general manager of Aberdeen harbour board to Mr. McCrae, the clerk to the Peterhead harbour trustees, at the meeting in London with the two sets of parliamentary agents, and it was dismissed out of hand at that stage. That was in October or the early part of November.

Mr. McQuarrie: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that information. However, my information is that no discussions have taken place between Aberdeen harbour board and Peterhead harbour trustees. They are the people who are affected.

Aberdeen harbour board unveiled a plan, and the newspaper article was presented to Mr. Stanley Anderson, the consulting engineer to the Peterhead harbour trustees, as the trustees were willing to look at it, although the information was scanty.

After those investigations, the following points must be made. First, it was proven during the public inquiry, after careful consideration, that the Peterhead trustees' scheme would not interfere with tanker manoeuvrability in the Bay of Refuge. That was accepted by the commissioners.

Secondly, the width of the structure proposed by Aberdeen is such that the storm waves will be reflected straight back into the Bay of Refuge, reaching a possible height of 20 to 30 ft, which would render navigation by fishing and commercial vessels hazardous.

Thirdly, the alternative plan for width would be too narrow to be anything other than a vertically faced structure. It would act as a mirror reflecting the full energy of the waves back into the Bay of Refuge, again causing severe problems for the fishing and commercial vessels.

Fourthly, the Peterhead trustees' proposals took full account of those dangers, as can be seen from their scheme, where the proposed jetty is much wider and has a curved end to prevent unacceptable wave motion within the new harbour and render the existing south harbour free of any wave motion. The Aberdeen harbour board proposals do neither. They are defective in that the wave motion would be considerably worsened in the existing south harbour. That factor was established after extensive tests carried out by Mr. Anderson, the consulting engineer, on various shapes and forms of harbour layouts at the hydraulic research station at Wallingford.

Fifthly, it is obvious that no real thought, never mind the considerable expertise claimed by Mr. Turner, has gone into providing an alternative proposal to that of Peterhead. Nobody in his senses, having spent £250,000, as the Peterhead trustees have done, in the preparation of drawings, models, site investigation, design, hydraulic testing and many other operations, would consider a 3 in by 3 in illustration in a daily newspaper a suitable alternative to that produced by the Peterhead trustees.

For those reasons, it is right that the ridiculous alternative proposals should be rejected by the Peterhead harbour trustees. Even Mr. Turner is quoted in the article as conceding that they had already been dismissed as not being cost-effective by the clerk to the Peterhead harbour trustees, Mr. Colin McCrae.

Paragraph 12 of the new petition seeks to have the Bill referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament. In parliamentary discussions arising out of motions to refer confirmation Bills to a Joint Committee, it has been established that such a course should be followed only where a good prima facie case has been

made that there have been grave errors in procedure or a serious miscarriage of justice before the commissioners, or that new or material facts have emerged. Since the present procedure was introduced, on the passing of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1899, only twice has such a motion been successful—in the Leith Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Act 1904 and the exceptional Lothian Region (Edinburgh Western Relief Road) Bill this Session.

In the Leith case, the commissioners had denied an objector a locus standi and it appeared that there was a denial of justice. As is well known, the Edinburgh case has not yet been considered by the Joint Committee. Peterhead harbour trustees, the promoters of the Bill, do not think that there is any legitimate reason for referring the Bill to a Joint Committee. The new petition of the Aberdeen harbour board merely raises matters that have already been argued or could have been argued before the commissioners at the public inquiry.

Due to the pressure of time, I have been able to deal only in part with the necessity of giving a Second Reading to the Bill tonight. At present, unemployment in Aberdeen is only 5·6 per cent., compared with 13·9 per cent. in Peterhead. The development will create many jobs during the construction period and some permanent jobs on completion. It will mean a safer harbour for the fishermen, who require our support, when one considers the dangerous calling that they follow.

For that reason, and for others that I have mentioned, I ask my hon. Friends and Opposition Members to support Second Reading of the Bill and to reject the petition by Aberdeen harbour board to refer the Bill to a Joint Committee of both Houses.

7.40 pm

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): My intervention in the debate will not be brief, although it had been my intention to be brief. I gained the impression from the speech of the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie) that the hon. Gentleman thought that this matter should be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses. However, as the hon. Gentleman said that he had no intention of agreeing to such a proposition, the Opposition obviously have a duty to persuade the hon. Gentleman that even at this late hour and as the debate continues within its time limit, he ought seriously to reconsider his position on that point.

It is right that the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan should argue his case on behalf of the Peterhead authority. I was tempted to say on behalf of his constituency, but from the evidence and the correspondence that hon. Members have received, I think that the hon. Member would concede that there is some controversy in his constituency about the proposed development. The argument between the Peterhead harbour authority and Aberdeen harbour authority has far wider repercussions than the harbour at Peterhead and the port at Aberdeen.

Mr. McQuarrie: The hon. Gentleman has said that there are considerable problems in my constituency. Will he elaborate upon those constituency problems?

Mr. Ewing: The hon. Gentleman should not put words into my mouth. I did not say that there were considerable problems in his constituency. When he reads *Hansard* tomorrow he will see that I understand from correspondence that I have received that there is some controversy in his constituency about the development. I did not say that there were considerable problems.

The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan referred to the controversy that surrounds the proposal to develop Peterhead harbour in an area which the harbour authority does not own. The area is owned by the Peterhead bay authority. The matter of ownership is one of the major differences between the developments that have taken place over the years at Aberdeen and the proposed development at Peterhead. The developments at Aberdeen have taken place in an area that is owned by the authority carrying out that development whereas the Peterhead trustees do not own the land where the proposed development will take place.

I honour and respect the fact that the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan is entitled to argue on behalf of the proposition for the Peterhead authority. I was interested in the points that he made in seeking to reassure the householders in the proposed development area about the skyline of the buildings to be constructed if the developments and the proposed road network went ahead.

The hon. Gentleman said that the road network would have to be approved by Grampian regional council and the planning consents affecting the skyline and other matters would have to be approved by Banff and Buchan district council. The hon. Gentleman seemed to suggest that that would be an automatic fait accompli; if the residents accepted the development, the planning authorities would take care of the residents' interests in planning considerations.

After 15 years in the House of Commons dealing with such matters both on a constituency and a national level, it has been my experience that it is pointless to put too much faith in the outcome of a planning application. I would not want to put a great deal of emphasis or stress on such an assurance because no planning authority would give any assurances before a planning application was submitted. The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan does not have grounds to pursue that point on that basis.

On a lighter note, it was interesting to hear the hon. Gentleman refer to Mr. Tom Buchan. The hon. Gentleman said that the Aberdeen harbour authority's approach to the matter was like Mr. Buchan having an application for a garage rejected by the planning authority and his neighbour then suggesting an alternative proposal. I have news for the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan. I do not know what happens in his part of the world, but in Falkirk, East that is a regular feature of garage construction. The two neighbours get together and arrange a compromise. That is what we are trying to do today.

The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan skated over the very important point of Peterhead harbour's record on the export of grain. I was tempted to intervene and ask the hon. Gentleman why, if Peterhead harbour is operating so well and efficiently at present, it should want to spend £13·2 million. That was the estimated cost in March 1984 but obviously that will have risen since then, as one can see the final costs of civil engineering jobs over the years outstrip estimated planning costs. I do not understand why the Peterhead planning authority wants to spend that sum if, as the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan claims, it is operating exceptionally well.

The only reason for the authority wishing to spend that money is that it wants to attract more traffic from other

[Mr. Ewing]

ports. I know that the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan will say that the harbour authority wants to spend that money to provide a safer refuge for the fishermen who steam into Peterhead harbour. I am in favour of making the sea and the refuge as safe as possible for the fishermen, but I cannot accept that the development is solely for the safe passage of the fishermen who use the harbour. I suspect that in his heart of hearts the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan knows that.

Mr. McQuarrie: I did not say that the development was intended solely for the fishermen. I said that it was primarily for the fishermen. The hon. Gentleman, who has had ministerial experience, must accept that the vessels in the harbour line up six, seven or eight deep and that there is a serious risk of overcrowding in the harbour. That risk justifies the harbour commissioners in asking for an extension primarily for the fishermen and to make the harbour safe. I do not dispute the fact that the proposal would make the harbour safe. The prime purpose of the Bill is to assist the fishing vessels and to make the harbour safe.

Mr. Ewing: I accept what the hon. Gentleman says, but I suspect that the alternative proposal by the Aberdeen harbour authority would make the harbour safe primarily for fishermen, as the hon. Gentleman says. There is another element involved, and that is that the development would attract additional traffic. The authority is seeking to increase the facilities of the harbour to allow vessels up to 10,000 tonnes into the harbour. It is clearly essential to attract additional traffic to obtain a return on a proposed investment of £13·2 million.

Mr. Malone: If the proposal was intended to benefit fishermen in the first instance, it seems odd that the proposals put before the commission included a roll-on/roll-off facility. My hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie) has said that the fishermen are voting with their feet, but I do not think that even that novel concept requires a roll-on/roll-off facility.

Mr. Ewing: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. Whether the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan and the Peterhead authority like it or not, there is grave discontent about the way in which the commission conducted the inquiry. It cannot be right for one party to be able to take the commission on a tour of the area and to submit its evidence without cross-examination.

Mr. McQuarrie: That is not true.

Mr. Ewing: It is clearly recorded in the documents that the Peterhead harbour authority was never cross-examined. The chairman, Lord Hughes, allowed no cross-examination of the authority itself as distinct from its witnesses.

Mr. McQuarrie: Mr. Tom Buchan, chairman of the harbour trustees, was questioned and cross-examined. His evidence is contained in papers 15 to 80 of the record. The words "T. S. Buchan cross-examined" are there for all to see. Mr. Buchan gave evidence and was examined by Mr. Osborne and cross-examined by other parties including the chairman. I quote just one example:

"The Chairman: If all the parties produce documents, if you finish up with 10 the Objectors will start with No. 11."

That is just one of the chairman's comments to Mr. Buchan in cross-examination. The hon. Gentleman should get the facts right.

Mr. Ewing: The cross-examination of witnesses is the function not of the chairman but of those representing the objectors. One of the unsatisfactory features of the inquiry was the attitude of the chairman — I say this in the friendliest possible way to my old friend Lord Hughes —to those seeking to object to the proposition. I leave it at that, but the deep dissatisfaction and discontent that it has caused is just one of the reasons why the matter should be submitted to a joint Committee of both Houses.

It would be wrong for the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan to try to convince the House that the commission conducted the inquiry satisfactorily because it did not. Indeed, that is a salient difference between the 1904 Leith tramways case mentioned by the hon. Gentleman and last week's western relief road case. In the latter case, there was no complaint about the commission of inquiry, but there was certainly a complaint in the 1904 case and there is a complaint in relation to the present case which should be taken into account when the House makes its decision today.

There is a much broader issue involved. As I have said, one might easily gain the impression that this was a private battle between the Aberdeen harbour authority and the Peterhead trustees, but nothing could be further from the truth. We need look no further for evidence than the barley export comparisons made by the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan between Peterhead and the Forth ports. The hon. Gentleman failed to mention the significant fact that the EEC Commission recommended to the inquiry that there should be no extension of harbour and port facilities in the United Kingdom. As Scotland is included in the United Kingdom, that was a salient feature in the investigation. If the project were allowed to go ahead it is clear that there would be serious repercussions for the Forth authority ports. At the last count, there were some 21 harbours around the coast of Scotland involved in those exports.

Mr. McQuarrie: Give us the facts.

Mr. Ewing: I wish that the hon. Gentleman would afford others the courtesy and respect with which the House listened to his comments. He should sit quietly for a minute and listen to what others have to say.

There has been a dramatic change in the export of goods from Scottish ports in the past five years, and the extension of facilities at Peterhead will merely aggravate the problem. I hope that I shall not bore the House if I give some figures. Five or six years ago, 75 per cent. of all exports with manufacturing origin in Scotland were exported through Scottish ports — the Clyde authority ports, the Forth authority ports and ports in other areas of Scotland, including one non-scheme port. Peterhead is not the only non-scheme port in Scotland. Now, only 25 per cent. of all goods with manufacturing origin in Scotland are exported from Scottish ports. The reason is the introduction of the grid system, to which the Government have turned a blind eye despite my constant efforts to make them come to terms with it.

Under the grid system, the shipowners — not the Government or the exporters—pay for the transport of exports by road from any part of Scotland to the non-scheme port of Felixstowe. A good example is whisky

which is manufactured in Perth but taken by lorry free of charge down to Felixstowe. The reason given is the long steaming distance to Scottish ports, but the Government fail to appreciate that the grid system is leading slowly but surely to the closure of the Scottish ports and that as soon as that result is achieved the system will be removed and the exporters will have to pay the road haulage costs. Among all the threats to the prospects of Scottish industry I can think of none more damaging than the inability to use our own ports for the export of our manufactured goods.

Gartcosh is in the news. I do not intend to go into detail about it, but 48 per cent. of the cargo going out from my port of Grangemouth is finished steel products from Gartcosh — finished steel products for export to the German car industry. If Gartcosh closes, we simply could not replace that dry cargo let alone allow a development at Peterhead which may take away more. Grangemouth is also a port which is used to ship to the Shetlands and other islands.

The Bill has far wider repercussions that appear to be appreciated by the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie). I must say this as gently and as kindly as I can, but I simply do not accept that the Peterhead harbour trustees can blandly assure us that they will not take cargo from anybody else. It may be Christmas, but we do not live in a fairytale world. The Peterhead harbour authorities will be as much in competition for exported goods from Scotland as Grangemouth, Leith, Dundee, Aberdeen or any other port.

Mr. Robert Hughes: If the scheme went ahead and Peterhead harbour did not increase its revenue as much as possible by increased trade, Peterhead fishermen would pay a heavy price. What would the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan say then?

Mr. Ewing: That is a very important point. It emphasises what I am trying to say about the viability of this investment at Peterhead. It could not be supported by fishing alone. There are no ifs and buts about that. This investment of £13·2 million at 1984 prices, now possibly in the region of £17 million, could not be supported simply by fishing. If that is true and the House accepts it, support for this investment must come from somewhere else.

It is the somewhere else that concerns us. There is uncertainty about where the investment will come from. There is uncertainty about all that will flow from a decision to allow this development to go ahead without further examination. That makes me strongly favour reference to a Joint Committee of both Houses, and on that I will cast my vote tonight.

8.2 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): On these occasions when confirmation Bills are contested there can be a general misunderstanding about the Secretary of State's role and responsibilities. As we have heard tonight, the Opposition, and especially the official Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing), can take a fairly broad view. I am sure that hon. Members will be under no illusion about the Secretary of State's function. The House will know that this is purely formal in relation to the introduction of the Bill and of our proceedings tonight.

Perhaps I might go back a little in time to set those remarks in context. Under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936, where a provisional order under that Act is opposed, as is the case here, an inquiry is held before the commissioners. This inquiry takes place in Scotland at or near the place which is the subject of the powers which are sought.

Promoters and objectors, represented by council, appear before the commissioners and lead evidence. After the hearing the commissioners recommend to the Secretary of State, in the form of a report, that the order should be issued or should be rejected or should be issued with modifications. In this case the commissioners, sitting at Peterhead, hearing the arguments put forward, recommended that the order should be confirmed, with some small modifications.

If an order is then issued by the Secretary of State, as it has been in the present case, it is submitted to Parliament in the form of a confirmation Bill, which once approved by Parliament is regarded as a public Act. The Secretary of State's role so far is a formality.

In theory, the Secretary of State could decline to accept the recommendations of the parliamentary commissioners, but it has been the practice to honour the undertaking given during the passage of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1933—consolidated in the 1936 Act—that the Secretary of State would treat such recommendations with the greatest respect and would not, save in exceptional circumstances, set them aside. Therefore, in submitting to Parliament an order which has been the subject of an inquiry, the Secretary of State is not to be regarded as expressing a view on the merits of the order. My right hon. Friend is enabling the appropriate parliamentary procedure to take place.

Mr. Robert Hughes: May I refer the Minister back to the original confirmation Bill. I refer especially to an answer that he gave about the publication of confirmation Bills. He said that he would not normally publish confirmation Bills until such time as a transcript of all the evidence was available to those who had an interest. Why did that procedure not operate in this case? The original confirmation Bill was published some months before the transcript was publicly available.

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman is right to remind the House that he put a parliamentary question to me on this. He is also right to say that my answer suggested that that was the normal practice—that the transcript of the evidence should be available. I understand that this is not of necessity the case, but it has been the normal practice. Under section 8(3) of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936, my right hon. Friend is required to introduce a confirming Bill

"as soon as conveniently may be".

Obviously, in those circumstances, where there is some difficulty in getting the transcript—the hon. Gentleman is aware that there were certain difficulties in transcribing —there must be a balance of judgment struck by my hon. Friend to decide when he chooses to introduce the Bill in order to conform to his statutory obligations. It was in the light of that that the Bill was originally introduced by my right hon. Friend in July of this year.

I should make one or two general points. It is our legal practice in this country that those who wish to build harbour works, which might interfere with the rights of others, should have statutory powers, usually quite specific, to do so. In the present case the trustees of the harbours of Peterhead, which is where the fishery traffic

[Mr. Ancram]

is accommodated, wish to extend their harbour facilities to the southward by creating new quays and berthing spaces. I understand that these facilities are intended primarily for commercial, that is non-fishery, traffic. The trustees maintain that these new works will have a beneficial effect also on their handling of fishery traffic. The financing of the proposed works is a matter for the trustees.

The confirmation Bill has been the subject of inquiry by colleagues in this House and from the other place. They have recommended, having listened to the evidence, the order for confirmation by means of a Bill, and it is on that basis and in accordance with precedent that it is before the House tonight.

In relation to the motion to refer to a Joint Committee, perhaps it would help the House if I were to explain the position as I understand it. There is a power under section 9 of the 1936 Act to refer the matter to a Joint Committee, if a petition against the order in the Bill has been presented before the period of seven days after the introduction of a confirmation Bill. I understand that a petition was presented in form and in time by the Aberdeen harbour board.

Although it has been usual not to refer confirmation Bills to a Joint Committee, that practice or precedent was overturned two weeks ago by the decision to refer the Edinburgh Bill to a Joint Committee. It is for the House as a whole to decide what to do in relation to a confirmation Bill under the private legislation procedure, including reference to a Joint Committee. I would not seek to advise or direct the House in that regard. As with the Edinburgh Bill, the Government are neutral, and I trust that the House will accept that we have fulfilled our responsibilities in regard to this Bill.

8.9 pm

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): I rise on the insistence of the Dundee port authority to ensure that this matter is fully ventilated. I have had the privilege of visiting Peterhead harbour. I found the trustees' work building up the harbour for fishermen superb. I hope that nothing that we do today will hold up those necessary improvements to make the harbour safer for fishermen.

I should like to put in a cautionary word. The hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) has already made it clear that there are broader implications in these developments than appear at first sight. The very fact that hon. Members who represent ports throughout the east of Scotland are present suggest that the matter is more controversial than was originally thought.

I do not oppose the general upgrading of Peterhead harbour, but I wonder whether its impact on other east coast ports has been considered properly. There is a question mark over the Commission chaired by Lord Hughes. It is remarkable that, after such a commission of inquiry, several organisations still feel that their arguments have not been examined properly and fairly.

The port of Dundee has a wide variety of harbour facilities which are well suited to the requirements of the types of shipping that could be expected to use the facilities afforded by the proposed works. As the roll on/roll off proposal has already been struck out by the Hughes Commission, I should like to focus attention on the accommodation and loading of grain vessels with a carrying capacity of 10,000 tonnes. Dundee port authority believes that the proposed work would not generate any new business, but rather that it could erode existing trade at Dundee and other major Scottish ports without contributing to the economy of Scotland as a whole or to that of Grampian and Tayside regions.

The port of Dundee currently exports more then 50,000 tonnes of grain a year in consignments ranging from 2,500 tonnes to 5,000 tonnes. The port owns two grain elevators with a loading capacity of 200 tonnes an hour and a further two elevators with a loading capacity of 800 tonnes an hour. It can accept and load vessels with a 10,000-tonne capacity. Peterhead and Dundee draw such traffic from separate hinterlands, with the exception of grain drawn from intervention stores. It is estimated that, from that source, there will be occasional cargoes from 10,000 tonnes to 15,000 tonnes capacity. That grain will not be collected from a restricted area of about 35 miles from a port, but will be collected from anything up to 150 miles from a port. The subsidy given by the intervention board makes it economic for the haulier to collect from a much greater distance. That is an echo of the grid facility which the hon. Member for Falkirk, East described. The port of Dundee and other major Scottish ports can already cope with the trade. The port's worries remain despite the work of the Hughes commission.

A scheme port has certain financial obligations which by statute it must fulfil. Such obligations do not necessarily arise from the operation of the port. They frequently—and most often do—arise from other ports. The National Dock Labour Board levy for administrative purposes is 2·75 per cent. of the port employer's gross wages and, in addition, there is a severence levy of 4·75 per cent. of the gross wages. Unfortunately, the pattern in our ports recently has been the rundown of manpower. That would happen if Peterhead went ahead without such financial obligations, and it would have an unfair advantage over other ports.

I hope that we do not have to vote down the whole proposal, because there is much in it, such as what the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan said about the need to take care of fishermen's interests, with which the House agrees. However, we must protect our own people's interests. The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan mentioned unemployment. I have to tell him that unemployment in Dundee is running at 16·5 per cent. Male unemployment, which includes dock workers, is considerably higher. In view of the general dissatisfaction and the need for a fair hearing, it would be best if the matter went to a Joint Committee of both Houses so that it can be examined with fresh eyes. If the Joint Committee accepts the order, I would accept it. I merely require the matter to be ventilated in the interests of my constituents, so that it is clear that they will not be disadvantaged. We wish Peterhead well.

Mr. McQuarrie: I should like confirmation of what the hon. Gentleman said. Did he say that he would accept the ruling of the Joint Committee?

Mr. Wilson: Yes. My port authority is worried that the matter has not been considered closely enough. If the order is upheld by a Joint Committee, I would accept it and not inhibit the scheme going ahead. In view of the tremendous disquiet in the House and in my area about the proposals, the subject should be referred to a Joint Committee.

8.17 pm

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): I respect the views of the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie). He must put his constituency case strongly. I do not object to that. However, I wish that he would not present the case in such a way as to make it appear that those of us with a strong interest in Aberdeen harbour are not behaving in a proper parliamentary way. We have a right to look after the interests of our own port and to consider the wider issues.

This is not a party issue. I am speaking purely with my constituency hat on as many of my constituents work in Aberdeen harbour or depend for their livelihood on the harbour in one way or another.

There has been some argument about parliamentary procedures and propriety. It seems that people in the Peterhead area have been given the impression that the parliamentary inquiry is the beginning and end of the democratic process and that no other means are open to them. They have been given the impression that they must accept the inquiry's findings and that to challenge them in any way is undemocratic. That is not true.

The inquiry is the beginning of the parliamentary process. Our debate tonight is the second part of that process. Other parliamentary processes follow. Some of the aggravation could have been prevented if the Secretary of State's office had handled the original confirmation Bill properly. The Secretary of State was aware of my interest in the parliamentary inquiry.

So that there should be no doubt about how the Aberdeen harbour board should proceed, and to further its objections, I advised it to write to the Secretary of State to find out how to lodge a petition. The Secretary of State's private secretary wrote to the general manager of the harbour board describing the procedures and explaining how, once the Bill had been published and read the First time, seven days were available to lodge a petition. Because of a strange coincidence, a lapse by the Scottish Civil Service or a deliberate act, the day before the Bill was published the Secretary of State's private secretary wrote to the general manager and neglected to tell him that the Bill was to be published the next day.

One could argue that the Aberdeen harbour board was lax. It did not imagine that the Bill would be dealt with so quickly. When I was telephoned, only by chance did I look at the Order Paper to discover that the Bill was due for its Second Reading. I had not been advised that the Bill had been published. Perhaps I was lax, because I could have been more vigilant by looking at the Order Paper every day. Whatever the reasons, the normal courtesies were missing, and as a result the opportunity to deal with the matter properly in the last Session was missed.

There is nothing new in Back Benchers seeking to block confirmation Bills and to refer them to Joint Committees. There is nothing new, novel, arrogant or malevolent in that. It is wrong to say that we are seeking selfishly to guard the areas which we represent and to destroy Peterhead's capacity to develop. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We want a development at Peterhead that will satisfy the original objectives, which were to provide a safer harbour and some improved facilities for cargo traffic. The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan cannot have it both ways. In his anxiety to show the need for development, the hon. Gentleman drew attention to the percentage unemployment for Peterhead compared with Aberdeen. Percentages mean nothing. I accept that the percentage figures for Peterhead are serious. I do not deny that they are much higher than they are for Aberdeen. However, many more people in Aberdeen are unemployed than in Peterhead. It shows the depths to which this Tory Government have driven us that we have to talk about percentages and job losses in Aberdeen compared with Peterhead. If the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan is saying that more people will be employed in Peterhead as a result of the South bay development, it must mean that Peterhead is looking for more traffic.

The hon. Gentleman's attention was diverted earlier during my intervention. Perhaps when he has finished his walk he will listen to what I am saying. The hon. Gentleman said that the Peterhead harbour trustees were not looking for increased traffic. He said that there was a gentleman's agreement not to take oil-related work and that the board did not want to poach grain trade from other ports. The development must be paid for. If the new scheme is to be viable, additional revenue must be raised to pay for it. If increased revenue is not generated by additional traffic, it will be necessary to increase costs to existing port users. If that happens, the first person to be on his feet complaining will be the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan, because the fishermen will have to pay more.

Mr. McQuarrie: The Peterhead harbour trustees make £1 million a year profit, mainly from fishing vessels. I made it clear that the development is primarily for fishing vessels. Many fishing vessels would like to use Peterhead harbour as their home port, but are prevented from doing so because of problems within the harbour. The fishing vessels are the main problem, not the grain. An undertaking has been made that no oil-related work will be taken on. In cross-examination, Mr. Buchan made it clear that the harbour trust had enough financial resources and approved backing to provide all the money required for the development.

Mr. Hughes: That last remark might one day haunt some people. We do not know the exact cost of servicing, and we do not know what will happen. There is no doubt that the depth of water required for the proposed development is intended to generate increased traffic. Assumptions about where the cost will fall are serious.

I appreciate why the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan keeps moving round the Chamber, but I would appreciate it if his ideas did not move as well. We are receiving different signals about his intentions later this evening. The hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Wilson) said he hoped that he would not be driven to vote against the Bill. I hope that I am not forced to vote against it. The matter is in the hands of the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan. He is in control of events. On his attitude depends how the Bill proceeds.

I enter a cautionary note. I have not had a chance to discuss the matter with the Chairman of Ways and Means, but I think that if the hon. Gentleman does not proceed far with the Bill this evening he may discover—as he might at Heathrow airport—that the plane has lost its place in the queue for take-off and that there may be a long delay. If the delay is too long, he may lose altogether. He must have a care that he does not lose his place in the queue for take-off and that his objective that the development at

[Mr. Hughes]

Peterhead should come to fruition is not lost because he has misjudged the mood of the House, tactics or the future. He will obviously have to take those into account.

One other matter of real contention is how far the alternative scheme has been considered and the stage of development that it has reached. The hon. Gentleman had a bit of a laugh about the article in *The Press and Journal*. He said that it published a 3 in square photograph of the development. To ask the House to believe that that was the sole available information on the alternative development is stretching credibility too far. An alternative scheme has been devised and tested on the hydraulic model. It has been found to satisfy the stated objective of the proposed new development. Such a scheme would have been acceptable to all the petitioners, although it fell short of the ideal compromise. That has been under discussion for some time. The fact is, as was admitted in evidence, that the Peterhead harbour trustees have never considered the options, and they have never been put in front of them.

I hope that the matter will not be decided simply on the word of either Mr. McCrea or Mr. Turner. We are not having a gladiatorial contest. This is a serious matter. We have the Peterhead harbour proposed scheme and the alternative schemes on the same scale. They are all produced in exactly the same form. If the matter is to be satisfactorily resolved, by far the best way is to allow a re-examination before a Joint Committee. If that were done, the matter could be examined, counsel could put the case, engineers could be cross-examined about the various schemes and we could come to some objective analysis.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be willing to allow the matter to go to a Joint Committee, where there can be a proper and free examination. That should be done with goodwill, not simply as an exercise to buy time. I know that the hon. Gentleman, like all hon. Members, is an honourable man, so I hope that we can look at the matter seriously. We want to see that reasonable developments are carried out. If those developments are to proceed at the quickest possible rate to the satisfaction of the hon. Gentleman's constituents and the fishermen, and to the joint satisfaction of those who represent other constituencies, and if a compromise can be agreed on, well and good, but let us have the matter thoroughly thrashed out.

I do not complain that the hon. Gentleman reads the brief that he has been given by the Bill's promoters—that is perfectly fair—just as he, I am sure, would not disagree with my right to put the brief put to me by my constituents. However, he is not in a position, and nor am I, to know for certain about wave heights and all the technical details that he began to go into. I trust Mr. Turner, the manager of Aberdeen harbour board, who is an engineer. There is no harm whatever in the matter being properly examined, and I hope that in everyone's interests the matter will be disposed of in the best possible way. That is in the hands of the hon. Gentleman. I ask him to accept my goodwill and that of others, and I hope that he will take that into account. I hope that Peterhead, too, will take that goodwill into account and will not wake up tomorrow to find that our goodwill has not been taken properly into account, because in the end it is Peterhead that will suffer.

8.35 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I rise to support the Bill. I do so because as a Conservative I believe that competition is good for the customer. As a party we believe that it is right to encourage competition, and that every effort should be made to encourage competition which leads to efficiency and a better service to customers.

I was interested in what the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) had to say. If I understood him correctly, he was critical of the parliamentary commission. I think I am right in saying that the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) was also critical of the way in which the matter had been handled.

It is becoming fashionable this week to criticise bodies that have been set up to conduct inquiries into Scottish affairs. If some hon. Members do not like the decision of a body, whether it is the parliamentary commission or the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, they attempt to have the matter retried. They do not seem to care about the merits of the case and whether they have been examined properly and fully by a parliamentary commission, as in this instance, or by the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs.

I draw your attention to this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the hon. Member for Falkirk, East drew attention to the link between Gartcosh and Grangemouth and the effect that any improvements at Peterhead may or may not have. There is no doubt that that was his clever way—he is good at it and he does it fairly well—of bringing in a topical argument. He and I both know that a parliamentary commission is set up in the knowledge that it is not a high court but an endeavour to find some kind of parliamentary view and the facts.

We may not like what the parliamentary commission has done in this matter. It is true that the chairman of the parliamentary commission was one of the hon. Gentleman's noble friends. One can presume that the hon. Gentleman was unhappy with his noble friend. I imagine that he is equally unhappy with the Chairman of the Scottish Affairs Select Committee.

The need to improve the harbour facilities to make the harbour safer for those who presently use it would, I imagine, obtain support from all corners of the House. There seems to be substantive evidence that there are too many boats alongside each other, certainly at weekends, at times when the tidal and wave conditions present a real hazard in the harbour.

Here we have a harbour that is efficient and profitable, making profits of about £1 million a year. That profitable harbour wishes to expand. It is incredible that any Conservative should object to that. We spend so much time in the House considering how we can help the lame ducks of the world and improve their lot, and all too often we do not invest in success. Here is a successful harbour which, by all accounts, is the premier white fish harbour in the United Kingdom. The figures appear to confirm that. There is some common ground in this matter.

Although people may say that there are alternatives, they may not give the trustees the harbour that they want to take them into the next century. An investment of this magnitude is not for this year or next year, but for many decades ahead. It is only right that the trustees should consider changes that may occur, and the ships, directly or indirectly related to fishing, that may wish to use the harbour.

People may say that a berth that will take 10,000 tonnes is not necessary. I do not know about that because I am not a professional seaman. Yet if some years ago someone had said to me that the Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth would not be plying the high seas today, I would have thought that they were talking nonsense. Those ships appeared to be the last word in seafaring. Who can say which ships will be directly or indirectly connected with fishing in the future?

There have been remarkable changes in the fishing industry. For example, off the west coast ports substantial Soviet vessels are carrying out various activities — I think that "factory ships" is the term used to describe them. I believe that the trustees have been responsible and prudent. I understand that originally they put forward proposals for a roll-on/roll-off facility, but then withdraw it. That does not surprise me because Dundee recently introduced such a facility which, I understand, is not—at this stage—obtaining the business for which it had hoped. Therefore, it would be unnecessary to include that facility at Peterhead——

Mr. Malone: I must put the record straight. The parliamentary commission amended the scheme to remove that facility. It was not removed at the request of the trustees. That puts a wholly different complexion on the matter.

Mr. Walker: I was fishing, and the fish rose to the bait. All that we hear is criticism of the commission. I wanted someone to say something good about it—so I am delighted that it has come from a hostile source.

We are trying to get at the facts, not opinions and views. The fact is that the commission is much maligned. It has no friends. I am doing my best to be friendly, so I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South for his intervention. I know little about this sort of fishing, but I have experience of other sorts of fishing. I know that if I throw the right bait, a fish will often rise when it is not rising for other bait.

Why are there so many objections to the scheme? It cannot be that there are fears that the harbour will be used by oil supply ships. After all, they are using an adjacent bay. It cannot be because there are fears that Peterborough will steal the fishing business of Aberdeen. We know from what has been said this evening and on other occasions that Aberdeen's fishing business is now 10 per cent. of its total business. Why are we meeting so many problems?

It is surely significant that a neighbouring harbour, Fraserburgh, does not object to the proposals even though it has similar business interests. It is a busy port, not far from Peterhead. The fact that it did not object to the proposals must tell us something. It did not object because it thought that it was a sensible scheme for the busiest port in Scotland.

The fishermen know something about risks and about the way in which they must invest for the future. They are looking to the trustees to provide them with safe harbour facilities. I mean not simply somewhere to put their boats, but all the necessary facilities of the quayside and all the necessary modern equipment that will meet the needs of a modern fishing fleet for the next 10, 20, 30 and 40 years. The proposals can only be beneficial.

Because Peterhead harbour is not part of the dock labour scheme, it is possible that it is looked on unkindly in certain quarters. As a Conservative, that does not worry me because I know that often the places that are not run in a manner that calls for any state supervision or that are not run in a way that suits out-of-date doctrine, are much better at doing the job. There are examples of that along the east coast. If Peterhead is to become an even greater success story than it is, I for one believe that this House should clearly say that the Bill commands our support on the merits of the case.

I do not ask the House to support the Bill on the basis of opinion. I do not suggest that it supports the Bill because the trustees will consult the regional authority about roads and so on. Everyone knows that, at the end of the day, the scheme must obtain planning permission, and regional authority support must be given for road networks. There is nothing odd about that—it happens with almost every project. Even the great design schemes of the Scottish Development Agency and other bodies require the co-operation, help——

Mr. Ewing: Not the enterprise zones.

Mr. Walker: I was very careful not to mention enterprise zones. I know something about the enterprise zone in Dundee. I shall not rise to the hon. Gentleman's bait—he cannot land me with that.

I accept that planning permission is not always required, and in some areas planning permission is simply a courtesy. Even if it is not granted, the scheme will still go ahead. However, Peterhead does not fall into that category. A proposal is being brought forward in the normal way, under the procedures by which we make changes to harbours. Even if the House agrees to the proposal, which I hope it does, the local authorities must be consulted to ensure that the scheme is in accordance with what they wish. I have no reason to think that Grampian regional authority is any different from Tayside, with which I deal and which is always helpful towards private enterprise schemes.

There have been suggestions that Peterhead is wrong to seek to engage in anything other than fishing activities. However, Peterhead has already become an important port for the export of grain and other bulk cargoes. Why should it not export those goods if it is the port that customers want to use? That is the important point. There is another small port on the east coast of Scotland, at Perth, which is no longer in my constituency. That port is also interesting. It was developed against the trend because it is well up river, but customers wanted to make use of it.

Mr. McQuarrie: Does my hon. Friend agree that the main reason why Peterhead has expanded its grain trade is that the people in the hinterland find it the most accessible port, and that they are saved the 35-mile journey to Aberdeen port if they can go to Peterhead or Fraserburgh, which is the adjoining port in my constituency?

Mr. Walker: My hon. Friend and I would not argue about choice, and customers being able to choose which port they want to use.

In any other area, if a successful organisation has generated capital and wishes to invest it and expand, there would normally be crowds of people demanding that we allow it. In Scotland, we want firms that provide employment and create export opportunities. If any firm came to the House and said, "We are not looking for public money. We generate profits and from them we can find the

[Mr. Walker]

necessary finance to go ahead with our programme," I would be surprised if many hon. Members spoke against it.

What, then, makes harbours different? Historically, we have dealt with harbours differently from other industrial areas. The hon. Member for Falkirk, East shakes his head, but I cannot think of many instances where the House considers legislation of this sort.

Mr. Ewing: I was trying to restrain myself from interrupting the hon. Gentleman. In this case, the difference is that the Peterhead trustees want to develop an area which they do not own. We do not need to deal with other harbour extensions, improvements or expansions in this way in any other part of Scotland, because the port authorities own the area that they wish to develop. The hon. Gentleman is missing the major point that the Peterhead trustees want to develop an area which they do not own.

Mr. Walker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that helpful intervention which spells out the matter clearly. However, I hope that he will agree that I was saying that harbours have been treated differently historically, and that we are considering a successful operation which wants to expand into an adjacent area. There is nothing wrong with that. Airports do it all the time and railway stations have done it. There are precedents, although not in recent times. At one time special legislation was needed to deal with railway stations and lines.

Similarly, we are considering a successful harbour run by trustees who wish to provide a better service for those in the hinterland, and to invest in facilities in the quayside that will provide modern grain-loading equipment of the highest order. The harbour board sees wooden-hulled and steel-hulled vessels siting along the quay wall in conditions that create hazards for the hulls, particularly wooden hulls. One does not have to be clever to realise that in some conditions hulls become vulnerable, and that that is not wise because harbours are supposed to be places of safety.

If one links that with the bulk and the grain facilities, it is clear that the harbour board's proposals, which have been examined by the parliamentary commissioners, are realistic and should be accepted. They will get rid of the congestion at present in the harbour, will provide better loading facilities, and will generally make the harbour better for the customers—the fishing vessel owners who want to use Peterhead harbour. I hope that the House will view the matter on its merits, and not from a narrow constituency point of view because that is not in the best interests of private interests or customers.

8.54 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): As I represent an area between Aberdeen and Peterhead, I have constituents who work at both ports and I have people interested in both harbours. My remarks seek to secure the best balanced development of the ports in north-east Scotland. I do not wish to see any port seriously held back from development.

At this stage, there is sufficient cause for anxiety to warrant a reference to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament. Indeed, a letter from the British Ports Association to my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) makes the point succinctly. It states:

"The British Ports Association do not wish to express any views about the merits of this Bill or the issues raised in the enclosed statement"

from the Aberdeen Harbour Board.

"They do, however, suggest that it is most unfortunate that a responsible harbour authority should feel so strongly that the arguments against the development proposed in the Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order have not received a fair hearing. For that reason, we would ask you to consider whether it would not be expedient for the Aberdeen Harbour Board's petition to be referred to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament so that this difficult matter can be looked at again."

That is the view of most hon. Members who have spoken in the debate. Clearly, there is a serious point at issue which must be resolved.

The simple statement of the entrenched position of the extremes of either side will not bring the matter forward. A fair and reasonable assessment that there is a genuine difficulty must be made. The detailed submission from the Aberdeen Harbour Board does not merely take issue with points of fact, but shows an element of bitterness, which the House would wish to address properly. In one or two areas, the board feels that it has legitimate grievances which have not been fully dealt with.

Much has been made of the cost. An investment in excess of £13 million is no little sum, especially if that sum is merely to achieve the creation of a safe, less crowded harbour for fishing boats. No one will deny that investment is needed to secure safety and more space, but £13 million-plus is a great deal of money simply for that.

There are two ways to repay that investment. The first, on which the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) has already touched, is that the users of the ports and the trustees will have to raise money to repay capital. Two obvious ways can be used. One is to ensure that the greater efficiency in the fishing harbour results in the generation of more revenue from fishing. It is probably asking a lot to think that that will be enough to fulfil the whole cost. What is more, there is concern that the fishing boat owners will find that their costs rise significantly to pay off the costs of the capital.

Much more likely is that the Peterhead harbour authority, having got excellent facilities with a wide range of versatile and alternative uses, will go out to get in extra traffic to generate the extra revenue. The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie) has rightly pointed out the success of Peterhead harbour in attracting other traffic. I am pleased to see that success and if I were persuaded that this scale of development is needed to enable the essential and normal development of the harbour, I might accept it.

However, a compromise has been proposed that will meet all the potential expansion needs of the growing traffic through Peterhead without creating a major new harbour on the east coast that will be in competition immediately not only with Fraserburgh and Aberdeen but with Montrose, Dundee and the Forth ports. It is worth reiterating what the EEC's findings were. The official journal for 31 January said that the port facilities in north-east Scotland already have surplus capacity and utilisation of the existing facilities is only around 50 per cent. It clearly points to one port going ahead only at another's expense, and it questions the contribution of new port projects to the region as a whole.

A question has to be asked and answered. The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) will no doubt have a positive answer. The question is where, if the expanded Peterhead harbour goes for new business, it will come from. If it is to come from new business that is not available to the existing ports, a closer investigation would wish to consider that. If, on the other hand, it simply draws it away from the other ports in the area, a major investment that does not create new employment or benefit has been made.

Mr. McQuarrie: If the hon. Gentleman is trying to make the case that the EEC has decided that there should be no further increase in facilities at ports in the north-east of Scotland, can he relate that to Mr. Turner's evidence to the commission that, for the next 10 years, Aberdeen harbour will spend millions of pounds in developing its facilities?

Mr. Bruce: There are two distinct points. I was quoting the EEC, but what is happening in Aberdeen harbour—I recently visited and toured both harbours—is investment in improving existing quays, clearing buildings, putting in better facilities and reorganising existing facilities to meet modern needs and technologies. The two things are mutually exclusive. I make it clear that I am not suggesting that there is no case for anything to happen at Peterhead harbour and that it should not be allowed to make investment to improve its facilities. Every hon. Member who has spoken recognised that Peterhead is ready to expand in that way. There is a difference in scale, timing and implication of these proposals.

The hon. Member for Tayside, North alluded only briefly to the existence of the dock labour scheme. This is not the time or place to discuss the scheme at any great length. However, the hon. Member said that the development should be encouraged on the ground that it creates competition. Whether or not we like it, the dock labour scheme is a restraint on competition. It matters not what a person's political views are—we have to accept that the basis of the dock labour scheme was to guarantee dockers work, and that ensures that the scheme ports have a cost. If the scheme exists, we have to accept that it is the basis of operation. Nothing will be done about it, but both the commissioners and the House should take notice of it.

Mr. Ewing: It is important to put on record the purpose of the national dock labour scheme. It was introduced in 1944 to replace the old casual labour scheme whereby men went to the docks in the morning and were sent back up the road with no work within half an hour. The scheme does not exclude competition—far from it, it guarantees the men a day's work and wage and replaces the casual labour scheme under which they had no such guarantee.

Mr. Bruce: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) but, as I said earlier, I do not think that this is the time to develop that point. However, I accept his contribution for the record. My point is that a port scheme port has a different basis of operation than a non-port scheme port. Given that a parliamentary commission is investigating the developments in a non-scheme port, it is legitimate to recognise its impact on other ports that are not operated on the same basis. I want the ports in the area to be developed, but the development of one port at the expense of another needs to be examined closely.

The Aberdeen harbour board's submission points to the extent to which it feels that its case has not been given a fair hearing and to the fact that its arguments have not been fully developed. The hon. Member for Banff and Buchan was somewhat dismissive of the Aberdeen harbour board's compromise proposals. I do not presume to comment in detail on their merits, nor am I qualified to do so. However, I take seriously the submissions of a body that has been involved in port engineering for more than 40 years and that puts forward a scheme as a serious, constructive alternative. Such a scheme is worthy of consideration and it was put forward, I know, in good faith.

It would not be wrong to say that the Aberdeen harbour board would prefer Peterhead to do nothing at all; it would prefer no development to take place at Peterhead. That is not my view and I do not believe that it is the view of most hon. Members who are taking part in the debate. However, the board recognised that that view was unlikely to carry very much weight. It was too introspective and too self-interested. Therefore, it recognised from the outset that at best it would need to secure a compromise. However, it feels that the Peterhead harbour commissioners have not been willing to respond to its compromise proposals.

It states that the promoters have put forward a scheme which, if it were fully utilised, would allow them to compete with Aberdeen in all the major areas of port activity in which Aberdeen is concerned, not just in those areas where there is a small overlap. For example, it pointed out that one part of the new scheme could be used as an oilfield supply base. My understanding is that the Peterhead harbour trustees have said that that is true but that they would be prepared to give an honourable undertaking not to use it as an oilfield supply base.

There are two problems. If my earlier point about the financial pressure on Peterhead turned out to be true and the expansion of the North sea activities that is hoped for in the future were to continue, the temptation might become too strong and, if it were there and had the potential, the facility would be used. The Aberdeen harbour board said that a binding agreement that the facility would not be used would be acceptable to it, if it underpinned the gentleman's agreement that the Peterhead harbour trustees were prepared to give. However, it was unable to secure a binding agreement. Therefore it is left with a nagging concern that at some stage or another the entrance to the inner harbour at Peterhead will be used as another supply base. Peterhead is a major competitor of Aberdeen as an oil field supply base. Indeed, the south side of the Peterhead Bay of Refuge is probably the best oilfield supply base in the country, as it was custom built. Therefore, this is a point of legitimate concern.

The point at issue on the specific compromise proposals is that the harbour board feels that the proposals have been dismissed. I said earlier that the Aberdeen harbour board would probably prefer the Bill to be stopped altogether. During the next few minutes the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Malone) will have to consider on behalf of his constituents whether he wants the Bill to be killed or whether he wants a compromise to be secured. That is the danger he runs. It is important that he should seek to represent his constituents and to use his judgment and parliamentary skills in deciding how to secure the best outcome for his constituents.

The point that was made about the compromise proposal was that it was put forward by those who know

[Mr. Bruce]

something about harbours. They believe that it could meet all of the Peterhead harbour trustees' objectives. It would be considerably cheaper but it would not create a port that offered the same threat to the existence of other ports in the area as it is believed that the proposed development will pose. Although this scheme was discussed, it was never fully considered, and the chairman of the Peterhead trustees is on record as saying:

"Peterhead Harbour Trustees have never considered these options, they have never been put in front of Peterhead Harbour Trustees."

That alone warrants a referral of the Bill to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament, because that alternative needs to be looked at before we can be sure which is the right and fair scheme that should go ahead.

These proposals should not be viewed in terms of Aberdeen versus Peterhead. I would not be representing the interests of my constituents if I supported such a duel, because I have constituents who work at both ports. My wish and objective is to see two strong, healthy, expanding ports to the north and south of my constituency. To that extent I do not wish my remarks to be judged in terms of Aberdeen versus Peterhead.

The harbour board in Aberdeen is dearly anxious to secure a compromise. Most hon. Members who have spoken want to see a Joint Committee examining this matter. If the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan holds out for the whole Bill, he runs the serious risk of getting no Bill at all. That is also the risk that the trustees run. The hon. Gentleman should make his own judgments on behalf of his constituents and should recognise that there is good will for Peterhead harbour on all sides of the House. There is a desire for a fair and just outcome. I hope that he will take that on board and will support reference to a Joint Committee.

9.12 pm

Mr. Gerald Malone (Aberdeen, South): It is worth considering referral to a Joint Committee of both Houses. I should put it clearly on the record that, although I have a close constituency interest in this matter, no campaign is being waged either by myself or the Aberdeen harbour board to kill the Bill. Indeed, the Aberdeen harbour board has always been prepared to talk about compromises and it has put forward an alternative scheme.

The sad truth has been that for their own reasons, and perhaps acting on their own best advice, the Peterhead harbour board trustees have decided not even to talk. My hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie) should bear in mind that this compromise has been offered and that it could best be discussed in a Joint Committee of both Houses.

On an occasion such as this, when there is such an overwhelming expression of the views of hon. Members, and when this is perhaps the best device by which to settle the issues between the parties, it would be unfortunate if that avenue of approach were not accepted by my hon. Friend.

Opposition Members are right to say that this matter broadly lies in the hands of my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan. If he is unable to tell me that he would like to adopt that line of approach, I would accept that because it is not my wish that the Bill should not get a Second Reading. However, Opposition Members will be only too well aware that the procedures of the House are such that one is perhaps obliged to adopt a line of approach that is not ideal in all the circumstances.

I repeat to my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan that the matter is in his hands and nobody else's. He has to represent not only one section of the community in his constituency; he ably and vociferously represents all points of view. However, some expressions of opinion in his constituency have not been in favour of the scheme.

There has been much disquiet about the way in which the parliamentary commission conducted its proceedings. When worries have been expressed on the Floor of the House, publicly and in the media it is important and proper that the House should consider the substance of those complaints and should consider the request for a referral to a Joint Committee. I do not suggest that, because we have to search far back into history for one example of a referral and to last week for another, we should simply say that the procedure should not be brought into play or that the practice has fallen into desuetude. Perhaps it is a shame that it has not been used more often to consider matters of this kind. There is genuine disquiet about the way in which the parliamentary commission conducted its affairs and that disquiet centres on several points.

Some of the implications of the inquiry's report were a little strange, as were the imputations cast on some of the evidence. One point that has not been raised in any detail is safety, which was considered by the commission. Important evidence on behalf of the Department of Transport was given by Captain Fellingham. I do not understand Lord Hughes' statement when he says:

"We took into account the report of the Department of Transport and the statement of Captain Fellingham which unlike the evidence of other witnesses was neither made on oath nor subject to cross-examination."

That would appear to impugn the captain's evidence. However, what is not explained is that that is the normal procedure when departmental representatives give evidence to parliamentary commissions. Some aspersion has been cast on the fact that Captain Fellingham properly did not submit himself to examination and properly did not go on oath. If there was an impugnment of his evidence, and there would appear to have been so if one reads the statement of the noble Lord, we are right to consider whether that coloured the commissioners' judgment when they reached their conclusions. I suggest that it should not have done so.

Opposition Members have already mentioned the tour of Peterhead harbour by members of the commission and the fact that there was no opportunity for others to cross-examine on that evidence and no other representatives were present. It is odd that a parliamentary commission seeking to take evidence and to be independent should proceed in that way. A procedure that is akin to the tour of Peterhead harbour and is common practice in court proceedings in Scotland is known as a view. Some hon. Members will be familiar with that procedure. If the sheriff or those trying the case decide that it is important to examine the locus, all parties traipse off to the view. They go to see what the facts are on the ground or, as in this case, in the water.

In that judicial process, all parties and their representatives must be present. If that criterion is considered essential by the courts, a similar procedure

should have been seriously considered by the commissioners. Perhaps they did not take a completely independent line when considering one of the most important pieces of evidence.

Mr. McQuarrie: I am sure that my hon. Friend does not wish to mislead the House. He said that objectors and their counsel were not allowed to take part in the tour by the Commission. In fact, all the objectors and their counsel took part in the tour of the area of the proposed works.

Mr. Malone: I must disagree with my hon. Friend; that is not my information. We must judge the sources of the information put to the House, but representatives of Aberdeen harbour have made the point vigorously to me and it seems to have been made vigorously to Opposition Members. My hon. Friend did not challenge the point when it was made by, I think, the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Wilson) and it is odd that he should choose to challenge it now.

My hon. Friend has an opportunity to concur with the will of the House, which is to have the matter investigated further. I do not intend to kill the Bill, but my hon. Friend must know the procedural risks that he is running. He would not be happy if he had to say that the Bill had been lost. I concede that the Peterhead harbour trustees are perhaps entitled to their legislation in an amended form and I should be sorry to see the opportunity lost.

The Court of Auditors of the European Commission reported in 1984 on the investment of about £15 million of European funds in port facilities throughout Scotland, and particularly in the north-east, over the previous 10 years. In its report to the Commission, the court said that port facilities in the north-east of Scotland were 50 per cent. under-used. The Commission had been investing not in port facilities that were necessary to cope with existing traffic or in port facilities that might be needed in the foreseeable future, but in port facilities which were substantially redundant. That fact is abundantly clear.

Not only European funds have been invested in ports in the north-east of Scotland. A substantial number of harbours in the area are maintained and supported by Grampian regional council, to the tune of £400,000 a year. In examining the economic case put by the promoters, we have to consider whether the facilities already provided in the north-east, substantially by public funds, will be used even less than they are at present.

I take up the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker). If the Peterhead harbour trustees decide that they will spend this money and put forward this proposal, good luck to them. The trustees say, "Of course, it is our money. There will be no further call on public funds."

I draw the attention of the House to the history of this matter, because we need to go beyond the past six or seven months to note the intent of the Peterhead harbour trustees. When the proposals were initially considered, the Peterhead harbour trustees wanted a substantial injection of public cash to make the project possible. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan will not mind if I refer again to that well-known national organ, that most worthy paper, that accurate reporter of local matters in the constituency of my hon. Friend, the *Buchan Observer*, which has been quoted so lavishly with great success. An article on 11 September 1984 stated:

"Aid refusal angers harbour board".

Of course the Peterhead harbour board trustees were not looking in September 1984 to fund the project from private funds — they were looking for public funds of £12 million, which they were not given by the Scottish Office. That was right. Mr. Buchan, the chairman of the Peterhead harbour board, reacted by saying:

"No way can we accept this without kicking up a helluva row about it."

I am surprised that the board was not relying on private funding then and I suspect that it is not relying on the prospect of private funding now.

Mr. Bill Walker: Surely my hon. Friend must write this down as a success for the Conservative Government. Is this not what we have been trying to do for so long—stop people bleeding the public purse? Yet my hon. Friend is complaining!

Mr. Malone: I am certainly not complaining about that. I believe that, if the scheme is approved, we shall not have heard the last of the claims on the public purse for support. I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North would agree that, if these funds were required in September 1984, they may inevitably be required again. I hope that my hon. Friend, who seems to know so much about this matter, will bear in mind the fact that the first time the Peterhead harbour board trustees called for a detailed economic analysis to be made public on this matter was April 1985 when a Coopers and Lybrand report was prepared and submitted in evidence. It is odd that a scheme that has been more than a gleam in the trustees' eyes for a substantial period should suddenly be subjected to a form of economic analysis.

Mr. McQuarrie: I am sure that my hon. Friend would not want to give the wrong impression about the Coopers and Lybrand report. I am sure that he will accept that the Peterhead harbour trustees were obliged to obtain a report from Coopers and Lybrand because the public inquiry had not been presented with anything on the subject of development.

Mr. Malone: The trustees were required to obtain a report because, until then, they had no idea of their economic case, except that they were looking for grants of £12 million from public funds. The Coopers and Lybrand report, which is a rather strange and scanty document containing many highly conditional conclusions and an economic analysis that is highly conditional with respect to much of the revenue that the trustees say will accrue if the changes are successful, is a little unlikely to prove true. It gives the game away, because, no matter how much my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan may say that the primary purpose of the development at Peterhead harbour is to improve the lot of fishermen, increase the safety of the fishing vessels and provide them with a safer harbour, if he reads the report he will find in one of the appendices of the economic analysis that the trustees are counting on increased revenue from cargoes brought into Peterhead harbour to fund the scheme if it were to be granted. It may have been represented to my hon. Friend that the main interest was to improve the lot of the fishing fleet. Of course, Peterhead harbour will look for more business beyond what it says is the purpose of the scheme—it will not look just for increased cargoes.

A gentleman's agreement was offered by Aberdeen harbour board when Mr. Turner gave evidence to the

[Mr. Malone]

parliamentary commission. He said that he would be perfectly happy to accept an undertaking that there will be no increase in oil-related activities in Peterhead harbour. The commissioners decided to ignore that and hoped that Mr. Turner and the Aberdeen harbour board trustees would simply rely on the gentlemen's agreement. The Coopers and Lybrand report suggests that the Peterhead harbour board trustees are looking to go further than they say they intend, and I also say to my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan that in the circumstances it is difficult for Aberdeen harbour board trustees to attach tremendous credibility to any statement that the Peterhead harbour board trustees may make about the credibility of relying on a so-called gentlemen's agreement.

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): In fairness to the trustees, surely the hon. Gentleman does not think that any harbour board would construct a harbour and confine it to fishing vessels. Obviously, it will go out of its way to make it as viable as possible. Whatever the arguments against the board may be, surely it cannot be faulted on those grounds.

Mr. Malone: I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will understand that I accept that, if the proposal goes through, the board will use all its facilities as much as it can. The board is saying that that is not so. That is the point that I am trying to make.

What the board is seeking in the Bill goes way beyond any reasonable assumption of what it might require. I was interested to note that it has decided to seek a power to dredge in excess of 1·5 m more than it was seeking when the case was put before the parliamentary commissioners. We have to look carefully at the proposal. In Peterhead harbour it would be possible to berth the largest vessels if the power that the board is seeking in the Bill were exercised. There is no need for that. The board goes beyond its stated aim, and that is one more fact that suggests that it does not intend to stick to its declared intentions.

When the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) intervened, I was about to refer to the goodwill of Aberdeen harbour board. On its behalf, I must rebut the suggestion that has been made in the House that it has been intransigent and has not been prepared to listen, and put forward an alternative scheme in the most casual manner. An article in *The Press and Journal* and a small sketch were referred to my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan. I say this with no malice to him, but I should like him to hear it. Aberdeen harbour board put forward the suggestion, in detail, to its counterparts in Peterhead, or at least it attempted to do so, and met with a rebuff. When I intervened in my hon. Friend's speech, I said that it was my impression that a meeting had taken place with Mr. Turner of the Aberdeen harbour board——

Mr. McQuarrie *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 119, Noes 53.

Division No. 27] **[9.35 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alton, David
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Blackburn, John
Body, Richard
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brooke, Hon Peter
Bruce, Malcolm
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Butler, Rt Hon Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Fox, Marcus
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Freud, Clement
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Harris, David
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hickmet, Richard
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howells, Geraint
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lloyd, Peter, *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Monro, Sir Hector
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Newton, Tony
Normanton, Tom
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Rifkind, Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Skeet, T. H. H.
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Thurnham, Peter
Waddington, David
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wilson, Gordon
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Albert McQuarrie and
Mr. Bill Walker.

NOES

Barnett, Guy
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Donald
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
George, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
John, Brynmor
Lamond, James
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McCartney, Hugh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Michie, William

Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Rogers, Allan
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Skinner, Dennis
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Torney, Tom
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Hughes and
Mr. Gerald Malone.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put accordingly and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Question put:—That the Bill be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses.

The House divided: Ayes 69, Noes 87.

Division No. 28] **[9.50 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Barnett, Guy
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Douglas, Dick
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freud, Clement
Garel-Jones, Tristan
George, Bruce
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hanley, Jeremy
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
John, Brynmor
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Malone, Gerald
Marek, Dr John
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Michie, William
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Radice, Giles
Rogers, Allan
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Gordon Wilson and
Mr. Malcolm Bruce.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arnold, Tom
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Blackburn, John
Body, Richard
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Butler, Rt Hon Adam
Butterfill, John
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Corrie, John
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Favell, Anthony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Fox, Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Hickmet, Richard
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Latham, Michael
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lord, Michael
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Malins, Humfrey
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Monro, Sir Hector
Moynihan, Hon C.
Normanton, Tom
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Pawsey, James
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Rhodes James, Robert
Rifkind, Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Speed, Keith
Spencer, Derek
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Thurnham, Peter
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Winterton, Nicholas

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bill Walker and
Mr. Christopher Murphy.

Question accordingly negatived.

To be further considered upon Wednesday 18 December.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Education (Amendment) Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Orders of the Day

Education (Amendment) Bill

Considered in Committee.

[MR. HAROLD WALKER *in the Chair*]

Clause 1

INCREASE OF LIMIT ON EXPENDITURE APPROVED FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT GRANT PURPOSES

10.2 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): I beg to move amendment No. 1, in page 1, line 11, leave out '1 per cent.' and add '·75 per cent.'.

The Chairman: With this we shall discuss amendment No. 4, in page 1, line 11, at end add 'in 1986-87 and 0·5 per cent. thereafter'.

Mr. Bennett: At this time of night the Committee will not want to spend long on the measure. The Bill is difficult to amend. Our main complaint is that it is irrelevant to the needs of the education service.

The Government must come up with a solution to the problem of teachers' pay and morale. The Opposition's most bitter complaint is that the Government are being provocative by introducing the measure at this time.

Our amendment is intended to probe the Government about their proposals. Amendment No. 2, which has not been selected, would seek to leave out the words "1 per cent." and insert "1·5 per cent." We do not favour the insertion of "·75 per cent." rather than "1 per cent." or any other figure, but we want to probe the Government about their intentions.

I hope that the Government will take the opportunity to make it clear that they are looking for a solution to the teachers' dispute and are not further provoking them, thus making them angry and disillusioned. I hope that the Minister will assure us that the Government do not intend to be even more provocative by introducing merit money without the teachers' agreement. If he does that, he will further anger and disillusion the teachers. Before he goes much further with the idea of merit money, he should look carefully at the response that will come from parents who will want to know what compensation the Government will give to their sons or daughters, or to them as parents, if a child finds that in his passage through primary or secondary school he is not taught by any teacher who is receiving merit money.

The Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman is straying wide of the amendment.

Mr. Bennett: Yes, I accept that I am a little wide of the amendment, but I hope that the Government will tell us that they will not come forward with such unilateral measures. I had hoped that the Government would pursue an independent inquiry.

The first time that I was involved in industrial action was in the early 1960s when teachers questioned whether lunchtime supervision was compulsory.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth) *rose*——

Mr. Bennett: Let me develop my case a little further.

As a result of that action, it was clearly established that lunchtime supervision was voluntary. Ever since then, the first stage in the withdrawal of good will has been to question lunchtime supervision. I also accept that many teachers have sought to get rid of the necessity to volunteer to carry out any lunchtime supervision.

What happens at lunchtime should be examined much more thoroughly than is possible under the Bill. Given the amount of money to which the amendment refers, it is not clear whether the Government have thought that out. If teachers do supervision at lunchtime, almost the only payment is the possibility of a free school meal. Who qualifies for a free meal and what school activities should be carried out vary from one authority to another.

I also accept that since the 1960s more and more local authorities have employed people to do lunchtime supervision which usually covers supervision of the meal, the playground and around the school buildings. The only person who has a legal duty, other than the employed supervisors, for discipline and behaviour within the school is the head teacher and, to a certain extent, the deputy. Considerable resentment has been caused by the fact that since May nearly all lunchtime supervision has fallen on head teachers, their deputies and the paid supervisors, if the local authority employs such people.

The Government are now introducing a new proposal which would be welcomed by teachers' unions if it were being introduced during a period in which there was goodwill in schools when teachers were happy with their pay and conditions. In introducing it against a background of lack of co-operation from the teachers the Government will cause far more problems.

I think that everyone would agree that it is important that teachers have a proper break at lunchtime. Many people would say that during the past nine months teaching has improved because most teachers have had a proper break at lunchtime. It is important that teachers get half an hour or so at lunchtime, but in the good schools many school activities should be flourishing during the lunchtime. Schools with a long lunch break allow the teacher to have a break and also be involved in supervision. The Bill fails to address itself to the real problems of what is supervision and what is teaching during the lunchtime period.

The Government chose to put 1 per cent. in the clause and the amount of money that that represented, but they do not seem to have thought carefully about the difference between lunchtime teaching and supervision.

Is it the Government's intention that teachers, or anyone else, should be paid for carrying out educational duties at lunchtime? Examples of that are choir practice, preparation for school pantomime, various club activities, examination revision, sports practice and so on. If those educational activities are managed well, a large number of pupils will participate and therefore receive supervision during the lunch break.

If teachers are not paid for those educational duties, it is possible that they will not resume them when the dispute has ended. I hope that those activities will be resumed, but the authorities must state clearly the possible uses of the money provided for in the Bill, and the relationship between those looking after pupils and those carrying out educational duties.

Is it the Government's intention that teachers should be able to claim for carrying out those educational duties? If so, what is the position if those same duties are carried out not at lunchtime but, for example, after school? It would be a major anomaly if a teacher could claim payment for supervising a choir practice at lunchtime but not for supervising after school. The Government must make that clear; they must specify what they regard as being or not being lunchtime supervision.

Will there be a standard minimum rate of pay under the Bill, especially for lunchtime supervision carried out by people other than teachers? The position of the head teacher and deputy head teacher must also be made clear. Will the head teacher still be responsible at all times if supervisors are employed? To what degree can that responsibility be passed on to a deputy head teacher? If the head teacher and deputy head teacher are not on the school premises—and this applies especially in primary schools—can a teacher act for them, and if so, will he be paid?

I hope that the Government have seriously considered whether the money provided for in the Bill will be genuine new educational money. Are the Government hoping that, in practice, that money will be offset by, for example, savings in supplementary benefit through the employment of part-time or casual staff? I am not suggesting that it is not desirable that people receiving supplementary benefit should, instead, have a job that provides them with a wage. I merely suggest that if that is the case, the money provided for in the Bill will not be genuine new money.

Do the Government envisage older pupils being employed for supervisory duties, and especially the use of sixth-formers in primary schools? I am sure that the Government are aware that older pupils are encouraged to work in shops. If the Government's Sunday trading proposals become law, there will be even greater pressure for pupils to work at weekends. It might be more desirable that pupils be employed in their schools or in junior schools rather than in shops that might press them to work longer hours, to the detriment of their studies.

What will happen in the small number of schools that have adopted a continental or short stay? Can any of the money be used to pay those carrying out supervisory duties after school? Many parents, especially those with young children, will face problems if schools decide to close at 3 pm or earlier.

Finally, before the measure is implemented the Minister must get agreement between the teacher unions and the local authorities so that there is some uniformity of provision across the country. I hope that he will answer some of my questions when he justifies the need for 1 per cent.

10.15 pm

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): I share the sentiments of the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) that this is an irrelevant and bad Bill. My amendment is a probing amendment. To be specific in my opposition to the Bill, I shall give three good reasons for the two amendments tabled and selected.

The first relates to the general dissatisfaction at the further inroads into the autonomy of local education authorities. On Second Reading and throughout the passage of the original legislation it was made clear that the Opposition did not dislike the idea of the Secretary of State having powers to fund his pet projects. We disliked the fact that that money should come from LEA funding, which is already earmarked for specific purposes, and which further erodes the ability of an LEA to impose a modicum of regional excellence on its programme. For that reason alone, it seems desirable to restrict such encroachment. If the Secretary of State wants to have separate contracts for lunchtime supervisors, he should pay for it from Government money, not money already earmarked.

My second reason for tabling the amendment is the confusion that persists after Second Reading about the money that will be used for supervision. The Government have still not satisfactorily explained why they can both pay for lunchtime supervision from the increased education support grant, and knock £40 million of the £1·25 billion offered to the teachers. On Second Reading the Minister said that the money came from sums

"additional to our existing plans for educational spending."

I accept that the Government will pay for some of the supervision under the formula for ESG, but I do not accept that that means that £40 million should be clawed back from the £1·25 billion, because, as I understand it, that is the total to be spent and includes the LEA element. Will the Minister clarify that point?

Thirdly, there is a good case for applying the increase in ESG to the first full year only. The Secretary of State admits that there is spare money from the ESG this year, which is why he can pay for lunchtimes until April from the existing 0·5 per cent. He made that clear on Second Reading when he said:

"In 1985-86 there is sufficient headroom within the existing limit to pay grant on this new activity."—[*Official Report*, 5 December 1985; Vol. 88, c. 460-479.]

One wonders whether the same will be true in future or, at least, whether there will be some spare to render excessive the full 1 per cent.

When that fact is added to the claim that future years' payments will come from the 1·25 billion, we have justified cause for anxiety. Added to that financial question is the fact that to pass the Bill in its present form seems to anticipate failure on the part of local authorities.

We know that lunchtime supervision has been a bone of contention for a long time, but it seems dubious to pass a Bill when the negotiations are in abeyance and there is a possibility, albeit remote, of new machinery to deal with lunchtimes without this expedient.

The amendments matter because it is wrong to give a Secretary of State yet more control over local authorities for more and for longer than is absolutely necessary. It gives power in a way which gives more power than a good man should need or a bad man should have. For those reasons, I support the amendment.

Mr. Pawsey: I am puzzled as to why the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) should describe this measure as a provocation. We are merely giving teachers

[Mr. Pawsey]

what they have been asking for for many years and I cannot see how that could be provoking. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will elaborate on that point at some time.

One of the great paradoxes of the educational scene is that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has introduced some measures to improve and——

The Chairman: Order. We are in Committee and are discussing a narrow amendment. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will address himself to it.

Mr. Pawsey: I shall do my utmost to stay within the rules of order.

My right hon. Friend has introduced many measures to improve the educational performance of schools and thereby improve the quality of education for our children. This measure is cast in the same mould that——

The Chairman: Order. If I allow the hon. Member to follow that line, I must allow other hon. Members to put arguments either in support or rebuttal of the Bill, and that we cannot have. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. Pawsey: I shall take careful note of that. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] It would appear that there is less support for me on Conservative Benches than there usually is.

I was genuinely surprised that there was no warm welcome for the measure. It will generally assist education. I hope that I am not straying out of order, but it would seem that the Opposition are opposing the measure purely for opposition's sake and are not looking at the benefits——

The Chairman: Order. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will seek to catch my eye on Third Reading. His remarks would be more appropriate then than now.

Mr. Pawsey: I acknowledge the fact that the amount of funding available for the measure is admittedly small. Nevertheless, it would seem that it is adequate to cover its requirements and needs. As this point will no doubt be touched upon by my hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. Patten) when he makes the Government's winding up speech, I shall rest my case on that note.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mr. Chris Patten): It is difficult to follow that contribution, but I shall do my best.

I hope that it will not disappoint the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) too severely when I tell him that we do not find it possible to accept the amendments to this small but helpful Bill. I was constantly reminded, both on Second Reading and this evening, of how difficult it is to do good in this world, but we are, as hon. Gentlemen will know, putting right something that has been frightfully successful for a number of years, and we should be given some credit for doing so.

I do not want to traverse once again all the arguments with which we dealt on Second Reading. On that occasion, I dealt with the argument put by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish about provocation and the other words that are generally regarded as synonymous with provocation, most of which he trotted out then and has trotted out since. Were I to do so, I should be repeating myself—*[Interruption.]* On the question of the dispute, perhaps I should once again make it clear, in case it is necessary, that the Government want an early, fair and lasting settlement to the dispute, which will ensure that we do not again get into appalling difficulties, and the resulting damage which we have seen all to frequently in the past decade or so.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: What will the hon. Gentleman do?

Mr. Patten: I should have thought that £1.25 billion is not chicken feed. That is on the table and would be regarded by most public sector unions as being the flexibility with which they could well do.

Mr. Bennett: If this is such a generous offer, why is it that the hon. Gentleman's charms have not persuaded the teachers to renegotiate?

Mr. Patten: It is not for me to comment on my charms. Perhaps none of us is perfect.

There has been some criticism both this evening and on Second Reading that we have not made available enough additional resources to provide for adequate and reliable supervision.

Amendment No. 1 would in due course reduce the additional expenditure which could be approved in England and Wales to about £28 million. In our view, that would not be adequate for the purpose. The increase that it would allow would not be sufficient to provide for the £40 million which we have said we are prepared to approve for education support grant purposes in the coming financial year. The effect of amendment No. 4 would be that we could approve expenditure on midday supervision for ESG support only until the end of the financial year 1986-87. I do not believe that to be desirable. I understand the attachment of the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish to the block grant as a hallmark of local democracy and local accountability. That raises much broader issues, with which I hope we shall have the opportunity to deal on future occasions.

Our intention, in offering the ESG for midday supervision, is to encourage authorities to develop new arrangements. In that sense, as we have said before, it is a pump priming activity. We expect that once the new arrangements are fully established they can be funded through the rate support grant in the same way as is most education expenditure by local authorities. I imagine that this will go some way towards satisfying the hon. Gentleman. However, at this stage we cannot be sure how long it will take. In primary legislation it would be wrong to impose a time limit of this kind.

The increase that we propose will provide for the approval of an additional expenditure of £55 million in England and Wales in 1986-87. There is therefore likely to be a small amount of headroom as a result of this increase. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has given an undertaking —he did so during our Second Reading debate—that pending the outcome of the review of local government finance, an outcome to which we all look forward, approvals for activities other than midday supervision will not exceed the existing 0·5 per cent. limit in the 1984 Act. I am perfectly happy to repeat that undertaking to the Committee.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether we envisaged paying for extra curricula work whenever it takes place during the day. The answer to this question is, as he

knows, in the negative. The overall work that is done by teachers must obviously be taken into account when determining their pay and considering their conditions of service. The sooner we deal with those things together the better.

When dealing with amendment No. 4 the hon. Gentleman referred to the relationship between the money that we are making available for lunchtime duties and the £1·25 billion. We have been accused of robbing teachers because the money for midday supervision will come from within the £1·25 billion that the Government have said that they are prepared to make available, if a suitable agreement upon teachers' duties and a salary structure can be reached. However, as has been said on almost more occasions than I care to recall, teachers have long argued for an end to the uncertainty over midday supervision. A resolution of this problem is bound to cost money. We made clear last August when we announced the £1·25 billion that it included a provision for new arrangements at midday. The remainder of the £1·25 billion continues to be available if the conditions for its release are met, but we are not prepared to give something for nothing. I ask the Committee to reject the amendments.

Mr. Bennett: I am disappointed by the Minister of State's reply. He has thrown no new light upon the difference between supervision and teaching during the lunchtime period. The Minister must address that central problem. He is saying that the payment can be made if either a teacher or somebody else who is specially employed for the purpose merely stops pupils from getting up to mischief. In other words, he wants to ensure that pupils eat in a civilised manner at lunchtime and that after they have had their lunch they are looked after in the school building or in the school playground. If, however, somebody finds something that is educationally useful for pupils to do at lunchtime, the Minister doubts whether the money can be used for that purpose. That is the central dilemma of this approach. While most educationalists want teachers to get a break so that they can be refreshed for their teaching in the afternoon, they would also accept, particularly in schools with a fairly lengthy lunch hour, that it is possible to have a break and to carry out a role at lunchtime that is both supervisory and educational.

It is logical that teachers who are carrying out both an educational and supervisory role ought to be paid some of this money for doing so. Until the Government can answer that central problem, the proposals in the Bill will run into difficulty. I do not believe that the amendment would usefully alter the Bill in any way, and I therefore beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2

Exclusion of certain remuneration from Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965

10.30 pm

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): I beg to move amendment No. 11, in page 1, line 17, at end add—

'which shall only be paid after local education authorities have satisfied the Secretary of State that adequate additional training has been provided for supervisory staff'.

The Chairman: With this it will be convenient to discuss amendment No. 7, in page 1, line 17, at end add—

'(2) This section shall not have effect until national minimum standards on the level of supervisory staff have been established.'.

Mr. Fisher: These amendments seek to ensure that whoever undertakes lunchtime supervision in schools is properly trained and is working to national minimum standards of staffing.

The questions of training and staffing were both raised on Second Reading, but the Government gave no clear indication on either matter. Tonight they owe it to head teachers, teachers, parents, children and anyone who may undertake this work in the future to make their position clear and to give some answers, particularly on safety and discipline.

Safety and discipline are difficult enough for trained, qualified and experienced teachers, but for untrained people the problems they raise will cause grave difficulties for the quality and maintenance of standards in schools. The premise behind the amendments is that most of the staff undertaking this work are likely to be untrained. The National Association of Head Teachers has estimated that the sums involved will allow payments at the rate of approximately £2·75 an hour. Do the Minister's figures accord with that? If so, very few teachers will accept that payment, and it is highly likely that the staff undertaking this work will be untrained and working to levels of staffing that are not specified in the Bill.

The Minister's Department is ultimately responsible, along with local education authorities, for ensuring the safety of children in schools, through Her Majesty's Inspectorate, and the provision of trained, qualified staff to teach our children.

Schools are extremely hazardous places. They are full of complicated, dangerous and sometimes heavy equipment, as well as chemicals. Many modern schools are full of glass, and in the urban areas many of our older schools are full of railings. These are all potential sources of accidents, especially during the dinner hour. In addition to any playground accidents or accidents with equipment, particlarly PE equipment, there is always the danger of fire. Since the Education Act 1981 there is also the problem of dealing with children with special educational needs.

Will children with special educational needs in normal primary, comprehensive or high schools be suitably supervised at lunchtime by unqualified and untrained staff working to unspecified levels of staffing? Such staff may well be unfamiliar with the premises and the materials to be found on them. How will they cope? Many secondary schools are now very large. I represent an inner city constituency, yet a school that I visitd last week has 840 pupils. Although it is in the middle of Stoke-on-Trent, it has 13 acres of ground, and additional hazards arise from shops, roads and visits to the chippy. How will unspecified levels of staff, particularly untrained people who do not know these premises, be able to supervise lunchtime?

I mentioned earlier the problems of fire and children with special educational needs. The Minister will recall that a few weeks ago a special school at Fenton in Stoke-on-Trent burnt down. Fortunately, that was not during the dinner hour. If it had been, handicapped children would have had to be got out of the building by unqualified staff.

[Mr. Fisher]

Is the Minister prepared to make any special provision for special schools? I am sure that he agrees that he has a particular responsibility to children with special needs.

Accidents are more commonplace, but how will unqualified staff cope with simple breaks and lacerations? I was amazed to learn from the North Staffordshire health authority last week that more than 100 children are admitted to the hospital casualty department in Stoke-on-Trent every week of the school term with lacerations and breaks. We are not accident prone; I am told that those are typical figures. Many more children suffer breaks, cuts and lacerations during the lunch break, and an onerous responsibility is being placed on staff who, if the Bill is not amended, will be working with no training and with unspecified numbers.

Who will be responsible for taking children to hospital? Will it be the head? What will happen if the head is off the premises, as the Bill allows him to be? What will be the levels of staffing and training? To whom will staff be responsible if things go wrong? Will they be responsible to the board of governors, to the local education authority or to the head?

What training do the Government envisage? Who will pay for the training? Who will set the standards of training? Will the Department of Education and Science get involved? What level of staffing does the Minister think will be necessary to ensure the safety of children? Will there be minimum national standards of training and staffing, or will it be left to each local education authority, with the Government saying, "You sort it out. It is your responsibility"? That would not be fair. The Government are changing the law and providing the money. They should be responsible for ensuring that staff are trained and that there is an adequate level of staff to ensure the safety of our children.

The problems of safety are containable compared with the less tangible problems of discipline. I am sure that the Minister and other hon. Members will know that discipline is difficult, even in some primary schools, particularly in inner city areas. There is a narrow line between order and chaos, and between a good educational atmosphere and a shambles in the classroom or the playground. If the Minister had ever had to take charge of high-spirited teenagers, let alone more difficult and disturbed children, he would know that these are serious problems and that the skill of maintaining discipline is not easy to learn.

How will discipline work with untrained non-teaching staff? Will lunchtime supervisors have disciplinary powers? That question is not answered by the Bill. What synchronisation does the Minister envisage between the lunchtime supervisors and teachers and head teachers? Who will supervise the lunchtime supervisors? Who will ensure that there is continuity of discipline in school hours and at lunchtime?

What advice would the Minister offer to a dinner lady or lunchtime supervisor who is left in charge of a high school and is approached by a large 14-year-old lad who uses what can only be described as unparliamentary language to her? That is not a matter of jest, though it has made some Conservative Members smile. That would be an unfair and difficult situation for the supervisor. It would also be unfair to other pupils, and it would be detrimental to the standards of discipline in the school. What will a supervisor do if there are two outbreaks of disciplinary problems and there is not enough supervisory staff to cope? The Bill does not ensure that there will be sufficient supervisory staff with adequate skills — staff provided nationally—to make sure that discipline is maintained.

I am sure the Minister will not deny that a breakdown in discipline at dinner time will have an effect on the whole of afternoon education in the school and could affect the quality and atmosphere of education in the school more permanently. I am sure the Minister will agree also that discipline is a vital ingredient in education and in the ethos of a school. Untrained supervisory staff of variable numbers, with unspecified guidelines, could have considerable problems and could do considerable damage to the school, to pupils, to staff-pupil relationships, to education and to standards in schools, which, rightly, the Government say they are seeking to improve.

I fear that the Government have not thought about any of these problems. The Minister agreed on Second Reading that they have not consulted any of the teachers' unions. I understand that the Government sent a note to the National Association of Head Teachers, but they have not indulged in any consultation. They have not thought the Bill through. They have not thought through the difficulties that the Bill will raise of training, staffing, appointing staff, the accountability of staff, the liaison that the staff may have with teaching staff and the position of the head and deputy head in relation to the staff. They have not even defined the lunch hour. I do not know how they have made their calculations without defining what they mean by a lunch hour. The Minister will know that a lunch hour varies considerably from school to school and authority to authority.

None of these problems has been considered by the Minister or his Department. In answering the debate on the first amendment, the Minister suggested that everything was quite simple and that it was a thoroughly uncontroversial Bill. The amendments reflect the difficulties that lie behind the unconsidered parts of the Bill. Even now it is not too late for the Minister to recognise that there are difficulties with the Bill. He would be wise to recognise them and to accept the amendments. I am sure he will agree that the Government owe it to parents and teachers to ensure that standards are maintained and that the supervisory staff in a school are properly trained and sufficient in number. The Government should set the standards, because they are introducing the Bill. They should set an adequate standard of training, and they should pay for the staffing that is proposed and for the training of the staff, to ensure that the staff are competent and efficient. Failure to do that will put schools and the standards within them in jeopardy.

The amendments are extremely constructive and give the Government the chance to improve the Bill by addressing the serious problems of safety, discipline and the quality of supervisory staff in schools. I urge the Minister to accept them and to improve the Bill.

Mr. Freud: The amendments are another example of concern that was expressed on Second Reading. It seems reasonable that if LEAs are to have to bid for ESG moneys, which is how the system has worked in the past, they should know what the rules are by which their bids will be assessed in future. I suggest to the Minister that he has not thought about this nearly enough. We do not know what he feels about ratios or the role of teachers, if any.

We do not know why he has rejected the idea of a national agreement. In a parliamentary answer which I received today——

Mr. Chris Patten: I am struggling to follow the hon. Gentleman's arguments. A short while ago he was accusing the Government of being too centralist in their approach. He is now saying that we should not leave everything to local authorities. His arguments are confusing. On the one hand, he is saying that we are centralising too much, and on the other he is saying that we are depending too much on local education authorities.

Mr. Freud: My point was that the Minister had not thought. I received a reply today, containing a fair amount of waffle, to my question about ratios. It stated:

"the sum of £40 million is not based on any single staffing ratio or rate of pay but the Government are satisfied that it will suffice to provide reliable and adequate supervision in schools in England and Wales."

The Minister has had the brilliance to pluck a figure of £40 million out of the sky and say, "This is an adequate sum", without giving the rationale for what those ratios will be. I remind him of the success that the Secretary of State had when he plucked the figure of £1·25 million out of the sky and felt that it was adequate to settle the teachers' dispute.

10.45 pm

Mr. Chris Patten: I hope that the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) will not regard me as being too legalistic if I say that the effect of the amendments would be decidedly bizarre. As they would add words to the end of clause 2, if enacted they would mean that the remuneration paid under the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 — the salaries of teachers and lecturers — should be paid only if local education authorities had satisfied the Secretary of State that they were providing adequate training and standards for supervisory staff. I cannot believe that that is the Opposition's intention.

I shall address myself to what may be the Opposition's intention. I cannot go along with the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central. We do not accept that additional training should be a statutory requirement for supervisory staff, which amendment No. 11 implies. It will be open to local education authorities to offer teachers separate contracts to do this work. It cannot be right to require local education authorities to train experienced teachers in the supervision of the midday break. I am sure that local education authorities will be guided by the principle that new supervisory staff must be capable of performing their tasks — covering safety and first aid, as the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central said — and of discharging the authorities' duty of care to the pupils in their charge. No doubt, some recruits will need short courses of training for this purpose—a point that has been taken on board by the Manchester education authority and the Inner London education authority which were considering, independently of this legislation, introducing lunch-time supervision. Authorities have experience in the provision of courses for such staff on which they can build.

The Committee should leave this matter to the local education authorities, which were properly commended earlier by the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud). I take the point that local education authorities and the Government will need to pay particular attention to special schools and units. The Government do not propose to issue guidance on the ratios of supervisory staff to pupils, which I understand was the thinking behind amendment No. 7. Our concern is to assist local education authorities to put in hand supervision arrangements which provide for work to be done under separate contracts, secure effective supervision over the period of the midday break under the overall authority of the head teacher—this takes up a point made by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent,. Central — and do not rely on voluntary participation of teachers. Provided that those objectives are met, we believe that staffing levels and the type of staff to be recruited are best left to local discretion.

Mr. Freud: Will the money be divided equally among LEAs on a per capita basis, or will those who can strike a bargain with their meal supervisors be punished?

Mr. Patten: We have set out in the draft circular which is in the Library the criteria on which we shall allocate funds. It is based on the number of children in an authority area and the number of schools. One must make some allowance for the size of schools and the existence of rural areas, which is why Wales has been treated in the way that it has been. Those details are set out in the circular. I am sure that that should satisfy the hon. Gentleman.

Those who press for the Government to prescribe staffing standards for midday supervision should reflect on the fact that no standards have been prescribed for teacher staffing in primary and secondary schools for some time. The Labour Government revoked the regulations relating to maximum class sizes in 1969. The Government do not think that it is right to introduce arrangements to secure the supervision of pupils at midday subject to the conclusion of a national agreement.

We believe that local education authorities are best placed to decide, within broad criteria, what arrangements are best suited to the circumstances of their schools, taking account of existing arrangements that vary from one area to another. For example, it will be for authorities to decide whether teachers should be given the opportunity to participate in supervision and for teachers to decide whether to accept that opportunity. Until the balance between teaching and non-teaching staff within the new arrangements is known, it would be premature to attempt a national agreement. Whether there should ultimately be a national agreement on midday supervision is not an issue for the Government, who would not be a party to it. It is a matter for the local education authorities and the staff whom they employ to resolve in the light of experience. I do not hear much support for the call made by the National Association of Head Teachers for a national agreement.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central suggested that midday supervision can be done only by teachers. That was a point that I sought to answer during the Second Reading of this admirable little measure. Already many people who are not teachers are employed to assist with supervision—about 90,000. Many adults are responsible for the safety and welfare of children in other areas. I do not believe that it is a job that can be done only by teachers. I therefore hope that the Committee will resist the two amendments.

Mr. Fisher: The Minister is being a little legalistic. Of course the Bill is difficult to amend, because it is unspecific. If the Minister would like to draft some amendments to the Bill on Report we would look at them

[Mr. Fisher]

with great sympathy and kindness. I am sure that his staff would have no difficulty in amending the Bill, if only the will was there. Unfortunately, the will is not there. The Government have said that they do not accept that there should be statutory training. The Labour party believes that the Government are wrong and that they will regret that decision. Time will prove that it is necessary to have statutory levels of training for the serious job of supervising children in schools.

The Minister talked about that being the responsibility of local education authorities and said that they should have short courses. He will of course, recognise that it will mean extra expense for the authorities if they take their responsibilities seriously. Does he believe that short courses at the discretion of local education authorities are adequate to deal with the problems that we have discussed? He said he believed that they should work within broad criteria. Is it his intention to publish those critieria, because they are certainly not laid down in the Bill?

If the Minister is saying that the Government will come forward with certain criteria, for example, minimum standards and guidelines within which local education authorities will work, we welcome that. That is what he appeared to say in the Bill. If not, he was referring to other criteria set by other people. I understood him to mean that the Government would come forward with the criteria. We would welcome that, because we believe it to be necessary.

The Minister also seemed to suggest that special schools were a particular case. What will the Government do to protect all children with special educational needs, not only those at special schools? I am sure that he recalls the provisions of the Education Act 1981, which ensures that children with special educational needs are educated alongside other children in ordinary schools. They, too, have particular needs of safety and discipline.

Is the Minister seriously saying that he does not believe that children with special educational needs require specially trained staff to supervise them at lunchtime? He cannot mean that. He knows that I was referring, not to teaching staff, but specifically to trained staff. For children at special schools with special educational needs, and physically and mentally handicapped children, it is wrong for the Government to say that they can be supervised by untrained and unqualified staff.

If anything goes wrong when the Bill is put into practice in schools, the Government will regret it. I urge them now to publish the guidelines or broad criteria to which they are working. In the hope that they will think again seriously about safety, particularly that of children with special educational needs, and in the belief that the Minister is serious about addressing the problems and will reconsider them on Report, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I beg to move amendment No. 13, in clause 2, page 1, line 17, at end add—

'(2) Section 2A above shall not apply to nursery schools.'.

Before the Minister jumps up to tell us that the amendment will not have the effect that he thinks we intend, let me tell him that we wish to take the opportunity to probe the Government on how they see the measure affecting nursery schools. If the amendment is impractical, we shall not be too disappointed. However, we shall be disappointed if the Minister fails to answer this question: in practice, what does he expect to happen in nursery schools?

The Minister has some major problems to sort out. In an earlier debate, he did not seem to be able to answer the question about the difference between supervision and education in the lunch hour. He will have greater difficulty in telling us where supervision finishes and where education starts in the nursery school.

In nursery education, the teacher and the nursery nurse have a different tradition of training and a clear difference in function, one being involved with education and the other in looking after the children, although in practice in many nursery schools it is often difficult to see where the skills of the one finish and the skills of the other start.

At lunchtime there will be greater difficulty in working out how to separate the supervision role from the education role. Anyone involved in looking after 3 to 5-year-olds in nursery schools will feel that it is part of the education to encourage the children to eat their midday meal in a civilised way and talk to each other, as well as to experiment with food that they are not likely to get at home. The teachers can talk about the nutritional content of the food and encourage the children to widen their taste so that they become interested in a wide range of foods. Those are educational areas. It would unfortunate if the Government want to give someone rate of pay that encourages him simply to supervise the children and see that they do not do any physical damage, rather than to carry out an educational role.

What does the Minister envisage will happen in the nursery schools? Does he envisage the nursery nurses working through lunchtime, or having a staggered lunch hour, whereas the nursery teacher will stop work at some point, and his or her role will be taken over by the person involved with lunchtime supervision? Then the teacher will start work again, having had a half hour or three quarters of an hour break. There will be great difficulties in making the Bill work effectively in nursery schools. I hope that the Minister will tell us how he thinks it will work.

11 pm

Mr. Chris Patten: Two points set the argument in context and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that, not unreasonably, they have determined our approach to the question. First, five out of six nursery pupils attend school part time, for either the morning or the afternoon, so the great majority do not need to be supervised during the midday break. Secondly, nursery schools and classes necessarily employ more non-teaching staff than other schools. As the hon. Gentleman rightly said, and as parents of young children will immediately appreciate, these very young pupils need more supervision at all times and not just at midday. That need is reflected in the fact that non-teaching staff out number teachers in these schools.

Local education authorities may consider that there are already adequate arrangements for supervision of pupils remaining on the premises at midday, but some may wish to make additional provision. That will be their choice in the light of the staffing of their schools. Authorities will be able to use ESG money for the supervision of pupils in nursery schools if they think it right to do so. If they decide

to offer separate contracts, there is no reason why those contracts should be treated differently from contracts for staff in other schools in terms of the Remuneration of Teachers Act.

The distinction between lunchtime supervision and extracurricular work at lunchtime, to which the hon. Gentleman has referred on several occasions, was made as long ago as the 1945 regulations and in the Rossetti report and subsequently, so although we all appreciate the distinction I think that on this occasion the hon. Gentleman is—to return to a word that we have both used—making a somewhat legalistic point.

Mr. Bennett: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Bill reported, without amendment.

11.3 pm

Mr. Chris Patten: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

The Government's purpose in this admirable little Bill is clear. We are seeking to promote the education of pupils by assisting local education authorities to make arrangements for supervision at midday which will ensure the orderly and efficient conduct of schools. As I have said before, I have been surprised at the objections raised by the Opposition on Second Reading and in our earlier consideration of the Bill today. I should have expected people as genuinely interested as I know that they are in the wellbeing of the education service to welcome this long overdue measure.

I would like to comment briefly on some of the objections that have been raised. We are accused of taking control of money which would otherwise have been available to local education authorities to spend as they wished. In respect of other ESG activities to be supported through education support grants, we have indeed said that the money should be found through redeployment within the total of planned expenditure on education, but we have recognised that midday supervision is a new demand which requires new money.

Under the arrangements that we propose, 70 per cent. of the additional cost of midday supervision arrangements which are approved for ESG support this year and next will be met from the Exchequer. There will be no reduction in block grant as a result of this proposal, so we cannot be accused of asking authorities to bid for their own money. Authorities will need to find the remaining 30 per cent. if they wish to qualify for ESG support, but that will be their own choice. No authority which does not wish to do so will be forced to seek ESG money for this purpose.

I hope that, in practice, most authorities will see the advantage of using the assistance we are offering to improve their arrangements for midday supervision. Some local education authorities are already acting to introduce arrangements along the lines we propose. We expect that many more will do so.

We have also been accused of rushing this measure through with unseemly haste, but the need in our schools is clearly, alas, urgent. The General Secretary of the Secondary Heads Association has been quoted as saying: "the urgency of the situation was such that delay might have extremely serious implications for pupils, parents and local communities".

The Association's members are in a position to know the damage being done to our schools. I might add that the Association has broadly welcomed our proposals. Like all of the other teacher bodies, it was consulted about our draft circular.

A more substantial objection, if it were true—which it decidedly is not—is that we are prepared to bring forward proposals on this subject but not to do anything to resolve the dispute about teachers' pay. The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) made that point earlier. I shall not repeat the arguments that have been put to the House many times. We want an end to this damaging dispute. We have done all that we can to achieve a settlement that is fair to all parties to the bargain. We should not forget that that must include the taxpayers and ratepayers who must ultimately foot the bill. They must find the £1·25 billion of new money that we have proposed.

Against that background, it is mischievous of Opposition Members to suggest that we should not go ahead with the Bill until employers and teachers reach a pay agreement for 1985-86. We all hope that an agreement will soon be reached. There is a meeting tomorrow, which I hope will move matters forward constructively. The Government will continue to try to find ways in which to bring the dispute to an end which is fair——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. That does not arise on the Third Reading of the Bill.

Mr. Patten: In that case, I shall come even more speedily to an exceptionally brief peroration. The Bill seeks to solve a longstanding problem which has caused increasing difficulties in our schools. I therefore commend it to the House.

11.8 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): We oppose the Bill receiving a Third Reading for the same reasons as we opposed its receiving a Second Reading. We object to the way in which education support grants are now being funded. Although we do not oppose the principle of specific grants, we oppose the Secretary of State removing money from hard-pressed local authorities to use it for his own purposes.

I accept that the Government will provide £28 million for 1986-87 to support supervision at midday. However, as the Minister admitted, local education authorities will have to provide £12 million out of their own resources and they will lose control over a further £12 million of their money.

Against the background of the growing crises of provision in our schools and the growing squeeze on education resources, we condemn the Government's failure to provide new money to cover all education support grants. We also oppose the Bill because we object to its timing. We recognise the strong case for a fully staffed ancillary service at lunchtime, but the Government have not answered some serious questions about training and staffing.

The Secretary of State is rushing through the Bill during the dispute without consulting the teachers, and that is understandably considered to be provocative, particularly since the £40 million approved expenditure comes from the so-called "envelope" of £1·25 billion which the Government say is available under certain conditions for teachers' pay.

[Mr. Giles Radice]

The third reason why we are against the Bill is the Government's sense of priorities. There is a glaring contrast between the Secretary of State's eagerness to rush the Bill through the House and his inactivity in solving the teachers' dispute. Since August the Secretary of State has either wrung his hands or sat on them. The dispute over teachers' pay has lasted 18 months in Scotland and 11 months in England and Wales, inflicting great damage on our children's education.

The Government must now set up an inquiry. It has responsibility for the education service——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is straying outside the Bill.

Mr. Radice: The Government must take responsibility for finding a solution to this damaging dispute.

The Bill does nothing to tackle the desperate shortage of money and crisis of provision in our schools. It is ill-timed. Above all, it does nothing to bring an end to the teachers' dispute. For those reasons, we oppose the Bill.

11.12 pm

Mr. Freud: The Minister described the measure as an admirable little Bill. That is how King Edward VII referred to the Kaiser. My right hon. and hon. Friends will oppose the Bill, mainly because of its irrelevance, and because the Minister has failed to provide anything remotely like supervision at mealtimes. He is providing only for people to stand around while children eat.

I oppose the Bill because it does nothing to make education in 1986 less awful than it was in 1985. What is more, it takes £40 million out of education expenditure which might have helped solve the teachers' dispute. I oppose it because it will do nothing towards finding a solution, and nothing towards setting up an inquiry that might finally help education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have already reproached the Minister and the Opposition spokesman. The hon. Gentleman must address his remarks to what is in the Bill.

Mr. Freud: I wanted to show the unity throughout the House. I can see no good cause——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman seems to suggest that I am the only right hon. Gentleman who is out of step, but I am the only one in step. I hope that he will get in step with me.

Mr. Freud: I accept that and shall move on quickly.

Our opposition to the Bill is predominantly because it does nothing new. The only new step taken by the Secretary of State recently was to appoint the hon. Ladies the Members for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) and for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) to junior posts because he is the only man in the House who does not know the difference between them. I welcome their appointments, but I hope that their talents will be used in future for more acceptable causes.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 145, Noes 66.

Division No. 29] **[11.15 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Benyon, William
Blackburn, John
Body, Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bruinvels, Peter
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hickmet, Richard
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lord, Michael
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Portillo, Michael
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roe, Mrs Marion
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Spencer, Derek
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Peter Lloyd and
Mr. Francis Maude.

NOES

Alton, David
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale

Clarke, Thomas
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S.)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freud, Clement
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, John
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Kennedy, Charles
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ronald
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Maxton, John
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Rogers, Allan
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Skinner, Dennis
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alex Carlile and
Mr. James Wallace.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Education Support Grants

11.25 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mr. Chris Patten): I beg to move,

That the draft Education Support Grants (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1985, which were laid before this House on 27 November, be approved.

The draft regulations amend the Education Support Grants Regulations 1984 so as to add one further item to the purposes for which my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales may pay grant. The additional purpose is "securing the supervision of pupils in schools at midday".

My right hon. Friends have consulted the Association of County Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and the Welsh Joint Education Committee about their proposals. Those associations raised no objections to the amendment effected by the draft regulations.

There has already been considerable debate in the House on our proposal to pay education support grants for midday supervision. I do not want to flog an argument which has long since been deceased. Therefore, I shall concentrate on two points which have a particular bearing on the draft regulations.

First, I shall explain more fully the resources which the Government are making available for this purpose. We shall add £10 million to relevent expenditure for local authorities in this financial year. The aggregate of Exchequer grants to local authorities will be increased by £7 million, representing 70 per cent. of the total which will be supported through education support grants, if the draft regulations are approved. For next year, the sums involved are £40 million and £28 million respectively. Those additions for 1986-87 can be made available only if the Education (Amendment) Bill, which the House has just read a Third time, receives Royal Assent.

Secondly, hon. Members may welcome some information about the nature of new arrangements which might result from our proposals. The description in the amendment regulations is deliberately drawn widely. My right hon. Friends have no wish to prescribe the details of any arrangements which local education authorities consider suitable for their authorities and schools. Before approving expenditure for education support grant, they will wish to be sure that the proposed arrangements satisfy a few simple criteria. Those criteria are described in the draft circular, a copy of which is in the Library.

We have received some helpful comments on the draft circular from the local authority and teacher associations, and others who were invited to comment, and we will look at the draft again in the light of those comments. If the regulations receive the approval of Parliament, we shall issue the circular to all local education authorities inviting them to submit proposals for approval for education support grant. Our aim is that grant should be payable on expenditure incurred from the beginning of the spring term so that authorities may move ahead quickly with their plans to provide proper supervision at midday.

I ask the House to approve the amendment regulations.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Education Support Grants (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1985, which were laid before this House on 27th November, be approved.

SCOTTISH GRAND COMMITTEE

Ordered,

That, in the course of its consideration of the matter of the recommendations of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council concerning higher education in Scotland, the Scottish Grand Committee may meet in Edinburgh on Monday 20th January 1986 at half-past 10 o'clock.—*[Mr. Mather.]*

ARMED FORCES BILL

Ordered,

That Mr. Gerald Bermingham, Sir Antony Buck, Mr. Roger Freeman, Dr. Norman A. Godman, Mr. Kenneth Hind, Mr. Robert Key, Mr. Kevin McNamara, Mr. John Stanley, Mr. Neil Thorne, Mr. Peter Viggers and Mr. James Wallace be members of the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill:

Ordered,

That Three be the Quorum of the Committee:

Ordered,

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records:

Ordered,

That the Committee have power to adjourn from place to place.—*[Mr. Mather.]*

House of Commons Members' Fund

11.29 pm

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): I beg to move,

That in pursuance of the provisions of section 3 of the House of Commons Members' Fund Act 1948 and of section 2 of the House of Commons Members' Fund and Parliamentary Pensions Act 1981 the maximum annual amounts of the periodical payments which may be made out of the House of Commons Members' Fund under the House of Commons Members' Fund Act 1939, as amended, and the annual rate of any payments made under section 1 of the said Act of 1981 shall be varied as from 1st December 1985 as follows:

(a) for paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 to the said Act of 1939, as amended, there shall be substituted the following paragraph:

1. The annual amount of any periodical payment made to any person by virtue of his past membership of the House of Commons shall not exceed £2,355 of such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring his income up to £4,353 per annum whichever is the less:

Provided that if, having regard to length of service and need, the Trustees think fit, they may make a larger payment not exceeding £4,545 or such sum as, in their opinion, will bring his income up to £6,543 per annum, whichever is the less:

(b) for paragraph 2 of that Schedule there shall be substituted the following paragraph:

2. The annual amount of any periodical payment to any person by virtue of her being a widow of a past Member of the House of Commons shall not exceed £1,179 or such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring her income up to £3,177 per annum, whichever is the less:

Provided that if, having regard to her husband's length of service or to her need, the Trustees think fit, they may make a larger payment not exceeding £2,268 or such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring her income up to £4,266 per annum, whichever is the less:

(c) in paragraph 2A of that Schedule for the words 'the annual amount of any periodical payment' to the end of the paragraph, there shall be substituted the words: 'the annual amount of any periodical payment made to any such widower shall not exceed £1,179 or such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring his income up to £3,177 per annum, whichever is the less:

Provided that if, having regard to his wife's length of service or to his needs the Trustees think fit, they may make a larger payment not exceeding £2,268 or such sum, as in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring his income up to £4,266 per annum, whichever is the less:

(d) in section 2(1) of the said Act of 1981, for the words from the beginning to the end of paragraph *(b)* there shall be substituted the words: 'the annual rate of any payments made under section 1 shall be—

(a) £1,372 if the payments are made to a past Member; and

(b) £686 if the payments are made to the widow or widower of a past Member'.

The motion is in the names of right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House who share with me the responsibility, as trustees, of administering the fund.

The purpose of the motion is to provide for and to increase the present levels of grants and payments which may be made under the Members' fund legislation, in line with the recent increases approved for public service and national insurance retirement pensions.

Members of this House now enjoy pension rights under the parliamentary contributory pension fund, but this has not always been so. Former colleagues who left the House before 1964 have no pension whatever from the House.

Many of them live in considerably reduced, and indeed straitened circumstances, not least those who are now of advanced years and, even more so, the widows or widowers of former Members. The Members' fund has existed since 1939 to provide assistance where necessary to former Members and their dependants, but the help that my fellow trustees and I are empowered to give from the fund is extremely modest.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): What is the present annual rate of payment from the fund?

Mr. Morris: The present annual rate is £138,000.

The trustees are deeply conscious of the need for more help from the fund and are urgently considering what steps might be taken to achieve improvement.

A further problem is that the needs of former colleagues or their widows or widowers are not always known to us, which is why on occasions like this some attention to the fund's work is important. I shall be most grateful if right hon. and hon. Members will get in touch with me if they become aware of any former Members or their dependants who are in need of help that the fund can provide.

I need not detain the House for long, as the provisions for which I and my fellow trustees seek approval are set out in detail in the motion. In paragraph 1(a) we set out the new provisions for grants to ex-hon. Members. At present the trustees are authorised to make grants to ex-Members of up to £2,199, provided that the total income of the applicant, including the grant, does not exceed £4,067. By this motion the grant is raised to £2,355 and the income limit to £4,353. To this is added a provision by which the trustees will be authorised to make larger payments, having due regard to length of service and need, of a grant of up to £4,545, provided that the income of the applicant, together with the grant, does not exceed £6,543.

Grants to widows are set out under subparagraph *(b)*. At present the grant to an ex-Member's widow is £1,101, provided that her income, with the grant, does not exceed £2,969. This grant is raised to £1,179, and the income limit raised to £3,177. There follows the provision by which, having regard to her husband's length of service, or to need, the trustees will be enabled to make grants of up to £2,268, provided that the widow's income, with the grant, does not exceed £4,266.

Grants to widowers are set out in subparagraph *(c)*, and the provisions there are similar to those for widows in subparagraph *(b)*.

Subparagraph *(d)* refers to the "as of right" payments from the Members' fund to former Members who had 10 years of service before October 1964, and to widows and widowers of such Members, provided for by the House of Commons Members' fund, and the Parliamentary Pensions Act 1981, which came into force on 19 March 1981. We now seek to increase the payments, at present at the rate of £1,282 per annum, to former Members to £1,372 per annum, and the payments to widows or widowers from £641 per annum to £686 per annum.

These new provisions will all be effective from 1 December 1985. They provide for increases of approximately 7 per cent. across the board, in line with the provisions in the Pensions Increase (Review) Order 1985, and the additional expenditure arising from the motion will be £9,800.

I hope that the motion will receive the unanimous support of the House, for I can assure right hon. and hon. Members that the experience of the trustees has made us realise how urgently this further provision is needed and how very much it will be welcomed by the fund's beneficiaries.

Finally, I wish to thank most warmly Mr. J. L. G. Dobson, the Accountant, and his colleagues in the Fees Office, both for their constant help to the trustees and for their ever humane concern for the wellbeing of those whom we serve.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That in pursuance of the provisions of section 3 of the House of Commons Members' Fund Act 1948 and of section 2 of the House of Commons Members' Fund and Parliamentary Pensions Act 1981 the maximum annual amounts of the periodical payments which may be made out of the House of Commons Members' Fund under the House of Commons Members' Fund Act 1939, as amended, and the annual rate of any payments made under section 1 of the said Act of 1981 shall be varied as from 1st December 1985 as follows:

(a) for paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 to the said Act of 1939, as amended, there shall be substituted the following paragraph:

1. The annual amount of any periodical payment made to any person by virtue of his past membership of the House of Commons shall not exceed £2,355 or such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring his income up to £4,353 per annum whichever is the less:

Provided that if, having regard to length of service and need, the Trustees think fit, they may make a larger payment not exceeding £4,545 or such sum as, in their opinion, will bring his income up to £6,543 per annum, whichever is the less:

(b) for paragraph 2 of that Schedule there shall be substituted the following paragraph:

2. The annual amount of any periodical payment to any person by virtue of her being a widow of a past Member of the House of Commons shall not exceed £1,179 or such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring her income up to £3,177 per annum, whichever is the less:

Provided that if, having regard to her husband's length of service or to her need, the Trustees think fit, they may make a larger payment not exceeding £2,268 or such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring her income up to £4,266 per annum, whichever is the less:

(c) in paragraph 2A of that Schedule for the words 'the annual amount of any periodical payment' to the end of the paragraph, there shall be substituted the words: 'the annual amount of any periodical payment made to any such widower shall not exceed £1,179 or such sum as, in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring his income up to £3,177 per annum, whichever is the less:

Provided that if, having regard to his wife's length of service or to his needs the Trustees think fit, they may make a larger payment not exceeding £2,268 or such sum, as in the opinion of the Trustees, will bring his income up to £4,266 per annum, whichever is the less:

(d) in section 2(1) of the said Act of 1981, for the words from the beginning to the end of paragraph *(b)* there shall be substituted the words: 'the annual rate of any payments made under section 1 shall be—

(a) £1,372 if the payments are made to a past Member; and

(b) £686 if the payments are made to the widow or widower of a past Member'.

Fuel Poverty

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

11.36 pm

Mr. Geraint Howells (Ceredigion and Pembroke, North): When the unnaturally cold spell hit us in November, many thousands of householders up and down the country were alarmed, for they saw ahead of them yet another long, dreary winter following on a cold and wet summer, with the ever-rising fuel bills that this means. This thought is depressing enough for the moderately affluent among us, but for those on the poverty line, or beneath it, it spells disaster and, for many, the inevitable cutting off of supplies because of the lack of ability to pay.

The Electricity Consumers Council recently issued disconnection figures up to 30 September of this year which show that the number of disconnections in England and Wales is now running at nearly 100,000 a year. The Liberal party commission on poverty in 1982 pointed out that one quarter of all local authority tenants are the victims of fuel poverty, while a further quarter are potential victims.

Age Concern tells us that seven years ago it was estimated that 90 per cent. of elderly people were unable to heat their homes up to the required 70 deg F to keep themselves warm and healthy in the winter months, and there is very little evidence that the position is improving. The consequences of inadequate heating for the elderly are often illness and, in some cases, death. We are all familiar with the sad stories of old people shivering in their poorly heated houses, terrified of the financial consequences of turning up the heat. Fuel costs have risen steeply in the last decade, and although prices have levelled off somewhat during the last two or three years the overall rise in the cost of fuel and light in real terms during the decade was 37·4 per cent., far outstripping other items in the household budget.

The people who have suffered most from the increase in fuel costs are inevitably the poor. They tend to live in bad housing, with inadequate insulation, often with the additional problems of dampness and condensation. They are seldom able to choose the kind of heating that they want and often end up with expensive and inefficient heating systems. This leads to a ridiculous situation, where those who can afford it least have to pay the most to keep themselves moderately warm. It is no wonder, therefore, that this leads to a failure to pay bills and to consequent misery.

We believe, as do the charities, that the White Paper that was published today will do little to help. Indeed, we feel that the difficulties will be even greater, both for the low paid who cannot heat their homes and for those charities that are involved in insulating several thousand homes in Britain.

The abolition of additional payments, including heating allowances for supplementary benefit claimants, will have serious consequences. The replacement of supplementary benefit by a system of income support containing a theoretical heating component may sound reasonable, but in practice it will lead to some very unpleasant choices for many households where budgets are strained to the limit. It could well be a stark choice between eating and keeping warm, with disastrous results for vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly.

I am also extremely alarmed that all other heating benefits to households, with special problems—those with young children or with ill, disabled or elderly people —will be abolished merely as an administrative convenience. It is also obvious that the abolition of single payments will jeopardise the future of insulation projects run by charities such as Neighbourhood Energy Action. In fact, the "Right to Fuel" campaign has said that DHSS single payments account for 80 per cent. of all insulation work carried out by the NEA.

Since 1981, this excellent group has carried out 120,000 jobs and has helped the elderly and disadvantaged to get the benefit of home insulation. At the same time, it has created about 2,500 jobs under the Government's community programme. Furthermore, it has opened up a new and thriving market for insulation projects. Will that work now be put at risk?

I believe that the present Administration, in their unseemly scramble to save money wherever they can at any cost, are in danger of reinforcing their public image as an uncaring, unsympathetic Government who are so intent on introducing tax cuts before the next election that they are careless of the needs of the most vulnerable in our society.

The White Paper represents a lost opportunity. It should have made an attempt to tackle the problem of fuel poverty, and it should have recognised the crucial role that single payments play in keeping the poor warm. The Government should take positive steps to make resources available for a special fund, as recommended by the Neighbourhood Energy Action movement, to provide a comprehensive and cost-effective approach to the insulation needs of the poor.

On a wider scale, greater efforts should be made to improve the housing stock and to ensure that building improvements and renovations are not subject to a crippling tax. Age Concern, a leading charity in the care of the elderly, has made many useful recommendations that the Government could well take on board and which would prove beneficial to all impoverished sections of society. It recommends that there should be mandatory payments for special circumstances, such as higher fuel bills in exceptionally severe weather. There should also be payments for draught proofing materials and insulation, repairs to heating appliances and so on.

I also believe that there should be a uniform and humane policy throughout Britain on disconnection procedures and repayment facilities, and that special payments should be made for reconnection. Fuel bills should be paid when disconnection may cause serious risk.

Will the Minister reassure the House that the Government are conscious of the need to modify their policies to fit the realities of life? After all, even the poorest among us are entitled to the basic requirements, including adequate heating. It is wrong that so many in this affluent society must face a miserable existence, and in this season of good will I hope that it will be possible for the Government to show just the smallest glimmer of compassion.

11.44 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Does the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) have the

consent of the Minister and of the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells) to take part in the debate?

Mr. Bruce: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells) for giving me the chance to speak in this important debate.

I and others are grateful that the unfair trigger mechanism that was highlighted last year has been phased out, but I hope that the Minister will recognise that there is still a feeling particularly in northern parts of the country, that the system is unfair, because those in the northern parts—particularly the poorer members of the community—who have, by definition, higher heating costs, need additional help which is not yet available. The Government should try to ensure that such help is given.

The fact that a trigger mechanism could even be contemplated is indicative of the bias that exists against the northern areas. The temperature did not have to sink to freezing point in Penzance for people there to secure a benefit, but in my constituency, the temperature had to sink to 2·7 deg. below freezing—and that was on the coast. Temperatures inland were 10 deg. C. lower, but people still did not qualify for benefit. Getting rid of that system is one step, but we need another step to ensure help for those in colder parts of the country.

No doubt the Minister will say that the Government's contribution to fuel allowances has increased from £100 million to £400 million a year since they came to power. That is creditable, because it shows that the Government are willing to make a contribution to fuel costs, but we have not made the logical link of trying to help those on low incomes to reduce fuel costs. After all, some do not qualify for help, but still face high costs.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North mentioned the neighbourhood energy action schemes, which have been welcome. I was recently pleased to launch a scheme in my constituency. It took 13 people off the long-term unemployment register and gave poorer members of the community the opportunity to insulate their homes, so that they had lower fuel bills and higher temperatures. The risks of hypothermia were reduced and everyone was happy. It is important that such assistance, which we welcome, should be boosted and extended and not cut.

Many elderly people and those on low incomes are worried about standing charges on fuel bills. I was disappointed that the opportunity to abolish standing charges was not taken in the Gas Bill. Worse than that, when the Bill came before the House, the Secretary of State said that the best that he could write into the Bill was that the British Gas Corporation should use its best endeavours to keep the increases in standing charges in line with, or lower than, the rate of inflation. That is not good enough. We want to get rid of those charges and ensure that people on low incomes have help to meet fuel costs, help to be warmer and more comfortable and help to insulate their homes. I hope that the Minister will take up those points with his colleagues in the Department of Energy. They are linked.

11.49 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. John Major): I listened with interest to the hon. Members for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North (Mr. Howells) and for Gordon (Mr. Bruce). I understand and share many of the concerns which they have expressed and congratulate them on the way in which they have expressed them.

The issues raised by the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North ranged wide and covered both fuel policy and the alleviation of poverty. He spread the net even wider by referring to draught proofing, housing and a variety of allied matters. I propose to refer briefly to energy prices, although strictly speaking they are for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. I propose to devote most of my remarks to the help given to the less well-off through the social security system, but I shall attempt to touch upon the specific issues raised by the hon. Members for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North and for Gordon.

Both hon. Members mentioned the projects that have been undertaken by various neighbourhood energy action groups. There is not a great deal that I can say about them this evening, save that I recognise the good work that has been done by the groups. Decisions have yet to be taken on how they will be funded in future. That is a matter that we are considering. I hope that it will be understood that I can go no further than that this evening.

The hon. Member for Gordon referred to some of the absurdities of the exceptionally severe weather payments and the disapproval last year which that method of making payments received in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman will know that the chief adjudicating officer issued fresh guidance about the payments only recently. We are considering the guidance and the future of that form of assistance with heating bills. The hon. Gentleman will know that last year the payments amounted to only £1·7 million, while administrative costs were £1 million. I mention those figures, not to denigrate the help that was given, but to put them in the context of the £400 million-worth of heating addition payments to which the hon. Gentleman referred.

The hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North illustrated the extent to which the cost of fuel is relevant to those on low incomes. I accept that view. It is an important view, and I accept what he had to say on that score. Fuel is clearly a basic necessity, especially for the elderly and the sick. I recognise the concern that is felt by many on low incomes when it comes to paying for fuel. I shall come to what has been done, what is being done and what will be done under our new proposals to try to alleviate that concern.

Reluctant though I am to do so, I must take issue with the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North about the term "fuel poverty". It is a phrase which is often used these days, and upon examination it is a rather curious concept. The general idea of poverty itself is far from straightforward. We can recognise it, but it is not always easy to define it. The hon. Gentleman will know that the standard rate of supplementary benefit for adults has more than doubled in real terms since 1948 and that this benefit is the primary means of alleviating poverty, and has been so under successive Governments for some years. Yet the hon. Gentleman talks of fuel poverty. We do not hear a great deal about clothes poverty, or food poverty, but fuel poverty appears in a rather curious fashion to have developed a life of its own. Fuel, like clothes, food and all the other necessities for rich or poor alike is paid for out of people's normal income.

[Mr. John Major]

I recognise that individual need for expenditure on fuel can vary, but that is true of other necessities. I do not wish to make too much of what may seem to be a matter of semantics, but it is often misleading to talk about fuel poverty as if it were some special breed of poverty that necessarily requires different measures from those that are generally used to support the less well-off. An effective attack on poverty, which we all wish to see, comes in many guises — for example, benefit rates, control of price increases, economic stability and economic growth. Energy prices are a part of that tapestry, but only a part.

Although the general financial framework within which the gas and electricity industries operate is agreed with the Government, price increases remain a matter for the industries themselves. The Government do not set prices and do not have the power to so. Tariffs must reflect the industries' costs and provide a proper return on the substantial capital resources that they employ. They are not a means of indirect taxation. I call in evidence to support my proposition the relatively low level of price rises in recent years, which the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North acknowledged. They have been below the rate of inflation in the past two years and charges have therefore fallen in real terms. After allowing for inflation, the price of gas to the home is roughly what it was in 1970.

The hon. Member for Gordon addressed himself to standing charges. I know that these charges have been a cause of deep concern to many for many years, especially to the elderly. The charges reflect the necessary cost of keeping a supply available to the consumer in his own home for 24 hours a day. They cover the maintenance of the connection, meter reading, accounting, billing and emergency services. The costs arise no matter how much or how little gas or electricity is consumed by the individual householder.

The abolition of standing charges, although self-evidently attractive in some ways, is not an easy option. It would cost the gas and electricity industries more than £1·1 billion a year in lost revenue. Abolition for pensioners alone—if we could determine which pensioners should have abolition, whether it should affect people living on their own and all the other details that must be decided — would cost about £300 million. That lost revenue would have to be recovered by substantial increases in unit prices, which would penalise many of those who, through age, sickness, infirmity or some other reason, need more heat, even though they may be among the least well off.

That raises the question, which may have flashed through the mind of the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North, whether there should be special tariffs or free allowances for people on low incomes. That has been considered in the past, but successive Governments have concluded that it would be an expensive, ill-directed and probably ineffective means of helping those most in need. In 1976, the Labour Government announced that they had reviewed possible help through concessionary or restricted tariffs or free allowances of gas and electricity. Their conclusion—I quote from the report's foreword which was written by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn)—was that these did not offer

"a satisfactory way of helping poor consumers with their fuel bills".

I am sure that the right hon. Member was right, and I suspect that the Liberal party thought so too, because, as far as I am aware, it expressed no contrary view at the time. Successive Governments have therefore taken the view that help is best given through the social security system. That help is considerable.

More than £40 billion is spent on social security—about a third of all Government spending. We have kept the major benefit rates ahead of the rise in prices during the lifetime of the Government and, because of the increases in benefit last month in line with inflation, we increased our spending by a further £2 billion a year. The main help for the less well off with their day-to-day living expenses, including fuel costs, is through the standard weekly rates of supplementary benefit. Those rates increased by 6 per cent. in real terms between November 1978 and November 1984 and were increased again last month in line with inflation. They have doubled in real terms since 1948, and I think that every hon. Member welcomes that.

On top of those benefit rates, we provide extra weekly help for those with special needs. The hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North mentioned people with special needs—the elderly, the very young, the sick and the disabled. Each is entitled to heating additions. Last year we spent more than £400 million on those heating additions, which is £140 million more in real terms than any previous Government have spent at any time. Since 1979, we have extended the help available. In November 1979 we introduced a basic rate of heating addition for pensioner householders over 75. Over the years, we have extended the age range so that this now takes in pensioner householder over 65. We have introduced a similar addition for the under-fives. Last November, we introduced a new higher rate of heating addition, worth well over £200 a year—a considerable sum—payable automatically to householders over 85. We have also assisted disabled people. Since 1980, we have paid a higher rate of heating addition automatically to severely disabled people people on supplementary benefit who receive attendance or mobility allowance or its equivalent. Last month, we introduced a further measure — automatic entitlement to a basic rate heating addition for sick and disabled householder claimants on the long-term rate of supplementary benefit. As a result of these changes, we estimate that 60 per cent. of all people on supplementary benefit and 90 per cent. of supplementary benefit pensioners now receive a heating addition. That is a dramatic improvement on the position before 1979 and represents a considerable attack on what the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North referred to as "fuel poverty".

The hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North referred to the White Paper proposals. I should like to explain why we felt it right to move forward and reform these arrangements, as announced in the White Paper which was published today. The answer is that heating additions are merely a means of giving more help to certain groups of claimants who may have extra heating needs. The additions are better, in our view, than tariff adjustments and certainly better than nothing, but they are not the only, or necessarily the best, form of assistance.

Heating additions are a rather curious mixture. Many are paid automatically on grounds such as age, but others involve detailed questioning on matters such as the claimant's health. There is a complex array of rates, rules

and regulations. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North did not feel that the White Paper would be an improvement on the present rather muddled situation. He asked me whether I was conscious of the need to modify policy to match reality. That is what we believe the White Paper is doing. I hope that, upon reflection, it will be shown that we are right, although I acknowledge that it is a controversial issue at present.

In the White Paper we are proposing an income support scheme to replace the current weekly supplementary benefit. Income support will continue to provide set allowances for normal living expenses, including fuel costs. There will also be premium payments for families, pensioners, sick and disabled people and lone parents to help with the extra expenses that those groups tend to have — including extra heating costs. That will mean a system that is simpler than the present one. It will be easier for the public and staff to understand. It will cut out much of the intrusive questioning that now takes place — I think that everyone will welcome that—and it will also effectively direct extra help to groups of people who are likely to face extra expenses.

As I said in the House only a couple of weeks ago, the fact that we shall not call the premiums "heating additions" does not mean that they do not exist, that the cash is not in the claimant's pocket and that it cannot be used towards fuel costs. We believe that income support will, in future, be a better means of delivering that help and we intend that the money spent on heating additions will be included in the resources available for the new scheme. Nor are we alone in that view. The Social Security Advisory Committee commented similarly on the Green Paper in June. The committee welcomed the idea of premium payments in income support for different groups. Moreover, the Select Committee on Social Services said that it

"broadly accepted the principle of premiums reflecting the additional needs of individual client groups".

Therefore, I think that a substantial amount has been done, is being done and will continue to be done to meet the needs of people who face difficulties with fuel poverty through poor or low incomes. I hope that the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North will accept that we are sincere in our intention to help those people meet the difficulties that they face.

I also hope that on reflection the hon. Gentleman will see the wisdom of the approach that we set before the House in the White Paper today and that we shall seek to carry through in a Bill early in the new year. I am confident that when the House debates the Bill, it will take that view. I hope that it will carry the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues with it at that time.

I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's concern that people should be able to afford adequate heating. We share that concern and we shall continue to offer substantial assistance to that end, but we shall do so in a way that we regard as simpler and more effective than the current system. We believe that our proposals will meet those criteria and I hope that in due course they will be endorsed by the House and the hon. Member for Ceredigion and Pembroke, North who raised the subject.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at three minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 17 December 1985

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

NEW WRITS

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Mr. Speaker, I have given you notice that I am desired today to move for the issue on 3 January of your Warrants in respect of Writs for by-elections in 15 constituencies in Northern Ireland—that is to say, all the constituencies in Northern Ireland except Belfast, West, and Foyle—in place of the 15 Northern Ireland Members of Parliament who have accepted today a disqualifying office—we used to call it "an office of profit under the crown".

In order to save the time of the House may I ask that these motions be taken together and that their text be published in the Votes and Proceedings and in the *Official Report?*

Mr. Speaker: Does that course have the agreement of the House?

Hon. Members: Aye.

Ordered,

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of East Antrim, in the room of Roy Beggs, Esquire, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of East Londonderry, in the room of William Ross, Esquire, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone in the room of Kenneth Maginnis, Esquire, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Manor of Northstead in the County of York.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of Lagan Valley, in the room of the Right honourable James Henry Molyneaux, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of Mid-Ulster, in the room of the Reverend Robert Thomas William McCrea, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of Newry and Armagh, in the room of James Nicholson, Esquire, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of North Antrim, in the room of the Reverend Ian Richard Kyle Paisley, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Manor of Northstead in the County of York.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of North Down, in the room of James Alexander Kilfedder, Esquire who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of Strangford, in the room of the right honourable John David Taylor, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of South Antrim, in the room of Clifford Forsythe, Esquire, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Manor of Northstead in the County of York.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of South Down, in the room of the Right honourable John Enoch Powell, M.B.E., who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Manor of Northstead in the County of York.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the County Constituency of Upper Bann, in the room of James Harold McCusker, Esquire, who since his election for the said County Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, in the County of Buckingham.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough Constituency of Belfast East, in the room of Peter David Robinson, Esquire, who since his election for the said Borough Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Manor of Northstead in the County of York.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough Constituency of Belfast North, in the room of Alfred Cecil Walker, Esquire, who since his election for the said Borough Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Manor of Northstead in the County of York.

That, on Friday 3rd January, Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new Writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough Constituency of Belfast South, in the room of the Reverend William Martin Smyth, who since his election for the said Borough Constituency hath accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Manor of Northstead in the County of York.—*[Sir Peter Emery.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers' Pay Dispute

1. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the teachers' pay dispute.

2. **Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' pay dispute.

3. **Mr. Haselhurst** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the teachers' pay dispute.

6. **Mr. Alan Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the outstanding issues in the teachers' dispute.

11. **Mr. Randall** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the teachers' pay dispute.

17. **Mr. Merchant** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' pay dispute.

19. **Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the current position in the teachers' dispute.

20. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the latest position in the teachers' dispute.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Sir Keith Joseph): The teachers' panel of the Burnham committee met on 5 December and resolved to seek an early resumption of negotiations. The management panel met on 11 December and agreed to undertake further informal discussions with the teachers' side. Discussions are taking place today.

I welcome any development which may help to achieve a settlement of this bitter, damaging and unnecessary dispute. But it remains the Government's view that an honourable, worthwhile and lasting settlement will come only from a bargain which clarifies teachers' duties and reforms their career structure as well as improving pay levels. The teachers' unions have so far refused to try to negotiate a deal of that kind.

Mr. Yeo: Is my right hon. Friend aware that hundreds of thousands of families are desperately worried by the serious and permanent damage that is being inflicted on their children by the dispute? Is he further aware that while many of them recognise that the intransigence of the NUT has brought about the situation, they look to the Government in general and to my right hon. Friend in particular to take a lead in bringing about an early solution to the problem?

Sir Keith Joseph: Yes, and some of the teachers' unions could end the disruption today. The Government have taken an initiative in the conditional offer that they have made.

Mr. Haselhurst: Does my right hon. Friend accept that there are two unyielding obstacles—the determination of the teachers to prolong the dispute and the non-availability of resources to make an increased pay settlement in 1985? Will he equip himself with the powers necessary to pursue the objectives which he rightly has, and bring an end to this damaging dispute?

Sir Keith Joseph: If the Government sought to equip themselves with powers, I doubt whether that would immediately end the disruption.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Alan Howarth.

Mr. Hancock: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My question is No. 2 on the Order Paper and I was informed that my question would be taken with question No. 1.

Mr. Speaker: The mistake is entirely mine. Mr. Hancock.

Mr. Hancock: Will the Secretary of State say whether responsibility for settling the teachers' dispute has been taken out of his hands by the Prime Minister? Will he inform the House what proposals she has laid before him for any solution to the dispute and of any initiative coming from her?

Sir Keith Joseph: The hon. Gentleman should not believe everything that he reads in the newspapers. The Government have no new initiatives to put before the House.

Mr. Howarth: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that it is the Government's desire that, as resources become available, teachers' salaries should more adequately reflect the great importance of their responsibilities and their high professional standards, but that one of the conditions for teachers enjoying such a high professional standing is that they should forswear the disruption of their pupils' education?

Sir Keith Joseph: I agree with the latter part of my hon. Friend's question. To ensure the recruitment and retention of the right quality of persons as teachers and effective teaching, the Government see it as necessary to provide an adequate pay and career structure.

Mr. Merchant: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the serious anxiety now being displayed by parents at the effective abandonment of children during lunchtime in many areas by the teachers' unions' withdrawal of supervision? Is he aware of the problems in Newcastle where, in some areas, children have been threatened with sexual abuse and assaulted during lunchtime because there is no supervision? What steps is he taking to ensure that local authorities use their maximum powers to ensure that alternative arrangements are made at lunchtime to provide supervision for those children?

Sir Keith Joseph: The House will be aware that the Government have introduced a Bill to enable local education authorities to make alternative and effective arrangements for midday supervision.

Mr. Spencer: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the National Union of Teachers has taken special selective action in the constituencies of some Members to whose views it has taken exception? Does he agree that that is an especially nasty and vindictive form of attack on innocent children?

Sir Keith Joseph: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I agree with my hon. and learned Friend. It is only a fraction worse than the general indifference to children's welfare shown by some teacher unions.

Mr. Flannery: The Minister says that the unions could end the dispute overnight. Why does he not say that the reality is that the Government could end the dispute overnight? Despite his gerrymandering of the Burnham committee, the teachers' unity will continue for a long time after Christmas because of the Government's intransigence in failing to pay teachers a professional wage and refusing to give them the status that they should have, which would be the way to get children back to school. He knows that as well as the House does.

Sir Keith Joseph: Why does the hon. Gentleman persist in ignoring the fact that after a mere 20 minutes the National Union of Teachers and other teachers' unions rejected the Government's initiative when they offered substantial increases, conditionally, of pay for good teachers?

Mr. Sean Hughes: Did the Secretary of State mean what he said when he told the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) that the Government have no intention of taking any initiative to bring this dispute to a halt?

Sir Keith Joseph: The Government have taken an initiative which the teachers' unions could request the employers to pick up again tomorrow if they wished.

Mr. Barnett: Is the Secretary of State aware that the NUT's demands, which if responded to by him would settle the dispute, are entirely reasonable? It has asked for the cost of living during the current financial year to be taken into account, for the relativities between teachers and other professions to be restored, that there should be an element in the settlement to take account of the fact that teachers have fallen far behind others, and that he should give a commitment that there will be an attempt in future years to restore teachers' salaries to the level of Houghton? Is that not reasonable?

Sir Keith Joseph: No, Sir. The NUT walked out of negotiations in December 1984 which might have provided additional finance from taxpayers for the current year.

Mr. Haynes: Why does the Secretary of State have a one-track mind? There are two arguments in this. Why does he not stop interfering, and let the unions negotiate and settle the matter? They will win in the end.

Sir Keith Joseph: It would be extremely satisfatory if some Opposition Members spoke up for the children.

Mr. Greenway: Is my right hon. Friend aware that I recently saw a deputation of parents whose children had refused to attend a detention imposed on them for misbehaving during the teachers' strike? Is that not understandable, but sad, silly and tragic? Has not the time come for teachers to stop damaging children's education and to go back to work, and for a proper inquiry, not just into pay, but into pay and conditions, to be held?

Sir Keith Joseph: I agree with the first part of my hon. Friend's question. I am not convinced that an inquiry, however broad, would automatically bring this disruption immediately to an end.

Mr. Janner: Is the Minister aware that of the many teachers whom I have met and who are now in dispute, every one regrets having to take what he or she regards as necessary action to protect his or her profession and rights? Is he further aware that the teachers deeply resent the sort of allegation that he has seen fit to make again today, that they do not look after the welfare of the children, about whom they care deeply, but that that does not prevent them from trying to ensure that their profession has a decent life and continues to attract the first-class people whom the Minister would wish it to attract?

Sir Keith Joseph: The teachers are men and women given by God free will, and it is their decision to disrupt children's education. There is no question of having to do that.

Mr. Cormack: Does my right hon. Friend accept that while nothing can excuse the victimisation of children that is taking place on such a wide scale, and while only the teachers can give a status to their profession, there is real merit in my right hon. Friend considering during the recess the suggestion made by his predecessor, our right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle), who suggested the establishment of a review body to consider the whole issue, on condition that further action was immediately called off?

Sir Keith Joseph: The behaviour of teachers is not such as to recommend the Government to consider a review body. Moreover, it is perfectly possible for the employers and teachers to agree on pay that rewards good teachers, recruits and retains people of the right quality, and which is affordable.

Mr. Freud: Does the Secretary of State genuinely believe that he is doing enough to settle the teachers' dispute?

Sir Keith Joseph: If the hon. Gentleman has suggestions that would be affordable, would achieve the Government's purposes, and would end the disruption, I would gladly listen to them or read them. Of the options available to the Government, I believe that the right one is to persuade the teachers to do their duty by the children and to finish the disruption now.

Mr. Powley: Would my right hon. Friend care to reflect on the attitude of the general secretary of the NUT when in a 20-minute address to the Back-Bench education committee he never once mentioned the effect of the dispute on the children, whom we should consider primarily, nor its financial effect? Many of us see other areas for expenditure in the education service, such as on improvement in the capitation allowance, and in buildings, and on welfare in schools.

Sir Keith Joseph: I would not be surprised if that were true, and I am sure that the gentleman concerned remains self-righteous despite it.

Mr. Radice: With the dispute now in its 11th month, is it not about time that the Secretary of State took a fresh initiative? He has not moved since the beginning of August to try to end the disruption in our schools. Why does he not establish an independent fast-acting inquiry on teachers' pay, which many of us have been urging on him for many months?

Sir Keith Joseph: The employers also asked for an inquiry and the Government considered such ideas, but

there is no reason to expect that an inquiry would automatically end the current disruption. I hope that the hon. Gentleman tries to bring the same persuasive power to bear on the teachers as he does on the Government.

CERN

4. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has yet decided on the level of future British contributions to the CERN project.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. George Walden): My right hon. Friend has not yet reached a decision in this matter.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Is my hon. Friend aware that the CERN project is a rare example of a successful European collaborative venture that which will help to keep Europe in the forefront of world science? Does he agree that if we alone reduce our contribution we shall send all the wrong signals to the many other European countries involved, as well as damaging the project itself?

Mr. Walden: I agree with the first part of my hon. Friend's question and one of the first things that I did was to go to visit CERN for myself. It is a centre of excellence. It is no part of our intention to damage it, but we have taken serious note of Professor Kendrew's recommendations, and in his view it will be possible to save 25 per cent. of the expenses. I reaffirmed in my contacts with member states that the Government continue to place the highest priority on European collaboration.

Mr. Dalyell: Why did the hon. Gentleman say last night that it would be wrong to make a hasty judgment?

Mr. Walden: Because that is self-evidently the truth. Professor Kendrew reported in June. I am undertaking a round of consultations and so far I have talked to nine of the 13 Ministers of member states. That is not evidence of hasty judgments.

Mr. Freud: Are there not grave implications for international co-operative ventures such as might come with SDI? Would it not be more sensible to invest money than to withdraw from something as valuable as CERN?

Mr. Walden: Not for the first time, I fail to see the connection between two propositions that the hon. Gentleman has put.

Dr. Bray: Is the Minister's proposal for a joint independent review of CERN similar to that of the Kendrew committee, or is he considering a wider international review of particle physics research, in which the United States and the Soviet Union might participate? Does not the latter course open up wider possibilities of international co-operation?

Mr. Walden: For the moment, our objective is to secure a radical review of the CERN operations, but against a mental background of the kind recommended by the hon. Gentleman. I noted carefully the thoughtful comments that he made on this subject in last night's debate.

Teachers' Pay Dispute

5. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will institute an inquiry into the arrangements for the remuneration of teachers and their conditions of service.

Sir Keith Joseph: On 11 December the management panel restated its view that a Royal Commission or some other kind of inquiry should be established to look into teachers' pay, structure, conditions of service and negotiating machinery. Naturally I will give careful consideration to that request, but I have to say that it is difficult to see how such action would produce an early resolution of the present dispute in view of the union's insistence on a settlement for 1985 without conditions, at a level which the employers cannot afford.

Mr. Chapman: While I hope that good sense will prevail, particularly on the part of the NUT leadership and the dispute will be brought to an end, I should like my right hon. Friend to be a little more forthcoming. Is there any good reason why he should not set up a short inquiry now, irrespective of whether the negotiations are successful, and in linking conditions of service and pay have such an inquiry, whether or not with the co-operation of the NUT?

Sir Keith Joseph: It is not self-evident that such an inquiry would bring to an end the present disruption. Discussions are taking place this afternoon between the employers and the teachers' representatives. I do not want to pin too much hope on what might emerge from the discussions this afternoon, but I repeat that an inquiry would not necessarily end the disruption.

Mr. Spearing: The Secretary of State said earlier that this was a bitter and damaging dispute, and he referred to initiatives. Does he agree that it was his initial initiative and the requirement to link appraisal and pay that has caused the length and bitterness of this dispute? Is not the Secretary of State's initiative responsible, therefore, for a high proportion of the bitterness and damage to which he referred?

Sir Keith Joseph: No, indeed not. I do not for a moment believe that my modest suggestion, which is agreed in principle by so many teachers as well as by so many members of the public, has any part to play in this dispute.

Mr. Alexander: I accept the constraints under which the employers must operate in this dispute, but is it not a fact that there is a great shortage of mathematics and science teachers? Is not this shortage likely to continue until arrangements can be made to make salaries attractive to graduates in those disciplines?

Sir Keith Joseph: Most certainly yes. One of the advantages of the offer that the employers made on 12 September, with the help of conditional additional money from the taxpayers, was precisely that it would have enabled employers to offer relatively attractive salaries to teachers who are in short supply.

Mr. Freeson: Whenever it is suggested that an independent inquiry of some kind should be set up—a suggestion that comes from both sides of the House and from outside—why does the Secretary of State keep on repeating, parrot fashion, the phrase, "It is not self-evident that such an inquiry would end the present disruption"?

Nobody is suggesting that it would, but just because it is not self-evident to the Secretary of State, must everybody else therefore be ignored? Why will he not shift just a little bit to meet the views of many people, of all persuasions, and make some kind of movement to resolve the present dispute?

Sir Keith Joseph: It is an indication of the irrationality of some of the unions involved in the dispute that makes the right hon. Gentleman accept the possibility that even an inquiry would not bring to an end the destructive damage that is being caused by the dispute to the education of children. It is often in the minds of hon. Members on both sides of the House that, if introduced, an inquiry would end the disruption. I believe that it is right to say that that is not self-evident.

Mr. Madel: Is it not time, after 11 months of dispute, that the teacher trade unions made use of the good offices of ACAS to try to resolve the dispute? Even though the full-scale intervention of ACAS would not necessarily end the dispute, it should lead, first, to a lowering of the temperature and, secondly, to an end to the industrial trouble while ACAS does its best to solve the problem. Why do the trade unions not go to ACAS and be seen to be trying to solve the problem?

Sir Keith Joseph: My hon. Friend makes very sensible suggestions, but they are, alas, for the trade unions and the teachers concerned, not for the Government.

Mr. Radice: Many hon. Members on both sides of the House, and people outside, will be deeply depressed by what the Secretary of State has said this afternoon. Why does he not put an end to the Government's muddle, indecision and inactivity over the teachers' dispute and announce that he has decided upon and agreed to set up an independent inquiry?

Sir Keith Joseph: For the umpteenth time—because I do not believe that it would fulfil the hopes of many hon. Members, and of many outside the House, who imagine that the teacher unions would then behave reasonably.

Student Grant

7. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to restore the student grant, in real terms, to its 1979-80 value.

Mr. Walden: No, Sir.

Mr. Alton: Will the Under-Secretary admit that yesterday's decision to increase student grants this year by only 2 per cent. will mean that by next year students will have sustained a cut in real terms of 20 per cent. since 1979, and that yesterday's decision to reduce students' housing benefit, unemployment benefit and supplementary benefit during short vacations will mean that in real terms £14 million will be cut from students' allowances during the next year, making a net saving to the Government of £20 million? Does he not accept that he is surreptitiously introducing by the back door the provisions of his Green Paper, against the wishes of his own Back Benchers?

Mr. Walden: I accept—because it is incontrovertible—that over the years there has been a cut in the grant to students, but the hon. Gentleman must accept that the number of students in this country is at an all-time high. Secondly, he must accept that students in this country benefit from the most generous system of support in the Western world. Thirdly, he must accept that the cost of that support must be shared among students, parents and the taxpayer.

As for benefits, I understand that a written answer on this question is down for reply tomorrow by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

Mr. Forth: Is my hon. Friend aware that our student grant system is the envy of many students throughout the world, who are expected to make a much greater contribution towards their education? Will he undertake again to review the possibility of introducing a loan system, which works perfectly satisfactorily in many other civilised, developed countries?

Mr. Walden: Let me elaborate on the cost of student grants in this country. The United Kingdom devotes a greater proportion of GNP to student support than do our major competitors. For example, it is twice as much as West Germany, two and a half times as much as the United States, and about seven times as much as France and Italy.

I assure my hon. Friend and the House that full consideration was given to all the implications of introducing a loan system, but it was felt that for a number of reasons it would not be right to introduce it at the present time. Two of the reasons were high initial costs and the effect on low income groups.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Can we take it from what the Minister has said that the Government are now determined to reduce the record number of students by giving them inadequate support? Why, after six years in office, cannot the Government at least afford to maintain the level of student grants rather than cutting them by about 3 per cent. next year? Should not the Minister come clean and tell us what will happen to student grants as a result of the removal of the right to claim housing benefit during vacations? Does yesterday's statement that there will be some adjustment mean that the grant will be substantially below the amount that will be lost?

Mr. Walden: The hon. Gentleman must realise that there is no evidence at all to suggest that the fall in the value of the grant has resulted from a decline in the demand for higher education. Therefore, his first question falls heavily to the ground.

He asked why the Government could not afford to do better. If he took the trouble to look back, he would find that, unfortunately, there has been a steady decline in the value of grants ever since 1962. Perhaps this was another example of this country promising too much, too widely.

Although the hon. Gentleman referred to benefits, I am sure that he would not wish me to anticipate the answer that will be given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

World Archaeological Conference

8. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to meet representatives of the Association of University Teachers to discuss the proposed world archaeological conference; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: No, Sir. No approach on this issue has been made to the Department.

Mr. Stern: Is my hon. Friend aware of the circumstances in which a major international congress, which would normally attract academics from all over the world, has been attacked by the Association of University Teachers, which wishes to define the countries from which people should be invited? Is he further aware that that attack had been backed up by the vice-chancellor of Southampton university, Dr. Higginson? In view of this attempt to blackmail academics into submission to the current political shibboleth, will he note that the guidelines issued yesterday by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals on freedon of speech in our universities are silent on this form of blackmail? Will he send them back, on the basis that they are totally inadequate?

Mr. Walden: I have, naturally enough, seen references to the ban in the press, but it is entirely a matter for the organisers of the world archaeological conference whether to impose one. I understand that the matter has not been considered by the senate or the council of the university and that no such condiion was proposed by the university. My hon. Friend suggests that we send back the guidelines from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, which we received only this morning. I hope that he will give us time to read them first.

Crayford School

9. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has received any representations about the proposed closure of Crayford school.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mr. Chris Patten): No, Sir.

Mr. Evennett: Will my hon Friend consider the proposal to close Crayford school carefully when it arrives on his desk for a decision, and take account of the wishes of parents and the local community? Will he also consider the problems that children will face if they have to travel a long way to another school?

Mr. Patten: I know what an informed interest in due course my hon. Friend has shown in this issue. I assure him that my right hon. Friend will want to take appropriate account of all representations from his constituents.

Schools (Internal Management)

10. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will introduce legislation to restrict the circumstances in which local education authorities may intervene in the internal management of schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Education Bill to be introduced this Session will include proposals to establish a consistent pattern in the distribution of functions between the governing body, the local education authority and the head teacher. The local education authority will not then be able to override the governing body or the head teacher in the discharge of the functions allocated to them.

Mr. Hamilton: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. I am sure he will be gratified to learn that we are on the same wavelength. There is a widespread desire among parents to strike off the shackles of political control and make schools more autonomous. Can my hon. Friend confirm that the Bill will cover the circumstances such as have occurred at Poundswick school in Manchester? What happens in the meantime, until the Bill is passed? What protection is there for parents?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend has filled my cup to overflowing and I very much hope that he is a member of the Committee that considers the Bill. Irrespective of whether we are talking about Poundswick or other matters, what is at issue is not so much the powers held by different interests, as how they are exercised. When responsibilities are split, there is scope for unproductive conflict. That can never be entirely removed.

Mr. Alfred Morris: The Secretary of State wrote to me on 9 December about the dispute at Poundswick high school in Manchester. As today—17 December—marks the time limit for a reply from the Manchester education authority to the Department's recent letter, is there anything more that the Minister can say further to the reply that I received on 9 December?

Mr. Patten: We have not yet received a reply from the education authority. I quite understand the right hon. Gentleman's concern and we shall, of course, get in touch with him as soon as possible.

Mr. Lawler: If the Labour and Liberal groups had had their way in Bradford, Mr. Honeyford would have been summarily dismissed a long time ago merely for expressing views with which they happened to disagree. Will my hon. Friend give an assurance that, in the forthcoming legislation, opportunities for local authorities to dismiss school staff will be restricted?

Mr. Patten: I suggest that my hon. Friend awaits the Bill. I understand that the difficult and sensitive issue to which he referred has now been settled, but I deplore the way in which some extremists have aggravated a delicate situation in a way that is clearly not in the interests of children.

Youth Training Scheme

12. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the educational content of the youth training scheme.

Mr. Chris Patten: The new two-year youth training scheme will give all trainees the opportunity to secure a recognised vocational qualification combining training and work experience with relevant education.

Mr. Pike: Does the Minister not understand that the Manpower Services Commission, YTS trainees and the Trades Union Congress aspire to a higher educational content in the YTS programme and that that cannot be achieved without additional funding? How can he expect the two-year programme to achieve a better standard of educational content with the same real terms funding as the one-year programme?

Mr. Patten: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman has said. I shall send him a copy of the speech that I made to the further education staff college a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Dorrell: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the object of the YTS is to provide a skilled labour force for industry? It may be important to provide extra funding for adult education, but is it not better to address that issue separately than to try to distract the YTS to provide the funds?

Mr. Patten: I take my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Sheerman: Rather than sending us copies of his speeches, will the Minister take on board the fact that many of the disadvantaged youngsters in our community who are in what are now called premium places—which used to be called mode B schemes — on two-year schemes are in great need of a special sort of education content? Is he aware that they will not receive the education content that they deserve, because of the 15 per cent. limit? Many disadvantaged youngsters will not have a mode B or premium place scheme within the YTS. What will he do about that with his colleagues in the

Mr. Patten: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman said. I think that he was straying into some of the territory of my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General. I still think that the hon. Gentleman would find my speech quite interesting.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is the Minister happy with the increasing infiltration of the MSC into education, which is provoking an artificial split between education and training? Surely it is important to recognise that any training given under a two-year YTS would qualify the trainee for higher education. Does not the split between the Departments impede that development?

Mr. Patten: The more I listen to the hon. Gentleman, the better I think my speech was. I do not accept his premise.

Free Speech

13. **Mr. Maclean** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what response he has had from vice-chancellors and principals of institutions of higher education to the concerns that he has expressed over the suppression of free speech.

Mr. Walden: Higher education authorities have affirmed their support for the principle of free speech. The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals yesterday published guidelines for the universities on freedom of speech and lawful assembly. My right hon. Friend welcomes this action and will consider whether the content of the guidelines raises questions that he would wish to discuss with the committee.

Mr. Maclean: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Is it not a fact that the report from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals said, in effect, "Of course we believe in free speech, but"? Did it not then produce a series of excuses for not being able to implement that belief in reality? Will my hon. Friend and the Government consider the prosecution of any student who is involved in incidents such as that which we saw at Manchester university involving my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Waddington), the Minister of State, Home Office?

Mr. Walden: The practical problems of ensuring that an individual speaker is given a fair hearing are formidable. The Government are grateful for the advice of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to the vice-chancellor of Manchester univerity expressing his view that a refusal to give a hearing to a Minister who had been invited to explain Government policy cannot be defended. He noted that the university's declared intention was to take firm action in response to the incident at Manchester on 8 November. The university made it clear immediately after the incident that it would consider recommending its council to withhold a proportion of the student union's grant if the latter's full report on the incident and its causes was not satisfactory.

Mr. Conlan: Why does the Minister not inform his hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and the Border (Mr. Maclean), as the Prime Minister is fond of informing others, that prosecutions are for the police and have nothing to do with the Government?

Mr. Walden: The premise on which the hon. Gentleman's question was based is obviously wrong, but his assertion that criminal prosecutions are matters for the police is obviously right.

Parent Governors

14. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to ensure that elections of parent governors are fairly conducted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Under section 2(9) of the Education Act 1980, responsibility for the conduct of elections of parent governors is for the local education authority, except in the case of aided and special agreement schools, where that is for the governors. Any contested election has to be by secret ballot, but otherwise LEAs and governing bodies are free to make what arrangements are appropriate to their particular local circumstances.

Mr. Howarth: Does not my hon. Friend agree that there should be provision to provide for a quorum of parents? Does he not also think it a good idea that notices of the elections for parent governors should be published in the annual report of the school, not only so that parents can be given plenty of warning, but so that they can choose suitable candidates?

Mr. Patten: The greater the clarity, and the longer the warning of the elections, the better.

Teacher Appraisal

15. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science by what means he intends that teachers should be appraised; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Keith Joseph: I should like to see teacher appraisal conducted at the level of the individual school by the teachers themselves, in accordance with general arrangements introduced and monitored by local education authorities.

Mr. Bruinvels: I welcome my right hon. Friend's commitment to proper teacher appraisal. However, is he aware that Fred Jarvis, the secretary of the National Union of Teachers, and various other high-ranking officials, are deliberately smearing his plan? They are suggesting that the assessment will be done purely on pupils getting better examination results, rather than teachers improving themselves in the school. Is that not a shocking approach?

Sir Keith Joseph: I do not agree with everything that Mr. Jarvis does or says, but I am informed that there is a good deal of unanimity of opinion between Mr. Jarvis and his union and the Government on the matter of appraisal.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty The Queen.

Mr. Fallon: Does my right hon. Friend accept that there is widespread concern on the Conservative Benches about the moral implications of unprosecuted fraud, hidden evidence, and ill-made money, and that we welcome the rigorous steps proposed by her right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry at the weekend to clean up those parts of the City which the law does not appear to reach?

The Prime Minister: I agree with the views expressed by my hon. Friend. No one is more anxious than the Government to ensure that those who are guilty of fraud are brought to justice. The Lord Chancellor and the Home Secretary have just received Lord Roskill's report. It contains about 112 recommendations. We shall be considering it carefully. It is a weighty document, and we hope to be able to publish it next month.

Q2. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Ms. Short: Will the Prime Minister admit that she and her Ministers have been seriously misleading the House and the country over the past three months in suggesting that the unemployment rate has been falling and that that development shows some improvement in the real economy when, in fact, the fall is caused by an increase in places on the Government community programme for the long-term unemployed? That programme has increased by just over 24,000 places. The seasonal drop in unemployment is only just under 16,000, so that in the real economy unemployment is still rising. When will the Government start to do something about real jobs in the real economy instead of just fiddling the figures?

The Prime Minister: I thought that the Opposition were in favour of a community programme and of training young people. I shall have to revise my views, because clearly they are not. Yes, there are 230,000 places on the community programme to help the long-term unemployed back into work. Yes, there are 30,000 unfilled places. Yes, we shall continue with the programme because we wish to continue to help the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Hannam: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the Labour party's policy to renationalise newly privatised industries, with compensation being given only on the basis of the original investment price? Does she agree that that is a disastrous threat to the millions of new shareholders?

The Prime Minister: Wider share ownership is a great principle of the Conservative party. The Labour party will have nothing to do with it.

Mr. Kinnock: In 1984 the Prime Minister promised "to protect the poor and those most in need."
What does she now say to the pensioner couple in their seventies, who will lose £3 a week? What does she now say to the middle-aged couple on a take-home wage of £75 a week, who are to lose £5 a week? What does she say to a 24-year-old single worker taking home £55 a week, who is to lose £12? How does she excuse the malice and immorality of that act of robbery against the people who are already poor?

The Prime Minister: What the right hon. Gentleman wants to do is to accept all the increases that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services announced yesterday, and to forget that there might have to be some losers—*[Interruption.]* There might have to be some losers—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman wants to forget that there might have to be some losers. However, if he looks at the total expenditure, which is set out in the autumn statement, he will see that this year the total planned expenditure on social security is £40 billion, but by the year 1988-89 it is planned to be £46 billion. That is an increase of £6 billion, which will have to be found out of taxation and contributions by ordinary people.

Mr. Kinnock: Is it not about time that the Prime Minister honestly admitted to the country that more money is spent on benefits for the poor because her policies have made many more people poor? Is it not time for her to say to those whom she glibly dismisses as "some losers" that she could not live on £75 a week and could not tolerate a further loss of £5 a week? How can she defend taking money from people who are already desperately poor, when she knows that her objective is to give more to those who are already very rich?

The Prime Minister: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said yesterday, the point of the proposals is to direct resources to the areas of greatest need. The new family credit will go to 200,000 more families with children than now have the family income supplement. The right hon. Gentleman wants to take the benefits and all the increases, and accept none of the consequences of redistribution. My right hon. Friend wants improved incentives to work, and he wants to ensure that commitments entered into can be afforded. With that in mind, he has put forward his proposals, and they will require an increase in expenditure over planned expenditure this year and expenditure in 1988 of some £6 billion, which will have to be found by the taxpayer. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will think that that is reasonable. If not, how much more would his plan cost?

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister now tell us when it is right to increase the money given to the near destitute in this country? What on earth is the moral or economic justification for finding that money by stealing from the very poor?

The Prime Minister: Once again, the right hon. Gentleman has gone over the top—*[Interruption.]* I take it that he does not want any of the increases that are to go to families, that he does not want improved incentives to

work and does not want to ensure that commitments entered into can be afforded. He wants to promise the earth and not say how it is to be paid for.

Mr. Hill: Does my right hon. Friend agree that although elderly people are interested in pensions and housing benefit, they are mainly concerned about the protection of their environment, law and order on their council estates, and the fear that they cannot safely open their doors in the evening? Will my right hon. Friend continue to reinforce the police and help the chief constables in the regions to have discussions with the communities on neighbourhood watch schemes?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that elderly folk, along with others, are very much concerned with law and order, especially on the council estates. I think he will agree that under this Government old-age pensions have gone up by more than the cost of living, and that under this Government old-age pensioners have had their Christmas bonus every year, which was not the case under the Labour Government.

Q3. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Lewis: In the dispute between the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Secretary of State for Defence, whose side is the right hon. Lady on?

The Prime Minister: I am on the side of a company that is hoping to keep business going for its considerable work force, that has responsibilities to its shareholders and moral responsibilities to its work force, that must deal with its obligations to its bankers and that also has to consider the legal obligations of auditors. In the very sensitive situation that we now have, I suggest that it is left to the company to decide its future.

Dr. Hampson: Will my right hon. Friend go further and take this opportunity to correct the impression that emerged from yesterday's statement on Westland that the Government are backing the Sikorsky deal and confirm that for a long time the Government have sought greater collaboration among European armament manufacturers, which is particularly long overdue with helicopters?

The Prime Minister: Westland is a public limited company. It must take its own decisions. The Government saw that it had a choice. The board has legal obligations to the shareholders, it has moral obligations to the work force, the banks have their obligations and the auditors have their legal obligations. The people on the board are the only ones in a position to know all the facts. They must make their assessment and present that to the company.

Mr. Steel: Reverting to the first question to the Prime Minister this afternoon, since the deputy chairman of the Conservative party is reported to be acting as a character reference for the return of Mr. Postgate to Lloyd's, will she remind him and everybody else that the Government, like her predecessor's, stand against the unacceptable face of capitalism?

The Prime Minister: I have said that the Government have probably done more than any other to try to tackle fraud wherever it occurs. That will continue to be our policy. As I said, Lord Roskill's report has reached the Government. We are publishing today the White Paper on banking supervision, and the Financial Services Bill will be introduced later this week. We have done, and shall continue to do, everything possible. I suggest that the right hon. Gentleman does the City a great disservice by forgetting the number of jobs and the amount of income that it provides for Britain. He is trying to suggest that because some things may be wrong somewhere, that applies to the whole City. That is not correct.

Mr. Robert Atkins: While we are on the subject of aerospace, has my right hon. Friend noticed today that the figures for the British aerospace industry are £1 billion up on this time last year, representing a 23 per cent. increase, and of that some 60 per cent. are exports to the world? Does not she think that that is the jewel in the crown of British manufacturing industry?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate the aerospace industry on its excellent export record and would like to point out that other parts of manufacturing industry have done very well. Indeed, exports by manufacturing industry were a record last year.

Q4. **Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: Does the fact that the under-25 age group appears to be another group targeted for cuts in welfare benefits mean that the Prime Minister now accepts the view of the vice-chairman of the Tory party that too many young people will not get off their backsides and find work?

The Prime Minister: As I said earlier, no one has done more for youth training than have this Government. The one millionth youth trainee has now entered the scheme. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry that the Labour party treats these matters with such levity.

Q5. **Mr. Freeman** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Freeman: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the excellent reception on the Conservative Benches of yesterday's White Paper, especially the proposal for a broader spread of personal pensions? Will she continue to preach the principles of thrift and the broader spread of financial assets?

The Prime Minister: I am glad that my hon. Friend welcomes the White Paper. It is meant, among other things, to give wider choice to those who wish to save through a personal pension scheme and build up a capital fund on their own account. It is also directed to help more effectively those in greatest need, such as young families, through the new family credit scheme, and to give improved incentives to work.

It means that the commitment that we enter into can be afforded. That is a matter to which the Opposition have given no attention since the last election. Indeed, since then they have already promised an additional £10 billion without specifying from where that will come.

Mr. Adley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will have noticed that, during Question Time, once again the tactics of the Labour party were to shout down my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister at every opportunity—*[Interruption.]*—as they are trying to do to me now. Will you please use your influence to protect this House from the barbaric tactics of the Opposition?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The noise during Question Time today was rather greater than usual, so I agree with the hon. Gentleman on that point.

Banking Supervision

3.31 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

I am publishing today a White Paper setting out the Government's proposals for strengthening banking supervision, with a view to bringing a new banking Bill before the House early in the next Session.

The proposals contained in the White Paper reflect the vital importance that this Government attach to effective supervision. They build on the findings of the review of banking supervision that I set up exactly a year ago today under the chairmanship of the Governor of the Bank of England, in the wake of the Johnson Matthey Bankers debacle. Six months later, when the group's report was published, I told the House that the Government were minded to accept its two key recommendations. I can now confirm that both will be implemented.

First, the new legislation will extend to banks the higher supervisory standards that Labour's 1979 Banking Act applied only to licensed deposit takers, and not to recognised banks. That means that the so-called two-tier system will go. I have, however concluded that it would be right to confine the use of the name "bank" to institutions with at least £5 million in paid up equity capital.

Second, the Government will do whatever is needed to permit effective two-way communication between supervisors and bank auditors. If this can be done on the basis of agreed professional guidelines, underpinned by statute, well and good; if not, we shall not hesitate to take appropriate further powers.

However, assisted by the extensive consultations that have taken place since I made my statement to the House in June, I have become convinced that it would be right in a number of respects to go beyond the Leigh-Pemberton committee's recommendations.

The key to better supervision is the organisation and ability of the supervisors themselves. Last October, the Governor announced changes in the Bank's organisation to give supervision a higher priority. To carry that further, he will now set up, as soon as possible, a new board of banking supervision within the Bank of England. The board will be given statutory backing in the forthcoming legislation. It will be chaired by the Governor, and a majority of its members will be experienced practitioners from outside the Bank of England. That will bring independent outside expertise to bear at the highest level and give more forceful direction to the task of bank supervision. The board's views will be separately identified in the Bank's annual report, which I lay before the House.

Second, supervisors cannot do their jobs unless they have adequate, accurate and timely information. That was one clear lesson of the JMB affair. Under the existing legislation, it is not a criminal offence to mislead the supervisors, even if this is done knowingly or recklessly. I propose to make it one—with appropriate penalties.

As I told the House in June, one of the most conspicuous reasons for JMB's failure was that it was over-committed to a small number of closely related borrowers. Building on the Leigh-Pemberton committee's recommendation, I propose to make it a statutory requirement for banks to notify all such exposures in excess of 10 per cent. of their capital base; and all exposures in excess of 25 per cent. will require prior notification.

Important as they are, rules of this kind are not enough. Supervisors need to have a better knowledge of individual institutions at first hand. I therefore welcome the steps that have recently been taken to increase the frequency of supervisory visits to banks, on a routine basis as well as where there are grounds for prudential concern.

The nature of banking is changing fast and the supervisory system has to keep up with it. We cannot prescribe for every eventuality in advance. In particular, there is a risk that new forms of deposit-taking may fall through the supervisory net. I therefore propose to take powers to vary by secondary legislation the definition of deposits and deposit-taking around which the legislation will continue to be structured.

I am also very conscious that banking supervision can no longer be considered in isolation. The Government are urgently considering the supervisory problems posed by the growth of financial conglomerates. One of the most obvious requirements is that those who supervise banks should be able to exchange information with other supervisory authorities. Legislation this session will make that possible. Changes in the confidentiality requirements, including those in the Banking Act, will be secured through the financial services and building societies Bills this session.

The details of these and other proposals are in the White Paper. They represent a considered, full and prompt response to the real lessons of the Johnson Matthey Bankers affair. The system of supervision we will be putting in place will be strict, without being a straitjacket. The proposals avoid the pitfalls of unnecessary bureaucracy and administrative upheaval. They also avoid the danger of setting out rules so rigid that they encourage compliance with their letter but not with their spirit.

As I told the House in June, an effective system of banking supervision is essential, not merely for the protection of depositors but for the financial health of the economy as a whole. Effective supervision is also a vital weapon in the fight against fraud, which the Government are determined to do all in their power to combat. Supervision cannot eradicate risk—nor should it—and it must not stifle competition. Nor, above all, can it derogate in the slightest degree from the overriding responsibility of managers to run their businesses soundly and properly.

Together with the Building Societies Bill, to be read for the Second time on Thursday, and the forthcoming financial services legislation, I believe that the proposals outlined in this White Paper will help to create a comprehensive and effective statutory framework for a rapidly changing financial services sector.

I commend the White Paper to the House.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): Does the Chancellor realise that outside the City and the Tory party the proposals that he has outlined will be regarded as grossly inadequate, a reflection more of the City's views and values than of the growing concern about supervision of the City in general and the banking system in particular? Will he understand that confidence will not be restored while the duties of supervision essentially remain within the Bank of England? Negligence in the Bank of England contributed to the Johnson Matthey scandal. When asked

[Mr. Roy Hattersley]

to report on the lessons learnt from that affair, an inquiry dominated by the Bank of England made recommendations that even the Chancellor rejects; yet the power of supervision is to be given to the Bank of England.

While the Chancellor, in his own words, retains the powers "within the Bank of England", some of the proposals that we welcome and some of the proposls that our pressure brought about — such as the statutory backing and the extension of the criminal law to cover the misleading of supervisors — will be seen as generally inadequate.

I ask the Chancellor the basic question relating to his statement: Why must the board of banking supervision remain in the City's own club? Why can it not be created outside, with all the additional confidence that its independence would provide?

Will the right hon. Gentleman answer some specific questions? For example, when the supervisory body is told of an exposure of more than 25 per cent., what powers will that body possess? If it discovers that the bank in question is over-exposed, what can it do about it other than note it and worry about it?

What changes does the right hon. Gentleman propose in the confidentiality requirements? When shall we hear of them, and when will they be passed into law? Indeed, does he appreciate the need for speed in this operation and the need to introduce the new legislation—the statutory backing — quickly to overcome any feeling that the Government do not want to tackle this matter urgently?

Do the Chancellor and the Leader of the House appreciate that the whole question of the supervision of the City is now such a matter of national concern that a debate in the House is urgently needed? Are they aware that, if the Government will not give time for such a debate, the Opposition will provide it at the first opportunity?

Mr. Lawson: My response to the right hon. Gentleman's last point is that I have set out in the White Paper important matters which I recognise the House might well wish to debate. However, that is a matter for the Leader of the House.

The right hon. Gentleman's categorisation of the measures which I have outlined, and which are outlined more fully, as inadequate, is wholly and completely untrue, but we shall, no doubt, have an opportunity to discuss that in the context of the forthcoming Bill.

The right hon. Gentleman asked some specific questions and made allegations about the Bank of England, allegations which I wholly reject. The JMB affair was a lapse, but a lapse from a very high supervisory standard which the Bank of England has carried out— *[Interruption.]*—over a number of years and which is recognised as such throughout the world.

The legislative framework which I am now tightening was put in place by the Labour Government. That framework, the 1979 Act, was inadequate. It took them five years—from the secondary banking crisis of 1974 until 1979—to legislate. I am proposing to legislate twice as fast after the JMB affair.

The right hon. Gentleman asked what the supervisory body could do. It has the ultimate power to revoke the licence of any bank to take deposits, and that is a very profound sanction indeed.

The answer to the right hon. Gentleman's question about the confidentiality requirements—I assume that he was referring to the relationship between auditors and supervisors—is that he will see them set out in annex 4 at the back of the White Paper.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many people, in the City and throughout the country, will welcome the strengthening of the 1979 Act, particularly in bringing the banks under control and especially in view of the imminence of the Financial Services Bill?

Is he further aware that the flexibility between auditors and supervisors should ensure that any misdemeanour, or suggestion of misdemeanour, involving any deposit taker, be it a bank or any other deposit taker, will be immediately recognised? A two-way movement of information, from supervisors to auditors and from auditors to supervisors, will ensure that, if an investigation is necessary, it will be speedy and accurate. That should be wholeheartedly welcomed by the House and the City because it is essential to ensure that the integrity of the City is maintained.

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend is right. Communication between supervisors and auditors is an entirely new departure. Up to now, supervisors have not communicated with auditors and auditors have not communicated with supervisors. That will be changed, and I am grateful for the help of the various accountants' bodies in co-operating fully with the changes that we have in mind. Normally that communication will take place in the presence of the bank in question, but there is provision in exceptional circumstances for the communication to take place directly between the supervisors and auditors.

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): Is the Chancellor aware that some of us argued long before the Banking Act 1979 was put on the statute book that the Bank of England should not be responsible for banking supervision? Will he therefore reconsider the role that the Bank of England will play? Although the establishment of the new board is a welcome step, will he confirm that all its members will be appointed by the Governor of the Bank of England? Does he agree that it would be much better if the Bank of England carried on its role as a central bank like other central banks and that the supervisory function should be carried out by an independent board? Will he consider that possibility? Will he also note that the other provisions in the statement are a welcome strengthening of the present regime?

Mr. Lawson: I note the points made by the hon. Gentleman. As a member of the Labour party, he was a supporter of the Bankers Act 1979. Appointments to the board of banking supervision will be made by the Governor, but they must be made with my approval. I believe that that answers his point. Whether the supervisory authority should be the central bank is a fair point. If the hon. Gentleman reads the annex to the White Paper about overseas experience, he will see that in some countries the supervisory authority is the central bank but that in others it is not. As we have always had the Bank of England as the supervisory authority, I believe that it is better to build on and strengthen that authority rather than to have a tremendous upheaval which I do not believe would be warranted or fruitful.

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): Does my right hon. Friend agree that his statement will be greatly welcomed,

because those of us who are anxious that the City's reputation should not be damaged by abuses of the system feel that the steps that he proposes will be helpful? Would it not be extraordinarily dangerous at this stage to set up an entirely separate organisation with no experience of those matters rather than to build on the Bank of England's foundation? Will he give us an assurance that we shall not have to wait for the legislation to be introduced before positive steps are taken to improve the present position?

Mr. Lawson: My right hon. Friend is correct, and I welcome his remarks. Steps have already been taken. Mr. Sidney Proctor has been appointed special adviser on supervision to the Governor. He is an extremely experienced and distinguished commercial banker who has retired and can devote a great deal of time to the matter. The Governor has also strengthened numerically and in other ways the Bank of England's banking supervision department. In addition, the establishment of the board of banking supervision will not have to wait for the legislation. The Governor proposes to get on with that straight away.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Bearing in mind that this statement arises in large measure out of the wanton negligence of Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the Governor of the Bank of England, how can anyone place any trust in a system of supervision organised by that appalling deadbeat? Is it not time that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had the bottle to tell the Prime Minister that Pemberton is not merely a disaster; he is a disgrace?

Mr. Lawson: There has been a great deal of talk about fraud of one kind or another. Fraud must be rooted out wherever it is found. Fortunately, it takes place only in exceptional circumstances in the City of London. It is wrong to imply otherwise.

The biggest fraud so far exposed is the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). He poses as the man who got things moving. *[Interruption.]* Listen to this. He did not even start—*Hansard* will show that this is so—his seemingly unending series of allegations until after my statement of 17 July informing the House that the fraud squad had already been called in. By engaging in a scurrilous McCarthyite smear campaign under the cloak of parliamentary privilege to further his sordid political objectives, the hon. Gentleman is succeeding only in damaging the good name of the City to the delight of our competitors overseas, and in impeding the police in their attempt to bring wrongdoers to court, as the police have already pointed out to him. To describe the hon. Gentleman as a pest would be unfair to pests.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): While any illegalities must be vigorously hunted down and their perpetrators suitably punished——

Mr. Sedgemore: You snivelling little git.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I prefer not to hear all of that.

Sir Peter Tapsell: Those of us who most abhor the scandals in the City at present sometimes find the interventions of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) to be counter-productive. While any illegalities must be hunted down and their perpetrators suitably punished, should we not, even in the present political atmosphere, be careful to bear in mind that the Bank of England is an extremely important national asset, particularly in the international sphere where on many occasions it has saved past Labour Governments? Indeed, if there is ever another, Labour Government, they will probably look to it to save them again. Should we not bear that in mind when scoring short-term party political points? My personal belief is that the Bank of England is, in the British context, the appropriate body to continue to conduct banking supervision.

Mr. Lawson: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. As he will have heard, I reached the same conclusion.

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer explain where market forces end and fraud begins?

Mr. Lawson: If the hon. Gentleman does not know that, he is not fit to be a Member of the House.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): Will my right hon. Friend consider whether it should be the duty of the auditors of the day to report independently to the bank's supervisors without the knowledge of the bank, if necessary?

Mr. Lawson: That is a difficult question, and my hon. Friend is right to raise it. I believe that that would place considerable difficulties in the way of auditors. My conclusion is that it is better to adopt the normal procedure, and that the auditor and supervisor should have their dialogue in the presence of the bank in question, while reserving powers, if need be, in special circumstances for there to be a direct dialogue between auditors and supervisors without the presence of the bank.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Will the Chancellor consider adopting in the Bill the principle that I have been advocating for defence contractors who make excess profits, whereby if an employee identifies fraud he should be compensated from the public purse?

Mr. Lawson: The hon. Gentleman is an assiduous Committee member, as I know from experience on many occasions in Standing Committees on Finance Bills of old, and I am sure that he will find himself in Committee on this Bill, when he can make that point. However, I do not think that that would be a sensible proposal.

Mr. Peter Rees (Dover): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Governor of the Bank of England is a distinguished and honourable public servant who deserves better of the House than to be traduced by the vulgar criticisms of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore)?

Mr. Lawson: I agree strongly with my right hon. and learned Friend. It is appalling how the hon. Gentleman seeks to traduce the Governor of the Bank of England, the Bank of England and the entire City of London to further his political objectives. It can mean only that people in Tokyo, Frankfurt, Zurich and other places will laugh all the way to their banks.

Mr. John Ryman (Blyth Valley): Will the Chancellor consider calmly and quietly for a moment what real sanctions there are, apart from the ultimate sanction of revocation of the licence, if the supervision board finds negligence or fraud? A complaint to the police takes a long time to investigate, and the resources of the fraud squad are far too limited to cope with the mass of complaints that emerge from time to time and that require thorough and lengthy investigation.

Mr. Lawson: As I announced, the legislation will create a new offence of misleading the supervisors for which there will be severe penalties, substantial fines or imprisonment. I announced as far back as July 1984 the Government's decision to set up a fraud investigation group, which was before the Johnson Matthey Bankers affair, and which has considerably strengthened the Government's and the authorities' resources for pursuing fraud wherever it may be.

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement, but I should like to press him a little further on the question of resources. I am sure that he will agree that more staff will be needed and will have to be sufficiently qualified as accountants, lawyers, bankers and others, not just in banking supervision but in insurance and other things as well. Can he assure the House that, in attracting people of the right quality, there will be no Civil Service-type restrictions on the grades at which they can be employed so that they can come into the business and do a proper job?

Mr. Lawson: It is important that those who are engaged in the seeking out and prosecution of fraud, whether in the Department of Trade and Industry or in the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions, must be of sufficient calibre, and that is something that the Government will unstintingly seek to achieve.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Will the Chancellor accept that his proposal will be seen by the public at large as following the old principle of "set a thief to catch a thief"? Will he suggest ways in which he might undertake some positive screening of the people who will be on the supervisory board?

Mr. Lawson: The hon. Member should know that I have suggested a considerable strengthening of the system of banking supervision, which has a good record. That is widely acknowledged throughout the world. The JMB affair was a lapse from its high standard. The measures that I have announced will strengthen it still futher and make it better than any other banking supervision system.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Are not these proposals tough and comprehensive — much more so than anything proposed by the Labour Government of which the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) was a member? Is not the real danger that, if we go too far, 2 million jobs and £6 billion worth of exports will be threatened as financial services companies move offshore?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend is right—there is a real danger of that. I do not ask anybody to pronounce now, but I hope that when hon. Members have read the White Paper and seen what is proposed they will desist from uninformed criticism, which can only be bad for the country.

Mr. Stuart Randall (Kingston upon Hull, West): I am sure that the Chancellor will agree that the various fraud cases about which we have heard recently have reduced in the eyes of the British public confidence in the City and all the other institutions. Does he agree that, in order to regain that confidence, it would be desirable to publish some of the findings of the new board of banking supervision? Will that happen, and, if so, to what extent?

Mr. Lawson: The board of banking supervision will make an independent report of its own, to be contained within the annual report of the Bank of England. What it chooses to report will inevitably be governed by the laws concerning banking confidentiality.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Bill that he has announced today could be tough, along with the Financial Services Bill, and that the need for that is because of the huge financial conglomerates that will come about and may spawn things of which many in the City will not have experience? Bearing in mind also that the Bank of England is an adviser to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would it not be a sensible move if the Chancellor imported into his Department some people of great expertise in the City—although not those who are likely to go back to the City, who may have something else to gain? Would it not be a good idea if three or four people who have spent their lives in the City and understand it and the Treasury were there so that they could give five to seven years of good advice to prevent many of these things from happening? In the end is it not right that the buck stops here? Whenever there is a scandal, the Government cannot say that it has nothing to do with them. If it is in the end, therefore, to do with Government, is it not better for the Chancellor to have his own team of experts on hand to handle his advice?

Mr. Lawson: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I am quite sure that he means well, as he always does, but I have to say two things to him. First, I have every confidence in my officials in the Treasury. Secondly, the duty of supervising British banks is not laid upon the Treasury but is laid, and will be quite clearly laid by the legislation to which I have referred, on the Bank of England. Therefore, there will be a duty laid on the Bank of England to have supervisory staff of the appropriate quality and calibre and also to have independent outsiders to ensure that there is a strengthening of the enforcement of supervision at the top.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to protect the subsequent business of the House. The Chancellor announced that there will be a debate. However, I draw to the attention of the House the fact that there will be an opportunity tomorrow to debate this matter on the Consolidated Fund Bill under item no. 3.

Mr. Rob Hayward (Kingswood): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask that during the Christmas recess you should ask that your amplifiers should be looked at, given the language used by the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), aimed at the Chancellor of the Exchequer? It described him as a snivelling little git. It was clearly audible in the Chamber and such language is clearly disgraceful and unparliamentary.

Mr. Speaker: Order. In a highly charged atmosphere I did not hear all that was said and I do not think that it was directed at the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Although it may not, in strict terms, be unparliamentary language, it is not the kind of language that we want to hear in civilised debate.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You probably heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer say in response to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch

(Mr. Sedgemore) that questions on these matters had not been put down until July. May I remind you that I put down questions on 23 October 1984? For that reason, I thought that there might be a chance to explain that in a question to the Chancellor.

Mr. Speaker: That is bad luck on the hon. Gentleman. However, he is one of the hon. Members who has applied for a debate on the Consolidated Fund, and he stands a very good chance of being called.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): Further to the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward), Mr. Speaker. Whether or not the atmosphere was charged, the remark was clearly audible throughout the Chamber. Will you use your good offices, Mr. Speaker, to call upon the hon. Gentleman to withdraw it?

Mr. Speaker: Order. First, I do not know which hon. Gentleman made that comment. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, under this canopy I do not hear everything.

Mr. Sedgemore: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of your reference to civilised debate in the House, I wonder whether you could strike a balance between an East End epithet and an allegation. I have told the truth. Since when has the truth been a McCarthyite smear?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must say to the hon. Gentleman and to all other hon. Members that we should take great care about imputations concerning the characters of others who are not in the House.

Supplementary Benefit (Board and Lodging Payments)

4.3 pm

The Minister for Social Security (Mr. Tony Newton): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the position concerning supplementary benefit board and lodging payments following the Court of Appeal decision last Friday.

As the House will be aware, the court upheld Mr. Justice Mann's decision in the Divisional Court on 31 July that there was no power to make two paragraphs of the regulations passed by the House in April. The court rejected a cross appeal that the Social Security Advisory Committee had not been properly consulted before the regulations were made.

The House will wish to know that the Government do not intend to appeal further. We shall take steps to identify from our records those cases in which arrears may be due because we did not meet the full charge, and to pay these arrears as soon as possible. To this end, we have sought and received from the court today further guidance on how such arrears should be assessed.

I should make it clear that the Court of Appeal judgment does not affect the current benefit position of those in board and lodging. Those payments are covered by the fresh regulations agreed by the House last month which came into effect on 25 November.

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): Is the Minister for Social Security aware that his statement, both in its nature and in its perfunctory length, is an insult to the House and, much more than that, is an insult to the thousands of elderly, handicapped and vulnerable people who have been illegally cheated and short-changed by the Government since the regulations came into effect? How dare the Minister come to the Dispatch Box to make that statement and utter not one word of apology or explanation for all the suffering that has been caused. It is not even as if the Government can complain that they have not been warned. Initially when the regulations were introduced the Social Security Advisory Committee heard from over 500 organisations that wrote to condemn the proposed regulations. It was the largest number ever to condemn such proposals, apart from those who wrote to condemn the Fowler reviews.

We should like the Minister to say, first, whether it is the case, as he claims in his statement, that the Government sought clarification from the court or whether, as we have been informed, the Government tried once again to put pressure on the court to weaken the judgment that had been delivered so as to deprive claimants. Will the Minister admit that if the Government had accepted the plain implications of the judgment—that cash limits also are illegal—not only would many claimants have been saved hardship but his Department's task in identifying those who should have repayments would have been made singularly easier?

Secondly, will the Minister tell us how his Department proposes to trace those who are owed money? Does he understand that it would be completely unacceptable and grossly unjust to place the burden of the claim upon individuals rather than upon his Department in seeking to identify them?

[Mrs. Margaret Beckett]

Thirdly, how far back does the Department intend the repayments to go? The clear implication of the Court of Appeal's judgment is that everything that the Government have done on board and lodging since the freeze in September 1984 has been illegal as well as completely unjust and unworkable and that everybody who has had a claim since then may be entitled in law to a refund. May we therefore have an assurance from the Minister that the cases will be dealt with on that basis? May we also have an assurance that the local authorities, who may have been giving topping-up payments, will have reimbursed to them the several hundreds of thousands of pounds that it has cost them and that they and the claimants will be compensated for all the problems that have been caused?

At this point in this extraordinary saga of incompetence, arrogance, injustice and illegality, will the Minister tell us what confidence anybody can have—indeed, what confidence he has—in the legality of the present regulations, which are also being challenged in the courts and which we have told him repeatedly we do not believe meet the basic issues raised by the Cotton case? Do the Government yet recognise that the nature of the problem is the increase in homelessness and the increase in the numbers who are in need of care and that the Government should be seeking to help, not to penalise, those whose problems their policies have at best exacerbated and often may have caused, especially those who are physically and mentally handicapped, who stand to be affected next April by the present regulations?

Finally, will the Minister tell the House that his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services is now considering withdrawing the regulations—not, as before, in order to do nothing whatever for months and then to rush them through, without consultation, as an emergency at the last minute, but so that he may properly consult his own Social Security Advisory Committee and the many organisations that are anxious to help to solve the problem by tackling its source, not by punishing its victims?

Mr. Newton: May I take the hon. Lady's questions roughly in reverse order. It was precisely because we were concerned to protect those vulnerable people to whom she referred that we sought to introduce fresh regulations a month ago. If the hon. Lady considers both the judgment and what I said when I introduced the regulations last month she will realise that the judgment has vindicated our decision to ensure a clear position for claimants when the judgment was delivered. Otherwise it would have called into question many of the payments that are currently being made to those who are in residential care and nursing homes. In that sense the Government are very aware of the problems expressed by the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett).

The hon. Lady asked about the legality of the present regulations and compensation for local authorities, an issue that has been raised by at least one local authority. She will know that both issues are the subject of current legal proceedings and the House will understand when I say that I do not think it right to comment further on such matters.

The hon. Lady also referred to the freeze regulations that preceded the April 1985 regulations. I remind her that that was not a specific issue and the position is not on all fours with the April 1985 regulations.

The main thrust of the hon. Lady's points involved the Government's proposals to pay the arrears and their purpose in seeking clarification from the court this morning. The Government intend and expect to be able to identify the relevant claimants from the records. Ever since the original Cotton judgment in July, the Government have ensured, for obvious reasons, that such cases were kept separately marked in local offices so that we could trace and identify cases quickly should the need arise. Arrears have, of course, already been paid in cases affected by the time limits. We shall act with equal promptness to identify cases and pay arrears in relation to the judgment on financial limits.

The Government were particularly anxious to achieve clarification on two particularly important issues, and I hope that the hon. Lady will accept that that was done in good faith this morning. First, we sought clarification as to whether there was any maximum at all in the light of the judgment made last week. As I explained to the House when this matter was last debated in November, it was not entirely clear whether the outcome would mean that the old local limit system under the 1983 regulations came back into effect or whether there would no longer be an effective maximum between April and November. That point has been clarified by the court and there is no maximum between 29 April and 24 November in these cases.

The other point, to which the hon. Lady will probably attach more importance, is that one possible interpretation of last week's judgment was that young people would not qualify as boarders and that they would have to be reduced to the non-householder rate from 29 April to 24 November. It has been established that it is proper for these people to be regarded as boarders and therefore to pay them as boarders and to discharge the obligation on arrears as soon as possible.

Sir Anthony Kershaw (Stroud): While I accept that public money was being extracted by many people, will my hon. Friend nevertheless bear in mind that a minority have suffered gravely as a result of the regulations? The people who have particularly suffered are those who have no family of their own and have made a new family by living for some years in lodgings. I trust that he will remember those people because they need his help.

Mr. Newton: I assure my hon. Friend that we shall bear that group in mind, as we sought to do with the regulations that have now been partly overturned and in the fresh regulations that were brought before the House in November. We shall continue to do everything to protect those people.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): On behalf of Simon Cotton, my constituent who took the Government to court over this matter, I thank the Minister for his statement this afternoon.

The Minister must be aware that his policy has been declared illegal and unlawful, twice by the courts and that that policy has resulted in some young people being made homeless, many being underpaid and others moving around the country in an attempt to claim benefit. Will the hon. Gentleman explain what measures he will take to

trace the claimants? He spoke about keeping records since the Cotton judgment. What steps is the Minister taking to trace the 60,000 or 70,000 claimants who attempted to claim benefit prior to the Cotton judgment?

I would like the Minister to look to the future. He confidently asserts that the Government's current regulations are lawful, but he must be aware that the Cotton success paves the way for the present legislation to be challenged in the courts. He must also be aware, and should have told the House, that when the Government's lawyers said that they might appeal to the House of Lords, the Lord Chief Justice said that if they had the nerve to return he would reject that application out of hand.

Is the hon. Gentleman aware that on Friday 13 December Camden council obtained leave for a judicial review against the current regulations? There is a large question mark over the Government's current proposals. Surely it would be advisable for the Minister to follow the advice that is constantly offered by the Opposition. In our opinion, he cannot gain the powers by regulation; he needs to seek primary legislation and he will gain the Opposition's support if he deals with the abuse that undoubtedly exists, particularly if he concentrates on the landlords.

Mr. Newton: I thank the hon. Gentleman for the characteristic generosity of his opening remark. However, I did acknowledge, although I did not refer directly to Camden, that there were further court cases in process. That was why I did not feel that it was correct to comment, as they are manifestly sub judice.

I have already explained what action will be taken to trace claimants. Plainly, we cannot directly trace through the records people who did not establish claims, and for whom no record exists. But if cases arise they will be considered, though I emphasise that in these cases, as in others, it is not for Ministers but for adjudication officers to decide what the entitlement may be within the current available guidance on the law.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): I welcome the news that my hon. Friend is not proceeding further with legislation in that particular aspect of the regulations. None the less, as other areas of the regulations are being challenged, will he undertake that if or when he is convinced that the current regulations are flawed he will come back either with new regulations or, if necessary, with new primary legislation?

Mr. Newton: I assure my hon. Friend and the House that the Government will continue to ensure that their obligations to Parliament and to the court's rulings in such matters will be faithfully adhered to. As all hon. Members will agree, the Government responded very rapidly in the appropriate cases to the original Cotton judgment. By my statement today I hope that I have made it clear that the Government intend to respond with equal rapidity to the Court of Appeal judgment last week.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I also welcome the Minister's statement, although I reiterate the opposition of the alliance to a system that is particularly pernicious in the way that it affects young people.

Let me press the point made by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). The Minister said that his Department was contacting the claimants who had outstanding money due. Does that mean that claimants will be written to individually? When will the local offices get confirmation that that is what the Minister requires of them?

Can the hon. Gentleman also say how much money is at stake, as my arithmetic suggests that a considerable sum of public money is involved? In future, when the Minister is considering changes in the system of delivering benefit — everyone can argue about the benefit levels, which can be changed by secondary legislation and nobody objects to that — will he learn a lesson and make changes by primary legislation so that the implications can be properly rehearsed in the House?

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman has made that point in several different forums within the past few hours and he will have heard what my right hon. Friend said to him recently in another forum on that wider matter. We shall certainly do our best to contact claimants by whatever means. Writing will normally be the most appropriate means——

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): What addresses will the Minister send the letters to?

Mr. Newton: I shall deal with the intervention from the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) when I have dealt with the original question.

Writing will normally be the most appropriate means, and that will be a responsibility of our local offices. We are proceeding urgently with the issue of instructions to our local offices, but at present I cannot give the hon. Gentleman an exact time by which those instructions will go out. However, I point to the precedent earlier in the year followng the original Cotton judgment, when we acted within a week to get instructions out and completed the payment of arrears within two months.

For obvious reasons, I cannot at present give the hon. Gentleman estimates of the numbers of claimants who will be entitled to arrears or the amount involved, but he may like to know that, in the case of the time limits, we have paid arrears in 8,500 cases, and the total amount of money involved has been just under £250,000.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): Does my hon. Friend recall that the regulations were originally introduced to curb the abuse of a system which was designed to help the elderly but which was being abused by unscrupulous rest home owners? Does he also recall that young people were being exploited by unscrupulous landlords? Many Conservative Members believe that my hon. Friend acted entirely honourably and are extremely grateful for the action that he took last summer. Will he assure the House that he and his Department will take whatever action is necessary to prevent any recurrence of the sort of abuse that we faced last summer?

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and I assure him that we shall continue to prevent abuse in this area. I am also grateful to him for acknowledging that, whatever the concern about the policy in the past, it must be right for the Government firmly to hold to their obligations to the courts and the findings of the courts in the way that I have indicated this afternoon.

Perhaps I can do the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras the courtesy of responding to his sedentary intervention. Clearly, we shall seek to correspond with people at the addresses that we have on file, but there will

[Mr. Newton]

manifestly be a problem if we are unable to trace claimants. However, by making this statement, I hope that they will become aware of what has happened. We are now talking not about people who have necessarily been moved on but about cases in respect of the financial limits.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): With my experience of being Parliamentary Private Secretary to the late Dick Crossman 17 or 18 years ago, I have the feeling that Alan Marre or the late Dame Muriel Riddesdell and their lawyers would have warned the Secretary of State. At any time did any of the hon. Gentleman's lawyers or senior civil servants give him some kind of premonition of the Cotton judgment and that what he was doing might be ultra vires? My experience of the Department was that those lawyers, who are jolly clever and competent, would have warned the Minister. Did not they do so in this case, and did not the Minister have an inkling that this would happen?

Mr. Newton: The convention is that Ministers do not normally refer in detail to the advice that they receive, but I hope that the hon. Gentleman will recognise that Ministers——

Mr. Dalyell: Were you warned?

Mr. Newton: In view of the imputation that the hon. Gentleman is seeking to make, I would be grateful if he would listen to the end of my sentence. I hope that he will accept from me that it would be inconceivable—if he does not, I can only assure him with all the emphasis at my command—that neither I, the Secretary of State nor anyone else would deliberately have proceeded to maintain regulations that we were advised were unlawful.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Is it not somewhat bizarre that, whenever the High Court rules against a Government Department, the Opposition shout that the Minister concerned has broken the law, as if that Minister had deliberately offended against the criminal code? Surely the reality is that English law is now so complex that there will inevitably be occasions when the High Court will be asked to interpret legislation and the actions of Government Departments. On occasions it will rule against Government Departments and on others it will rule in favour. The protection for us all is that there is a High Court that seeks to protect the interests of all citizens by interpreting the laws and ensuring that nothing unlawful is carried out.

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and I agree with what he says. A number of people both inside and outside the House may have overlooked the fact that these regulations were submitted to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments in the normal way. Their vires were not questioned by the Joint Committee and they were passed by Parliament in an affirmative vote.

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): In view of the admitted difficulties involved in tracing the claimants, will the Minister give an assurance that he will give generous time limits so that people can claim the arrears?

Mr. Newton: We will expect to deal with this in as open and fair a way as possible to make sure that we pay arrears to those to whom they are due. The House can certainly have my undertaking that we shall do that.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is to do with the answer that we have just received——

Mr. Speaker: Is it a continuation of it?

Mr. Faulds: No, it is a quite different point, but it is relevant to what we have just been told. Can we for once break with the conventions of the House and agree that, since they cannot defend themselves, the response to the question by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) should come from the Civil Service Box?

Mr. Speaker: The point of order was addressed to me, not to the Minister, and it is not a matter for me.

Colliery Review Tribunal

4.26 pm

Mr. John Ryman (Blyth Valley): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 10, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the continuing failure of the independent colliery review tribunal to deal with urgent appeals relating to collieries threatened with closure immediately after Christmas."

In Bate's colliery in Blyth, 1,400 men will be made redundant if it is closed, as proposed by the NCB. I recognise that I must persuade you, Mr. Speaker, that this matter is so urgent that it should have priority over the business that has already been arranged. In view of recent developments, my respectful submission is that, although this tribunal was set up by the NCB in October this year, since then it has been quite impossible to obtain any information from the Government as to the procedure of that tribunal which will hear appeals against pit closures.

I have asked the Secretary of State for Energy and the Leader of the House several questions about the procedure of this tribunal, but both Ministers, doing their incompetent best, were quite unable to answer them. No one knows how this tribunal will function or even how it will be contacted. We do not know whether it will sit in London or in the region. Consequently, it is quite impossible to make adequate preparations to present a case against pit closure, either by the unions involved or the Blyth Valley council which is vitally interested in the outcome of these appeals. No statement has been made by the Government and no opportunity has been given for a debate, as a result of which the whole thing is extremely unsatisfactory and is surrounded in mystery.

The urgency of my application is demonstrated by the fact that Bate's colliery will close on 27 December, just two days after Christmas Day, and I hope to persuade you —I appreciate the high onus of proof on me—to allow this matter to be discussed this afternoon or this evening, because unless we have some information about the work of the colliery review tribunal, it will be quite impossible to prepare a case.

The NCB has been conducting a deliberate, systematic and fraudulent campaign to delay these procedures as long as possible, in the hope that, with Christmas overtaking events, the coal mining community in my constituency will then not have sufficient time to do anything about it. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to consider this matter seriously before coming to a decision.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Ryman) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the continuing failure of the independent colliery review tribunal to deal with urgent appeals relating to collieries threatened with closure immediately after Christmas".

I have listened with care to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but, as he mentioned himself, my duty under Standing Order No. 10 is to consider whether a subject should be given priority over the business already set down for this evening or tomorrow. I regret that I cannot find that the matter which he has raised meets all of the criteria laid down under Standing Order No. 10 and, therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

Business of the House

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, at this day's sitting, if proceedings on the Motion relating to Register of Members' Interests have not been disposed of before Ten o'clock:—

(1) Mr. Speaker shall at that hour put the Question on any Amendment which may have been moved, and shall then put forthwith the Question on any other Amendments selected by him which may then be moved, and on the Main Question or the Main Question as amended; and

(2) notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 4 (Prayers against statutory instruments, &c. (negative procedure)), the Motion relating to Water may be proceeded with, though opposed, for one and a half hours after it has been entered upon.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

4.29 pm

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I do not intend to detain the House but this is a unique opportunity to raise an important procedural principle. I welcome the decision to change the order of business this evening so that there might be four Divisions on the amendments that you have selected, Mr. Speaker.

This is an important principle and I welcome the precedent which I hope will be extended to other occasions. We take the view that, apart from the Queen's Speech, which is the one chance every year when we are able to debate a second amendment and vote upon it, we far too rarely have the opportunity to debate and vote on other shades of opinion. Far too often our views are polarised and we are forced to accept black and white issues when there are often many shades of grey. Back Benchers who may hold a dissenting view rarely have the opportunity to table their amendments or debate them, so Front Bench views are often the ones that are set in concrete, and Back Benchers are invariably forced to vote upon them.

The present arrangements do not allow for the multi-party system which now operates. We have a multi-party system but it is stuck in a two-track groove. At present, even though our amendments may be tabled and appear on the Order Paper, they are not printed in the *Official Report*, thus the public are unlikely to learn of views other than those of the two Front Benches.

This issue was last examined in 1976 by the Procedure Select Committee. At that time, many Labour Back Benchers supported our view. I know that many hon. Members agree that such opportunities should be provided on other occasions. It should not be necessary to bring the Leader of the House here to table a business motion. We believe that such provision could be left to the discretion of Mr. Speaker. The Standing Order could be changed so that Mr. Speaker selects two or more amendments which might be voted upon automatically at 10 o'clock. It would be in the interests of all Members not to be penned in by the practice of always voting for or against set piece positions. If what we are debating today were common practice, it would improve the quality of our debates and political life. I support the motion.

4.32 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): Courtesy requires me to acknowledge what the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) has said. I am sure he would not expect me to go beyond that except to observe that, the

[Mr. John Biffen]

longer I talk at this Box, the more I shall eat into the time available for the debate on Members' interests. I leave it at that.

Question put and agreed to.

Fire Precautions (Amendment)

4.33 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stetchford): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Fire Precautions Act 1971 to extend provision to hospitals, nursing homes, elderly persons homes, mental institutions and similar premises; to limit the time available to occupiers or owners under the Act for bringing premises up to standard; to make further provision relating to the installation of sprinkler systems in public buildings and other places of public assembly; to ban the use of polyurethane foam in furniture; and to provide for educational and publicity programmes.

It is a sad irony that it requires a major disaster before the House amends the fire regulations. This year, we have had the Ringway airport disaster and the Bradford football ground fire.

Last Christmas in Bury, Greater Manchester, a family of eight and a family friend died in a tragic fire accident because Christmas wrappings fell into the fire grate and set the suite of furniture ablaze. Thus nine people died because of toxic fumes given off by the polyurethane foam that was used in that suite of furniture. It is a chilling prophesy, but it is likely that this Christmas we shall once again read of young children or indeed whole families dying in fires in similar circumstances.

The Home Office, in its review of fire policy in 1980, argued:

"loss of life through fire is insignificant".

However, in 1984, 700 deaths were caused by fires in England and Wales—550 took place in the home and approximately three quarters of them were caused by the poisonous fumes given off by smouldering polyurethane foam. The Home Office, in its review of the Fire Regulations Act 1971, stated:

"Although our present arrangements may bear favourable comparison with other countries, there is no room for complacency."

That is right, but the sad truth is that the Home Office has been extremely complacent in updating our fire regulations.

The deaths in Bury and, to some extent, at Manchester airport would not have taken place if the lessons of another disaster in Manchester had been learnt—the fire in Woolworth's in May 1979. Ten people died and a further 48 were injured. That disaster led to demands from Members of Parliament and the city of Manchester that something be done to tackle the problem of poisonous fumes as a considerable number of the deaths were caused by the fumes emitted from blazing furniture in the furniture department. It was said that the fire regulations were difficult to enforce and that it was difficult to prosecute Woolworth's because it had not been given time to bring its fire precautions up to scratch.

That is one of the reasons why this Bill would prevent prolongation of the period during which dwelling or company was allowed to bring its precautions up to scratch, thus preventing what happened with Woolworth's.

Woolworth's learnt from that disaster and, on re-opening the store, ceased to stock polyurethane foam-filled furniture and installed sprinklers. The Home Office, having threatened regulations, brought in the modest regulation—the so-called cigarette test—which tests whether furniture will catch fire when a cigarette is dropped on it. The Home Office failed to introduce the other part of the regulations which were promised—the so-called match test.

The regulations which the Home Office brought in, nominally as a result of the Woolworth's fire, would not have stopped that fire taking place. They did not stop the fire taking place in Bury last year. The majority of the 500 deaths due to polyurethane foam-filled furniture could have been prevented, however, by adequate regulations in 1980 and if the Home Office had not acted so complacently.

This Bill would bring in the match test and other more stringent fire precautions for furniture and lead to the banning of the use of polyurethane foam in furniture. The Bradford football disaster is still fresh in the memories of hon. Members. Fifty-two people died but many believe that lives could have been saved if sprinklers had been installed at the ground. That is why my Bill would require the installation of sprinklers in relevant circumstances. There is another simple lesson to be learnt from Bradford. Self-regulation, which Bradford operated, does not work. The Home Office has argued that efficient precautions are the most cost-effective way in which to ensure the safety of people and property, but it is going in precisely the opposite direction by attempting to introduce self-regulation. My Bill insists that regulation should be extended to elderly persons' homes, mental institutions, hospitals and nursing homes.

Most people's thoughts turn to children and the home at Christmas. The House ought to turn its attention to the protection of children by introducing more adequate regulations to prevent the outbreak of fire. The Fire Brigades Union has said that the Bill will reduce deaths and injuries. I hope that the House will give me leave to introduce the Bill as this is an important issue throughout the year.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Tony Lloyd, Mr. Ken Eastham, Mr. Andrew F. Bennett, Mr. Jim Callaghan, Mr. Terry Lewis, Mr. Peter Pike, Mr. James Lamond and Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS (AMENDMENT)

Mr. Tony Lloyd accordingly presented a Bill to amend the Fire Precautions Act 1971 to extend provision to hospitals, nursing homes, elderly persons homes, mental institutions and similar premises; to limit the time available to occupiers or owners under the Act for bringing premises up to standard; to make further provision relating to the installation of sprinkler systems in public buildings and other places of public assembly; to ban the use of polyurethane foam in furniture; and to provide for educational and publicity programmes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 14 February and to be printed. [Bill 50.]

ESTIMATES DAY

[1ST ALLOTTED DAY]—*considered*

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985-86

Class II, Vote 7

Overseas Aid

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a supplementary sum not exceeding £1,000 be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1986 for expenditure by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Overseas Development Administration) on the official United Kingdom Aid Programme including capital subscriptions, other contributions and payments under guarantees to certain multilateral development banks and other bodies; subscriptions and grants in aid to certain international and regional organisations; bilateral capital aid and technical co-operation; refugee and other relief assistance; the cost of in-house Scientific Units; assistance, including grants in aid, to certain UK based institutions and voluntary agencies; loans to the Commonwealth Development Corporation; and pensions and allowances in respect of overseas service.—*[Mr. Raison.]*

4.41 pm

Sir Anthony Kershaw (Stroud): We are approaching the festive season and this is a very good opportunity to discuss the wants of others. The Foreign Affairs Select Committee considered the famine in Africa and visited five countries. We were deeply depressed by much of what we saw and impressed by the knowledge that a great deal of the horror and the disaster could have been avoided.

I say that the disaster could have been avoided, but I do not imply that the Governments or people of those countries have been stupid, negligent or idle. We must not understimate the real difficulties that they face while we are in our comfortable society. Many of them have a climate which is not especially favourable to agriculture and they have been plagued with drought for almost 10 years, which has successively eroded the defences of the people who live there. They have lost their land, their beasts, their houses, their possessions and finally their money. They are in no way able to protect themselves from disasters unaided.

Those factors have been made worse by a rapidly rising population which would have had its effect on what is at best marginal agriculture, even if natural disaster had not taken its toll. Political circumstances after the colonial era have always been uncertain. The roll call of successful and unsuccessful coups and rebellions would have been enough to distract any Government from peaceful and progressive purposes. Political reasons have often determined the distribution of such food as they have. It has often been directed to the urban population and close political supporters rather than to the weak and poor rural populations far away from main towns whose interests have been correspondingly neglected.

They all have an administrative apparatus which is far too weak to withstand the difficulties that they have experienced, and it is often far weaker than they themselves suppose. The Select Committee was struck by repeatedly being told in one country that the administration was so widespread and flexible that instructions from the centre could be transmitted instantly to the furthest villages in the land. I do not know how anybody could have harboured such an illusion. The telephones did not work

[Sir Anthony Kershaw]

and communications were disrupted by rebellion. Whatever administrative apparatus that had been left behind by the colonial power had been completely eroded. The skills and communications necessary to run a country which needs a great deal of running simply did not exist. Immensely difficult choices have to be made in these weakened circumstances in such matters as exchange valuations, subsidies and resource allocations—choices that any country might find difficult. Above all, we found that agricultural policies discouraged farmers and made it less likely that they would grow the crops on which the rest of the country depends.

Any right hon. or hon. Member could have divined the problems that I have described, but we are entitled to say that more effective policies shall be followed in future. The Select Committee was encouraged by the fact that the countries concerned now recognise, especially in view of the Harare declaration, that different policies regarding agriculture would be in the interests of all of their countries. I hope that such decisions will now be taken, difficult though they may be. I hope that longer-term development can take priority over short-term expedience.

I was glad that, in their observations on our report, the Government recognised fully the greater importance of development as opposed to emergency aid. To what extent has our development aid programme been lamed by emergency aid expenditure on famine? My right hon. Friend the Minister, whose wise conduct of these affairs we all admire, says that development aid has been affected very little or not at all. He said in July last year that the development programme had not been affected by emergency aid. He repeated that statement in October. I find it hard to share his optimism.

We all recognise that there is slippage in the ODA programme. We cannot expect all of its schemes to run exactly on time and it is necessary to budget for a slippage towards the end of the year. If slippage must occur, however, must it amount to £86·5 million? That rather large slip is the estimated United Kingdom expenditure on famine relief in Africa. However, I freely concede that my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development could contradict my figures, because they are so difficult to calculate. The figures on which we rely are concocted from different sources and on different dates, so a double estimate or no estimate could cover the same prices.

Nevertheless, it is unreal to say that the £86 million that we have been forced to expend on famine relief will not affect the development aid programme. In the last resort, money for food aid must be deducted from development aid. Certainly part of the money voted to the ODA was originally destined for emergency aid, but not to the extent of £86 million.

The Select Committee on Foreign Affairs concluded that it would only be fair to the development aid programme if new money were brought in. I am sorry that apparently that has not been possible. I say apparently, because it is difficult to follow how the calculations are made. Perhaps the emergency aid has not harmed the development aid programme to the extent that I have suggested. If I am wrong, it is because I cannot understand how the ODA arrives at its figures. I look forward to my right hon. Friend's reassurances.

There was some new money. It was used by the Royal Air Force in its effective airlift to the difficult areas of Ethiopia, which ended today. That exercise cost £8·25 million, and no doubt has done much good in areas that would otherwise have starved. It is a tribute to the RAF that, as usual, the programme was carried out so efficiently. It is a tribute to the Ministry of Defence, which is not everyone's favourite when it comes to charity, that it provided the money.

The European Community Dublin summit vote of 1·2 million tonnes was a new and welcome move. The United Kingdom has participated fully in the delivery of that grain.

We provide more in famine relief to Africa through the European Community than we do bilaterally. This year bilaterally we gave £42 million worth of food aid and £47 million through the European Community. The Community made a slow start and it was rightly criticised by the Committee and others for that. However, the Community has now got its act together. The various titles of EC committees do not suggest by name that they address themselves specifically to these matters, but undoubtedly the problem has been gripped by the organisation and it appears now that the administration is running smoothly. I am sure that that is welcome.

However, I have criticisms of the European Community. It must realise that famine relief is not a method of supporting European agriculture, principally because of the cost. One year's storage of a tonne of grain costs £25. The cost of shipping that grain to Ethiopia is £250—10 times as much, as hon. Members will readily calculate. To store the grain indefinitely, or even eventually to throw it away, would cost only half as much as it would to give the grain to the starving countries. The European Community's preferred policy of transporting European grain is not in the best interests of the needy countries or of Europe.

The second reason why it is better to buy grain abroad, perhaps from the developing countries, is that the aid arrives more quickly. If the grain is bought nearby, it can be transported quicker than by sending it from Europe. If it is bought from a developing country there is a double benefit, because the country is provided with the foreign exchange that it so badly needs.

According to the recent harvest reports, stocks will be available in Africa this year. I hope that the system of buying those surplus stocks and sending them to needy areas next year will be adopted. I believe that the required food stocks will be available, whether from American, European or local sources. Then the main problem will return. The real reason why people starve to death in Africa and elsewhere is not because they are hungry, although that has something to do with it, but because of poverty. India, which is now an exporter of food, suffers as much from malnutrition, and death from hunger, as it did when it was an importer of food. That is a problem with which it is difficult to cope.

My third criticism of the European Community is that it relies too much upon food aid and attaches too much importance to it. If food aid is supplied instead of foreign exchange, that is indeed as good as foreign exchange and should not be despised. But the Government reply to the Foreign Affairs Committee states:

"Most food aid from the European Community is given to recipient Governments to sell in urban markets."

That activity will continue to create more difficulties for the provision of long-term agriculture development. I am glad that

"the Government will continue to press for more rigorous appraisal and co-ordination of non-emergency food aid."

During the past 18 months, we have learnt many lessons from the crisis that has engulfed parts of Africa. One lesson is that he who gives quickly gives twice. I hope that the ODA's emergency unit, which has earned much praise for its flexible and quick action, will be provided with more funds.

The famine in Africa is a nightmare for the world. It is terrible for Africa and we have a guilty conscience because we believe that we should have seen it coming and that we should have done more. It is a blessing that the famine is now receding, but let us hope that our precautions for the future will ensure that it does not return.

4.49 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): The hon. Member for Stroud (Sir A. Kershaw) and his Select Committee have done a great service to the House. They have produced two reports, one of which appeared earlier in the year and provided a detailed survey of famine in Africa. Secondly, there is the report which considers the Winter Estimates and casts some light on the dark and difficult area of Government statistics. The House has been well served also by the all-party group on overseas development, which published its own critical document. I hope that its severe criticism of the Government in some respects will not cause the Government to do anything other than benefit from the challenging thoughts and ideas which it contains.

It has been said by a United Nations official:

"The rains have recovered; Africa has not",

and that is currently the position. A number of the countries most severely affected by drought have experienced considerable improvements in weather conditions. Some of them, by a combination of that and food aid, are now in a much better position for the immediate future than they were months ago. Other countries continue to experience climatic difficulties. All still face the fundamental, long-term problem of dealing with what could be recurring famine and recurring hunger if we do not ensure that proper development assistance is given to them.

Aid at the basic level of subsistence farming is the priority which emerges from the Select Committee's report and from the all-party report to which I have referred. It is upon that that we seek to press the Government, and others may do so in their contributions. A restoration of the priority of basic agriculture work and assistance to the farmer to grow his own food must be the key to the solution of the problem that exists in most of the countries about which we are talking. That has implications for the domestic policies of those countries as well as for the aid which we provide.

Unfortunately, aid has suffered in the very areas in which we should be most concerned. Aid to basic development has suffered at the expense of other considerations, such as trade-related assistance of various forms, which has as its priority as much the promotion of our own trade, however desirable that may be, as the interests and basic agriculture of the country concerned.

The all-party group quoted a ministerial comment that it was to become policy to give greater weight in the allocation of our aid to political, industrial and commercial considerations alongside our basic developmental objectives. I submit that we should not be giving greater weight in the allocation of our aid to political, industrial and commercial considerations, however attractive those are in other contexts. If we do — and we must remember that, even if all our ambitions are achieved, our aid budget will remain limited—we shall not best serve the interests of the poor and hungry in the countries that we want to assist. Our industries and exporters can fight their battles and their campaigns for trade, and they can and should be assisted by various governmental activities, such as export credit, that are relevant. However, such considerations should not be a guiding factor, given the absolute priority of assisting long-term development. It is against that background that there have been cuts, which the Government have admitted, in long-term research staff, long-term development staff and in activities that are most relevant to helping basic subsistence farming. The developing trade-related side of aid activities is one area which has inhibited the basic and important work of development aid, and it is one that should be reversed.

The second factor which has played a part in limiting the amount of basic development aid has been, as the hon. Member for Stroud said when he opened the debate, famine relief itself. I do not think that anyone questions the competence with which the Government tackled the task of providing famine relief when they got down to it. Many of us, including the hon. Gentleman, criticised the Government for the time that they took to get the show on the road. However, when the real commitment was made, the work which was done was excellent. Plenty of tribute is due to the Overseas Development Administration and those who work within it for the way in which the work was carried out.

The criticism that emerges again and again is the effect that the diversion of resources will have on the rest of the work of the aid programme, especially basic development work. In the Select Committee's report on the winter Estimates there is a pointer to the difficulty of identifying what the money would otherwise have been spent on if it had not been diverted to aid. It is the Minister's plea that most of the famine relief moneys were found out of existing development programmes and that the development programmes of other areas of the world were not raided for it. It is claimed that the resources were found from slippage, from money which was not spent on other projects. It is extremely difficult to identify where the moneys would otherwise have been spent. The Select Committee and others who have commented have all said that we must assume that most of the moneys would have been spent on more basic development work of the sort which is so lacking. It is in that area that a greater commitment is required from the Government.

The public are aware of that. They are aware of the general problem and of the specific difficulties which arise. They appreciate the need for basic development work. Voluntary aid organisations have done much to inform the British public of the nature of the problem. Indeed, they are doing more and more all the time. That is another reason why development education work should be supported.

There has been a tremendous out-pouring of public generosity. I have in mind the Live Aid movement and all its associated activities, and the related boost in the work of almost all the voluntary agencies which work in the field. Impressive work has been done by schoolchildren,

[Mr. A. J. Beith]

in many instances of a notably well-informed sort. Associated with studies at school into the conditions of the countries which need assistance, they have undertaken voluntary work to target specific help to particular overseas projects. I find it moving to see how young people and children have become involved in this work and how they have set out to inform themselves and come to understand more about it.

I recall the 20,000 who participated in a lobby of Parliament. That is an example of massive public support and commitment. I can remember—I am sure others can as well—the days when one canvassed during elections and found that it was common to meet someone on a doorstep who asked, "Why is all this money being given to other countries? Shouldn't we concentrate on our problems at home?" I find that that is said less and less and more and more people understand that the fate of the hungry in the world is something about which they should be concerned on moral grounds. They understand also that they have every reason to be concerned about the issue if they care about the future peace and stability of the world.

A genuine transformation in public opinion has taken place. There will always be those who take the narrowest and most nationalistic, short-sighted view, but there has been a major change in public opinion upon which the Government, Foreign Office Ministers and Treasury Ministers should build. The task is easier for them now in justifying the enlargement of their budgets than it has been during certain periods in the past. There is a generosity in the public spirit which they should be seeking to match.

It is an improvement that the Minister, in his November announcement, suggested that there would be level funding for the overseas aid budget in the next few years if his inflation assumptions were accurate. I am not convinced about the accuracy of his assumptions about inflation, but the announcement showed some willingness on his part.

Many of us who take part in this debate will want to see Britain move positively nearer to the United Nations target, from which we have slipped back so disastrously over the past few years. If there are signs that we are to move in the right direction, let us seize on them. However, inflation is always higher than the forecasts of Governments, and I fear that we shall not achieve level funding and that we shall not see positive movement in the direction of the United Nations target.

Whatever is to be the amount of money that we spend, it is crucial that we examine how we spend it. We must assert the priority of basic agricultural development work. I accept that many other things are needed apart from the aid that we can provide. The task of tackling the debt problems of the poorest countries is a high priority for international considerations as well as for Britain's. The hon. Member for Stroud made a telling comment when he said that people die not merely because they are hungry, but because they are poor. There is the problem of poor countries and the problem of poor sections of countries' populations. That is one of the reasons why Socialist and Marxist philosophies often have a certain appeal in the poorest countries. Any Government of any poor country who took a narrow view of what the state should do would probably not be serving the interests of their people. However, it is discovered quickly that when Socialist and Marxist philosophies are implemented in some of the poorest countries, they have a tendency to produce an enlargement of rather top-heavy and bureaucratic state machinery and not equalisation or a reduction of poverty.

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): What about China?

Mr. Beith: China is engaged in a remarkable process of reform. It is cleaning out its administrative system. It is a process which many of us admire. Labour Members should not be so quick to become defensive. I have raised a problem which they should recognise. Different political philosophies face different difficulties in the Third world. I contend that those which are heavily Socialist in their emphasis tend to end up producing a top-heavy state machinery and buttressing that by curtailing individual liberty to protect that machinery. Many of them do not reduce poverty.

The result is not usually the eradication of that individual poverty which makes many people hungry. Those countries that forswear the Socialist path, stick to a pure capitalist course and make the assumption that the power of the state should be narrowed tend to make no contribution to the eradication of poverty, or make a contribution limited to the success of those who are able to prosper under a capitalist system. No political philosophy has provided a ready-made solution for the Third world. In all the countries new routes have to be found which embrace a recognition of what the state has to do, with some awareness of its limitations and dangers. It is significant that the simple solutions proffered by both sides of traditional politics have not solved the problems.

There are problems of policy for many of the countries concerned, not just in general political philosophy but in areas such as agriculture. The Harare declaration has been mentioned. That is one sign that there is a realisation in some of the countries that agricultural policies designed mainly to produce cash crops were, in most cases, the wrong avenue to pursue. Different avenues will now have to be taken and there will have to be changed priorities.

Although many of the areas of policy will be relevant to the solution of the problem of famine, it will continue to occur in countries where climatic conditions have dramatic effects unless we cater for those problems by contributing to basic agricultural development in a way that allows people to produce their own food and feed their own families. That must be the priority of overseas aid policy, and I urge it upon the Government.

5.11 pm

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): I declare an interest in this subject because I serve as chairman of the British-Somali parliamentary group and of the Horn of Africa Council. Both of those bodies are acutely concerned about the famine in the north-eastern part of the African continent.

In November 1984 I visited the refugee camps along the Ethiopian border with my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) and a former Member of the House, Colonel Billy McLean. As a consequence of that visit, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development was able to announce a £1 million emergency programme for the relief of refugees within the eastern part of Sudan within a calendar month.

The visit brought home to me a fact that will be all too deeply embedded in the consciousness of right hon. and hon. Members, that in so many instances famine is as

much a consequence of human evil, of internecine bloodshed, of civil war and politics as it is of the accidents of geography, topography, of agriculture and of climate. It is to the political dimension that I shall address my remarks.

When we visited the camps on the eastern frontier of the Sudan there were, at that stage of the emergency, two clear categories of refugees coming across. They were coming across like ships out of the mist. One saw groups of tattered persons and families, sometimes with animals and sometimes without. The Eritreans had a common story to tell. They had been bombed and napalmed out of their villages and in some instances actually driven out of their villages by the operations of the Ethiopian army. If left to themselves the food problem would have been tolerable but the combination of civil war and an adverse harvest were insupportable and they had to move away into Sudan.

The Tigrean refugees told a somewhat different tale. Most of them were elderly or extremely young. The able-bodied seemed to have been left behind to till the fields but insufficient crops were likely to be grown to support whole families. Within five minutes of our arrival an old man died at our feet. This was the pattern that seemed to be continuing for a long time to come.

Since that visit in November 1984 the political problems within Ethiopia have not improved. It is common knowledge that the Ethiopian Government have been giving assistance to the civil war in the south of Sudan. That civil war, combined with the burden imposed upon the already tottering economy of Sudan, led to the downfall of President Numeiri and the installation of the interim provisional Government in Khartoum. Unfortunately, a political solution has still not been found for the civil war in the south of Sudan in spite of the mediatory efforts made by the new authorities in Khartoum. This is sad and tragic because as a consequence of the continued conflict there are more refugees and there is a continuing relief problem in the south of the country.

In neighbouring Chad the problem is not much better. The climate has taken its toll and the famine has been severe. The news reports from Paris suggest that the Libyan-backed parties in the north are massing their forces again and the Government in N'Djamena are worried lest civil war should break out once more. At the beginning of the refugee movement from Chad into the western part of Sudan a good proportion of the refugees were driven out because of the civil war in Chad.

At the other side of Ethiopia, in the eastern part of the Horn of Africa, there is a continuing difficulty in that self-determination for the Somali people within Ethiopia has not been possible. Some 700,000 Somali refugees were driven out of the Ogaden region. To this day the Ethiopian air force conducts raids across the border and attacks villages in Somalia. That makes it harder to repatriate Ethiopian refugees.

There are serious political problems throughout the whole of the Horn of Africa, which is one of the most impoverished parts of the continent, and I bring those problems to the attention of the House. It is against that troubled and disturbed background that I ask the House to look at Her Majesty's Government's relief efforts and aid programme. It is sad that our gross bilateral aid to Somalia has declined over the past five years. In 1980 total financial aid and technical co-operation was £2·8 million. The figure has moved steadily downwards since that time and is now £2·1 million. There is a similar tale in British gross bilateral aid to Sudan. In 1981 the figure was £32·7 million, rising to a peak of £39·4 million in 1982. The figure for 1984, which is the most recent figure available, is down to £27·4 million. Those two countries, as I explained, have been adversely affected not only by the drought, which has affected the whole of that belt of Africa, but by a huge influx of refugees from Ethiopia.

However, when I look at Her Majesty's Government's aid to Ethiopia it is interesting to note that in 1980 gross bilateral aid to Ethiopia was £1·9 million and rose steadily to £7 million in 1984. I understand that in the exceptional circumstances of the drought Her Majesty's Government have had to take exceptional relief measures, and that is to their credit. Since October 1984 the British Government have disbursed no less than £36·84 million to Sudan. In 1984 they gave £25·84 million and in 1985 £36·34 million for the relief of famine in Ethiopia. That is welcome and good, but we must be realistic.

I am deeply shocked when I read reports in the papers that the Government in Addis Ababa have just banned from Ethiopia the admirable team of French doctors—Médecins Sans Frontières — who have been doing wonderful work not least in the provinces most wracked by civil war, of Eritrea, Tigre and Wollo. I ask my right hon. Friend the Minister, who knows and has visited Ethiopia, to discuss with his right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary whether pressure could be put on the Ethiopian authorities to conduct themselves in a normal, civilised and humane way.

Furthermore, it must be stated loud and clear and unambiguously that the forced transfer of populations, usually by Soviet air force aircraft or, if not, Aeroflot aircraft, from Eritrea and Tigre to the southern provinces of Ethiopia does no good for the relief of famine. Those people are herded on to the aircraft. I have heard it alleged that Royal Air Force crews at one side of an airport will be preparing their relief sorties and relief missions while at the other side of the same airport Soviet personnel and their Ethiopian brethren are herding hapless farmers and rural populations on to aircraft to be transferred to a strange and alien part of Ethiopia. That is intolerable. The Ethiopian Government have been using famine as a weapon of war against what they regard as the dissident populations of Eritrea and Tigre, who are seeking no more than the process of self-determination for themselves and a chance for autonomy in their provinces.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): There is a danger that my hon. Friend may unwittingly give an alibi to those who would wish Britain to cut our overseas aid altogether on the basis that if the countries of Africa cannot sort themselves out, why should we assist them? I wish to draw to my hon. Friend's attention a letter sent by the assistant secretary-general, based in Addis Ababa, to the editor of *The Times* in August this year. He said:

> "There is a complete consensus here among representatives of donor countries and voluntary organisations that the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission is doing its utmost to distribute whatever grain has been consigned to it."

The letter said that the United Nations thought that the Ethiopian Government were doing their bit to combat famine and not using it as an instrument of war, although the civil war must be brought to an end. However, it has not been used consciously as an instrument of war.

Mr. Wilkinson: I did not realise that my hon. Friend would read a handout in his intervention. If I had, I would not have let him intervene.

[Mr. Wilkinson]

I led the House's delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations in October. During that visit we were briefed by Mr. Bradford Morse, who heads the United Nations development programme and who has also been responsible for the United Nations emergency programme for Africa. That programme's document of 1 September 1985 reports an increase in child malnutrition in southern Tigre and says that there is particular concern for the health of orphans, destitutes and old people remaining in the camps. It lays particular stress on the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ethiopia for the returnees coming back from Sudan and Somalia, and the United Nations reminds us that next year, too, there will still be a major requirement for emergency food aid.

In no part of my speech did I deprecate in any way our efforts to alleviate suffering and help people suffering from famine in Ethiopia and the neighbouring states. I stated that war and the unscrupulous activities of the Ethiopian Government have made the relief operations much harder than they need have been. It is a scandal and a tragedy, but it had to be exposed. I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to do so.

5.26 pm

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): I congratulate the hon. Member for Stroud (Sir A. Kershaw) and members of his Committee on their outstanding report. I agree with his submission today that the famine disaster in Africa could have been avoided. The key question now is whether, jointly, we can contribute to avoiding its recurrence. To understand that and learn the lessons from the famine, we do not need a crystal ball.

Unfortunately, the future is already visible in the trend of food production in Africa. For example, from 1970 to the early 1980s in the industrial countries as a whole, as we would expect, food production per head was positive at 1·6 per cent. a year and for developing countries as a whole it was positive at 0·9 per cent. a year, but for Africa it was negative. In the west African countries as a whole it was −0·8 per cent. and in east Africa it was −2·2 per cent. If we look at the long-term trends, we see that from 1961 to 1970, less than six out of 24 African countries vulnerable to a food crisis registered a negative growth or a fall-back in per capita food production, but from 1971 to 1984 only six out of those 24 countries achieved a positive growth of food production per head.

I might come to the same conclusion as the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), from a different perspective, about the extent to which certain Governments seem more content to wage war within their own frontiers than to wage war on drought. None the less, even before the recent famine, and since the last major famine in 1974-75, agricultural output per head in Africa has been declining irrespective of drought or wars. That is the underlying issue to which I should like to address myself.

The hon. Member for Stroud, with good reason, drew attention to the fact that while drought self-evidently relates to climatic factors and causes famine, famine affects the poorest sections of the population. Therefore, if we urge the Government to take those measures in their aid programme which will help to avoid rather than simply remedy the effects of dought, the underlying structural problem of poverty should be addressed.

Much work has been done on that by Professor Amartya Sen who is now at the University of Oxford. I am glad to say that much attention also is now being paid to that, not by the economists in the economic research division of the World Bank, who seem to have seen the market work in south-east Asia and have been converted to market forces, but in the international division of the bank, especially by the head of that division, Shahid Javed Burki. Such stress on underlying structural poverty in the African countries can make a major contribution not only to our debate but to the kinds of policies which we should adopt and which we should urge the Government to adopt.

For example, Shahid Javed Burki has drawn attention to the fact that if the very poor are defined as those who ordinarily do not have enough income to obtain sufficient calories for adequate growth or health, against a worldwide increase of that category of up to an estimated 400 million people in 1985, the share of sub-Saharan Africa in that total has risen from 20 per cent., or 60 million people, in 1970, to nearly 40 per cent., or 150 million people, in 1985. In other words, in 1985 nearly half the population of sub-Saharan Africa belongs to the category of very poor — the people who are exceptionally vulnerable to famine when it occurs.

If the House is to address itself to the recommendations to be made to the Government on their aid programme and spending, we must understand that the consequences of famine will be irreversible unless there are sustained policies for intervention in agricultural production and in regional and rural development.

The first effect of famine was identified by the Royal Commission established on the famines in India earlier this century. It might well be called the shoe horn effect. In other words, it has been found that small farmers leave the land during famine and in that phase they almost certainly liquidate the small assets that they have, certainly their herds.

The second phase is that in which such former farmers seek farm employment hundreds of miles from their former grazing or plot areas. Therefore, they become casual labourers often driven into degradation, and too often the women are driven into prostitution.

The third phase is more critical, when depopulation sets in. Entire villages—whole rural communities—abandon the land in search of food. There is a simple logic about that. It swells the urban population while reducing rural farming. The result is less food for more people off the land and a combined rural and urban crisis.

What is needed to cope with the underlying structural problems of rural migration and urban poverty? First, higher food prices alone—I stress "alone"—are not the answer. For one thing, with depopulation and the reduction of the working population in agriculture—and of the land under cultivation—higher prices alone would simply aggravate inflation and shift the price of food further out of reach of the new urban poor. Even lower prices, such as are now registered in many of the African countries following recent rains—a point stressed in a recent article in the *New Scientist*—give no long-term incentive to migrants during the recent famine to return to the land. The price mechanism alone is not enough to

achieve, and certainly not enough to guarantee, a return to the rural areas of those who have come off the land during famine.

Secondly, as is illustrated in the Harare declaration to which some hon. Members referred, we need policies which make possible a better balance between cash crops for export and food for domestic production. The hazards of cash crops for export have been well known for some time and have been often criticised. We know why local Governments pursue that policy. They need the foreign exchange to finance imports, often not only imports of fuel but also agricultural imports such as seeds, fertilisers and agricultural equipment, including spares.

A third major corollary directly links the need for agricultural development to offset famine and the problem of debt. This has been stressed before in the House but we have not had adequate answers from the Minister. We appreciate that the Minister and the Overseas Development Administration have written off some of the loans to less developed countries and converted them to grants, and we are glad about that. But that still leaves us with the crippling problem with which Sudan was faced last year.

Although the Minister was able to give tens of millions of pounds in grants and assistance to Sudan, its total debt last year was $8,000 million. That resulted in the absurd situation that, when Secretary of State Shultz came to the Sudan to see the crisis and what the US agencies were doing, it is reported with some authority that several Ministers were able to drive to the airport to meet him but their staff had to return by public transport because they could not afford to drive back into town. Many of the British public have seen on television the Geldof convoys from the remarkable Live Aid and Band Aid initiatives overtaking convoys that have been stranded in the Sudan through lack of fuel. That is a crucial factor in the aid programme. Aid alone for agricultural equipment is not enough. Even if we were to see an increase in the aid budget, that would not be enough if the debt problem were not tackled.

In that context we urge the Government—especially with the kind of change in the United States Government's attitude which we see from Mr. Baker and which we welcome in terms of increased proposals for World Bank lending—to get together with the Governments of the United States, Germany and other EC countries to fund the long-term debt, reschedule it, and, where necessary, write off the long-term debt of the least developed countries and certainly the sub-Saharan African countries. The official estimate of their debt at $80 billion is, if anything, likely to be an under-estimate. It has recently been reckoned that it is under-estimated by 50 per cent. Any increase in the aid contribution, even if achieved, has to be seen in that debt context.

Zambia is in a straitjacket of debt. It is 95 per cent. dependent for its export earnings on one commodity—copper. With falling copper prices and the rise in fuel prices it is being crucified by long-term debt. Even with the floating of the kwacha, even seeking market solutions in the foreign exchange market, one cannot find adequate sacks to store the new food and the food surplus which in certain products has become available in recent months in Zambia.

Fourthly, the repopulation of rural areas and a long-term stable price structure means the need for intervention in agriculture and in regional development programmes rather than simply market forces. Those in the World Bank, the IMF and the Government who advocate a fuller flourish of market forces neglect the fact that no developed country has ever subjected its agriculture to the rigours of market forces in this century in the way that the World Bank and certain others are advocating for the African countries. The United States, Britain, with its previous deficiency payment system, and the EEC, with its common agricultural policy, would not dream of letting market forces rip with the consequent decimation of agricultural production in the manner in which certain people are advocating simply a market forces solution for African agriculture.

Of course, the market has an appropriate role to play. Of course, there are key issues of appropriate prices to producers. Certainly no Labour Member would argue that the African countries need a common agricultural policy of the kind that we now find in the EEC with its vast surpluses. But the African countries do need donors to work jointly with them to secure policies for incentives, assistance, grants and technical support for agriculture that go beyond the vagaries of market supply and demand and can assure a long-term future for agriculture.

Mr. Ian Grist (Cardiff, Central): Does the hon. Gentleman accept, from those who may know Africa a little better, that if European farmers can produce surpluses from overpriced food, the introduction of prices that the market could fetch would find African farmers producing food just as well?

Mr. Holland: I do not know what the hon. Gentleman means by those who know Africa a little better. He is not addressing himself to my main point. In the depopulated rural areas in sub-Saharan countries there is an outward migration of population to other countries — for example, Eritrea, Tigré, and Sudan. There is massive urbanisation. The market mechanism alone cannot provide sufficient incentives, from just one of two good annual harvests, to attract population back to the rural areas and to deserted and desolated villages.

I may have misunderstood the hon. Gentleman's point about price support. Of course, price support is an appropriate policy. However, a price mechanism alone will not ensure that those who have come off the land, joined the rural poor and are contributing to the urban population explosion will have the courage to return to the land when they lack capital, basic machinery and credit for further agricultural investment.

Fifthly, in any programme priority must be given to the needs of those who produce the most, but are paid the least. In Africa, that certainly applies to women. In east Africa, women work an average of 40 per cent. more than men, but are paid 60 per cent. less.

The Lomé agreement recommends that we should give credit where credit is due—that is to women and to women's co-operatives — rather than simply increase revenue through higher prices paid to male heads of households. It is clear that certain African Governments are willing to support and encourage that, and I should be interested to hear the Minister's comments. Otherwise, increased revenue from higher prices, or even a price support policy, will not go to those who have a vested interest in reinvesting in agriculture.

Sixthly, the role of technical assistance has two dimensions, and that issue has been raised many times in

[Mr. Holland]

the House. One dimension is water-based technical assistance, copper dams, pumps, wells and so on. The second dimension is seed-based assistance including both dry soils and tropical seed research. This House should admit that the Government's record is deplorable. As my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) has said several times, the Government have cut assistance to the Tropical Development Research Institute in London.

There is no aspect of that six-point agenda for action in sub-Saharan Africa where the Government are taking a lead rather than following the laissez-faire remedies favoured by the United States Administration.

During Question Time last month, the Prime Minister claimed that the United Kingdom aid contribution was in line with the OECD average. I pointed out that in terms of aid per head per OECD donor country, Britain is twelfth on the list. Indeed, our aid as itemised in the Chancellor's autumn statement will not mean an increase in—or even a defence of in real terms—the current spending levels up to 1987. The probable inflation rate is likely to mean a net decrease in aid as a share of United Kingdom GDP by a further 1 per cent. or even 2 per cent. down to 32 per cent. or 31 per cent. of GDP by 1987.

What is happening with rural development assistance? United Kingdom Government aid allocations for rural development have declined from £10 million in 1980 to less than £0·2 million in 1984. That is a derisory 2,000th part of 1 per cent. of the total United Kingdom aid budget. Will the Minister make a dramatic statement today, perhaps saying that he will double, treble, quadruple, or multiply by 10 times the amount spent on the rural development programme? Even were he to multiply it by 10 times, it would still be only 2 per cent. of the total United Kingdom aid budget. If the Minister cannot show that sort of commitment to longer-term rural development, we cannot take seriously the Government's commitment to these issues.

Hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Stroud (Sir A. Kershaw), spoke of the reshuffling within the aid budget so that the emergency food aid programme of £90 million to £95 million spent on famine relief came from other items of the budget. The net contribution of up to £9 million for the Hercules had to come from a magnificent effort by the Ministry of Defence rather than from the ODA.

I take the point made by the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood that many hon. Members heard on the ITN news today about the ending of the RAF's remarkable air lift, which recently has been accompanied by a new aerial assault in Eritrea by the Dergue, who have bombed women and children, hospitals and resettlement camps, and who have waged war on civilian populations—taking lives when the remainder of the world are attempting to save those lives.

The tragedy in Ethiopia is substantially of the Dergue's own making. But for the longer-term tragedy in sub-Saharan Africa, unless the Minister tells us today that despite the opaque nature of the Estimates there will be an increase in the aid budget, a triple indictment must be made—first, that the Government were warned of the coming famine but did not respond soon enough; secondly, that during the famine the Government robbed Peter to aid Paul, rescheduling aid rather than mobilising new aid resources; and, thirdly, that the Government appear to have learnt next to nothing about the underlying, long-term causes of the famine and have taken no clear steps to help avoid its recurrence.

The Government should have shifted new resources to respond to the famine, rather than reshuffle the aid budget. To recover from the famine, the Government—jointly with other countries—need to reschedule the debt of the sub-Saharan countries, to help restructure rural farming and aid a redistribution of resources towards rural areas. Before the famine, the Government proved themselves deaf to the warnings issued in the House. During the famine they often appeared to be blind to the real issues. Nothing in the current Estimates promises anything better for the future.

5.47 pm

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): Before his peroration, the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) had made a useful contribution to the debate. Those of us who follow this subject with considerable interest wholly reject his peroration on the Government's actions.

It is a pleasure to speak yet again on this matter in this Session. I spoke in the debate on the Queen's Speech, when hon. Members pointed out to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor the projected figures on aid and said how seriously many Conservative Members were awaiting his autumn statement.

We very much welcome the fact that in the autumn statement the aid programme for 1986-87 and 1987-88 has been increased by £47 million. I know that my right hon. Friend the Minister played his part in ensuring that increase. It would be churlish of anyone to refuse to recognise the part that he played.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) spoke about the position on the border between Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. He also referred to the politics of the issue. With the opportunity to travel the world, we can see the politics of the issue. I, like my hon. Friend, have travelled the famine areas and have taken photographic slides. When one is able to show those slides to schoolchildren and constituents and can share one's experience of what it is like to be in a camp in Darfur, the reaction is, "This is not politics; this is a question of the survival of the people".

I am sure that we all recognise that poverty is the real problem in Africa, as my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Sir A. Kershaw) said. I pay tribute to him as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He has led us positively. I am sure that the Committee's work has commended itself to the House.

Things have moved on since the report, and I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development. The hon. Member for Vauxhall referred to the article in the *New Scientist* entitled "Who will buy the surplus?" Some of us moved quickly to get in touch with my right hon. Friend to discuss that policy. It would clearly be disastrous in a climate-led recovery if surpluses depressed farm prices and we were not able to encourage a fragile economy. My right hon. Friend said:

"The United Kingdom has long argued that food aid should, wherever it is practical and cost effective, be purchased in one developing country which has a food surplus and transported to another which has a food deficit. This both encourages local farmers and provides valuable foreign exchange to the vendor country. We are currently arranging just such a 'triangular' transaction under our bilateral food aid programme, with 14,500

tonnes of grain being purchased in Zimbabwe for use as food aid to Mozambique. The European Community also makes use of triangular transactions as part of its very large food aid programme, and the United Kingdom has urged it to do so more frequently."

This shows that, contrary to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Vauxhall, my right hon. Friend the Minister is alert and aware of the changing problems and that he is trying to solve them.

Many of the Select Committee's members were concerned that the warning signals had been evident in the poorer African areas but, when the famine struck, many people were surprised. The United Nations had already warned the developing nations more than 23 times that a famine was developing. The Committee recommended that staff in overseas posts in countries where there was a risk of famine should conduct their own assessments independently of other organisations. My right hon. Friend the Minister wrote to the Committee saying that the arrangements had been made. Officers posted to countries where there is a risk of famine will be briefed on how to interpret the information and guidance notes have been distributed on the assessment of the food situation for the benefit of officers already in those countries. Those are two positive ways in which my right hon. Friend has reacted to the Committee's recommendations.

That makes me all the more sad that my right hon. Friend the Minister has not been able to respond to another point to which attention has been drawn in the Supplementary Estimates — the additional funds for famine relief that should have been provided. I am totally unconvinced by the argument that this is slippage and that no long-term development programme has been affected. One need only look at the average of the contingencies fund over the years to defeat that argument. The average has been about £13 million. In 1983 it was £30 million. We spent £80 million in 1984 and £87 million in 1985 on famine relief. If the average contingency reserve is £13 million and we spend the total budget, one cannot sustain the argument that the additional sums have not damaged the long-term development programme.

I am prepared to accept that a specific programme has not been stopped through slippage and that aid for an established programme has not been discontinued. It is obvious that programmes have been delayed and postponed. Had it not been for the famine problems, those programmes would have begun this year or last year. The Government are wrong to sustain that argument. It would be more sensible if they honestly admitted the truth. The Committee said that it was not acceptable that the entire cost of the United Kingdom's response to the crisis should fall on the previously agreed aid budget. We said that the emergency was of such a degree that it had to be regarded as a new situation and that substantial new money had to be provided to help with it. All Committee members stand by that position. It would be better if the Government admitted that that was the case rather than pretended that some strange formulation in the aid budget has produced additional contingency funds without diverting money from projects that would have gone ahead anyway.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) referred to the working party on United Kingdom aid to African agriculture of which I was the chairman. The report was a frank analysis of what we have been doing for African agriculture. The working party decided to be as constructive as possible to analyse those areas in which long-term development had, or had not, been operating efficiently and the required changes. I am sure that all hon. Members recognise that the fragile climate-led recovery in many parts of Africa is just a hiccup. The rainfall this year has been much lower than the average in previous decades. It would be a mistake to imagine that this year's rain and production levels mean a new pattern. We have been given a window of opportunity to rethink, restate and refinance our aid programme for assistance to African agriculture.

I would very much welcome my right hon. Friend taking up the Committee's suggestion and, early in the new year, making a new policy statement on the Government's stand on their aid programme and the share that will go to the poorest countries.

The working party stated:

"We believe that the ODA should maintain a specific long-term development aid programme which is inviolate. It should be equipped with a small provision for emergencies, and when a larger response is needed, this should be funded on the basis of additionality from one Government's contingency reserve and not from departmental funds."

I hope that my right hon. Friend will consider that suggestion and make it part of any future policy statement.

None of us—certainly no one who has been out in a field frequently — pretends that this problem can be easily solved, because we are concerned with the poorest people in poor countries, who are many miles from the population centres, road and rail systems and the means of support that would normally be necessary to sustain life.

It is difficult to maintain schemes in those areas. It is asking a lot of our aid people to spend long periods— frequently longer than six months — in such an environment, especially if they have families, because there is a lack of schools and other facilities. It is difficult also to persuade the nationals of these countries to do so. One might like to think of the bright lights of Khartoum, although I must admit I have yet to find them in my visits. I am sure that the bright lights of Kassala, El Fasser or Nyala are much dimmer. One should not pretend that it is not difficult to establish schemes for the rehabilitation of the peasant farmer and the nomad. Anyone who criticises the aid programme should recognise that. We must work together more positively with proper financing and skilled manpower, whatever its source, to begin schemes. We must recognise that politically the schemes are not popular because they do not produce immediate results.

Having examined carefully the schemes that exist, we found that, instead of looking at three-year or four-year programmes within the lifetime of a Parliament or even a Government, to be successful in areas such as this, one needs to look ahead 15, 20 or even 25 years and to a sustained programme of manpower and support.

All sorts of high-flown ideas are proposed of what is needed to help peasant farmers. We now have examples of what it takes to encourage farmers to produce. For example, in Zimbabwe there has been a remarkable recovery by peasant farmers, and that has come about not by over-elaborate schemes. The farmers there have grown enough to feed the whole population by receiving high-yielding seed, fertilisers at the right time, credit when they needed it and, at the end of the day, a price for their crops that gave them an incentive to grow a surplus and plant for a second year.

I urge the Minister to listen carefully to what is being said in the debate and to note the work that is being achieved by the Foreign Affairs Committee. He can rest

[Mr. Jim Lester]

assured that we shall return to this subject time and again, and certainly until we are satisfied that Parliament and the Government reflect the opinions of the members of that Committee and Back Benchers who are interested in these issues.

6.2 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): The hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) made a thoughtful and powerful speech, especially when dealing with the Government's contingency arrangements—or the lack of them—and I am sure that he spoke for hon. Members in all parts of the House when dealing with that issue..

My main purpose in intervening is to refer to the Grindlays address that was given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) on 25 September of this year in Jersey, when he made what I consider to have been a major contribution on subjects which are highly relevant to this debate. In that address my right hon. Friend pointed out that the situation in Africa was an enormous tragedy but not an inevitable one. It was not the result of an inability to feed the world's growing population or to fight disease and poverty. It was, rather, a question of meeting Africa's desperate need for assistance.

The size of the problem that we are debating dwarfs the present level of aid, and without a substantial increase in aid the economic challenges that confront the Third world will be insurmountable. We witness the ludicrous situation of net capital and interest payments flowing from the Third world to the west instead of the other way around. Certain African countries have been forced to adopt export policies which place too much emphasis on industrialisation and producing cash crops for export instead of improving farm practices and growing food for local use.

Before we condemn such policies we should attempt to evaluate why they are occurring. Without the revenue and foreign currency that accrues from such exports, countries cannot afford to purchase fertilisers or fuel for the next crop. Nor can they pay the interest on their indebtedness to other countries.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, during a visit to Tanzania, quoted Julius Nyerere as having said that he had to choose in his country between paying his debts and feeding his people. That, alas, is the choice we place before the leaders of many African countries, leaving little hope for them to be able to improve the lot of their people. My right hon. Friend noted when in Tanzania that that country's debt service obligations amounted to more than its foreign exchange earnings for the whole year.

There are, in all of that, implications for the western world, including Britain, in connection with unemployment and the job potential that we seem to be ignoring. Unemployment in the industrialised west represents stagnant development in the Third world and something for them and us which is far from a separate problem. Significant problems affect us all because of the way in which we approach these matters. Indeed, when I think of the problems of the Third world and of the possibilities of job creation which we ignore, I am reminded of the speech, which my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) will recall, of Mr. Ben Bella at a meeting initiated by the late Frank McElhone in which Ben Bella said:

"Your unemployed are our dead."

That is true, and we should be contributing more to the Third world to avoid such a calamity. It is a scandal, as we view the poverty in those countries, that in Britain men, mills and machinery are standing idle.

These problems are intrinsically linked by an economic relationship from which no nation can completely isolate itself. The industrial nations will not gain if there is an increasing wealth gap between them and the developing countries. Their poverty directly affects our welfare, just as our recession limits their development.

One in 20 industrial jobs in Europe and one in six in the United States depends on exports to the Third world. If the people of the Third world cannot afford to buy what we make, unemployment in the industrial west will grow.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth pointed out in his Grindlays address that by the year 2000 world population was expected to be 6·1 billion, three times higher than it was at the turn of this century. In the western industrialised nations, population growth would be relatively low when compared with Africa, though even in the United States there would probably be 20 per cent. more people than there are now, making it a problem, though not such a great one as that faced by African countries, because Africa's population would almost double, from 476 million in 1980 to 877 million by the year 2000.

My right hon. Friend pointed out that those developments were occurring at a time when access to fertile land was decreasing and poverty was on the increase and more Africans were estimated to be under-nourished than was the case a decade ago, with 20 per cent. less food being produced for every African today than was produced in 1960. If present trends continued, by the year 2000 the continent of Africa would need to import 44 per cent. of all its food requirements, but many of the countries so affected would not be able to afford to do so. That is the nature of the problem that the world must prepare for and attempt to defeat. Without improving on present standards, we shall have to produce 30 per cent. more food by the year 2000 just to meet the demands of growing numbers of people. That can be done only if aid is increased and directed to where it is manifestly required.

Every year, massive amounts of arable land revert to infertile desert, over-grazing and poor irrigation techniques, and the large-scale cutting down of forests contribute to the problems that Africa and other countries face. Short-term relief is not enough. The Government have presided over an 18 per cent. cut in their aid and development budgets since 1979. That includes a cut of £40 million this year and represents 3 per cent. in real terms. I am sure that the public, which has been so generous with its contributions, regards those reductions as being utterly repugnant and unacceptable. It is deplorable that the Government should leave the needs of the African people to the mercies of the market.

This year the United Kingdom has donated a record low amount—0·33 per cent. of gross national product—to overseas aid. The Government have not made the slightest attempt to achieve the 0·7 per cent. United Nations target which many other countries, less fortunate than us, have already reached or exceeded. That tells us everything about the Government's aid objectives. *[Interruption.]* I

agree that the Government's policy is nonsense. The 20,000 people who lobbied the House not so long ago showed that they agreed with me. A massive increase in overseas aid positively directed towards meeting human needs and encouraging long-term self-reliance is required. Aid for farmers to reclaim land from the desert and to facilitate the planting of new forests are two possible ways of encouraging the self-reliance that we would welcome for African economies.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth reminded us of how Ernest Bevin seized upon the Marshall plan after the war because he recognised that economic development and human freedom went hand in hand. The process was of benefit not just to the European countries but to the vastly productive economy of the United States. Today, we lack the political will to solve the problem. The price of such folly and the failure to tackle world economic problems in a way that will lead to recovery contribute to falling living standards throughout the world, especially in the poor south.

We should be investigating better ways of bringing recovery and not recession to Africa in particular and the Third world in general. That requires development aid rather than austerity programmes. It is a challenge to us all which has not been answered. We thrive together or decay separately. Bevin and Marshall had the vision to recognise that fact in the 1940s. It is staring us in the face in the 1980s and we ignore it, not so much at our peril but at the peril of millions of starving people whose plight it is possible to avoid.

6.12 pm

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): I agree with much of the analysis made by the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) of the position in Africa. There is good and bad news. I wish to speak in a balanced way about the aid budget. We must, therefore, consider the positive as well as the negative side.

My right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development has done an extremely good job, which is recognised by most nations, in conducting the aid programme in relation to the famine in Africa. Much of that aid programme has gone through the EEC. I have found, as the House will be aware, much difficulty in obtaining information from my right hon. Friend on what was being done by the EEC with over half the money spent on Africa. I was fortunate enough to go to Brussels and find out much of the information for myself.

One of the gratifying things that I discovered is that my right hon. Friend, almost unknown to the country and the House, contributed not just a Hercules in Ethiopia where the RAF has done such sterling work, but chartered a Hercules in a joint programme organised by the EEC delegate in the Sudan. It was used to carry food from the east of Sudan to the west of Darfur. That was referred to eloquently by my hon. Friends the Members for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) and for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson). The rains had come and lorries could no longer pass across the desert where there are no roads. The refugees from Chad and the Sudanese on the western border of Darfur were starving because the European and American aid could not be transported there despite my right hon. Friend's efforts to have the railway rehabilitated. That was the only alternative way of carrying the grain from east to west.

My right hon. Friend contributed a charter Hercules. The Italians, the French, the Dutch and the Germans also contributed an aeroplane. In that way, the EEC transported the grain and food, including American food aid, to the west. That is a programme and achievement of which we should be proud, and we should congratulate my right hon. Friend on it.

I also congratulate my right hon. Friend on his defence of the aid budget. He managed to see that it was not reduced, as the Government had planned. He has always tried to conduct the aid programme to provide effective and efficient economic assistance to the poorest countries.

I must come to the other side of the story to which my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe has referred. I wish to reiterate the points in some detail. They relate to how our efforts in Africa have been funded within the aid budget. The members of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee have been playing a game of blind man's buff with the Overseas Development Administration. We are sometimes faced with a budget which is 30 per cent. unallocated when presented to Parliament. That raises the important point of whether Parliament has any control over the budget. Most of that sum is included in the bilateral programme. The matter becomes important when the Government try to hide behind verbiage such as:

"The emergency aid so far provided has not involved cutting"—

we must consider carefully the words used—

"any planned development activities in the remainder of the aid programme."

That beggars belief, because on the most recent aid statistics published by the Department emergency aid represents £95 million. It is part of the bilateral country programme of £434 million from which much of the aid comes. That means that about 20 per cent. of the budget has been extraordinarily spent without affecting—let me use the words carefully—"any planned development activities."

Before my right hon. Friend says that at least half that sum was spent by the EEC and, therefore, did not come out of the bilateral programme, we will accept that the figure was 10 per cent. Those are huge figures and it is a huge proportion. If that is the case, the House should ask how the aid budget is being planned. What are the long-term development plans which have not been affected? Is it because we are budgeting from month to month that we are not committing the money to the long-term agricultural developments about which my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe spoke? Is it that the slippage is so great that we cannot spend it properly on planned long-term developments? We have always spent the complete aid budget, even when there was no emergency or contingency. The aid budget is spent on long-term development objectives when slippage occurs. It is not planned formally because one cannot foresee the events that will take place in a year. The fact that the money is not invested in long-term development is important, and I shall give the House two examples of where it has not been invested.

The money has not been invested in the United Nations development programme. We have cut severely our contribution, which is voluntary and not ratcheted to GDP. The programme undertakes the initial investigation into long-term agricultural projects which may eventually produce an agricultural answer to the famine-struck regions of Africa. Therefore, to argue that we are not

[Mr. Bowen Wells]

affecting long-term development projects by taking money from other projects is a sleight of hand. It is unworthy of my right hon. Friend the Minister to use that argument, and I hope that we shall persuade him to desist from deploying it. It undermines the credibility of his argument.

I conferred with my friends in the Caribbean about cuts in the aid budget. The Minister went to hear their arguments on 1 August at the request of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. They find that the aid budget is rigid, and that they cannot spend it properly on long-term developments because of the way in which it is presented, and they want a discussion on how that can be improved. The unallocated section is defended, with some justification, by my right hon. Friend the Minister and the ODA because they need flexibility within the budget to take account of the difficulties of disbursing that aid. However, they cannot have a flexible approach from Parliament, and administer aid inflexibly into the host countries in such a way that we do not get economic development but receive a minus quantity of good will from them. There must be something wrong with the administration of our aid if that is the net result. That is also an illustration of the way in which the aid budget is being cut by the diversion of money to famine in Africa. Caribbean countries have certainly suffered because they have not had the additional money which would otherwise be available through the bilateral programme.

It is essential for the credibility of the aid programme that at least £100 million — that is not a large sum, considering the whole sum — is put back into the aid budget as additional money to handle this serious crisis. We should also use it to begin to invest in the research, development, management and technical co-operation necessary to find the way to enable the people of the Sudan, Ethiopia and Chad to sustain their population and cattle in those arid areas. They can succeed in that.

The ODA and the EEC have two excellent research projects in the western Sudanese areas devoted to that. Would it not be a magnificent gesture by the Government to give additional money and resources to enable those programmes to ascertain how we can help other people to help themselves and in that way to help us?

6.23 pm

Mr. Eric Deakins (Walthamstow): This must be the best informed debate that has ever taken place on foreign affairs in the Chamber, for two reasons. First, never before can such a high proportion of those taking part have visited the countries concerned and, what is more, in the recent past. Therefore, hon. Members are aware of the problems from first hand. Secondly, we have before us two reports and other information.

We have the Select Committee report. Whenever I read a report by the Select Committee I regret that I am no longer a member of it. Perhaps happier days will come, if not before the general election, then after it. We also have the excellent report of the all-party group on the development of African agriculture, which is extremely detailed and well informed. As usual, we have the well-informed mailing from the world development movement, and we have the benefit of a paper prepared by two people —one from Oxfam and the other from Christian Aid— on food aid and cereal surpluses. The paper also deals with the underlying agricultural problems in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, we have the benefit of two further documents. The first is published by the Catholic Institute for International Relations and is entitled "Africa's Development Disaster". The other is a recent lecture given by Robert McNamara, who for a long time was a superb president of the World Bank, entitled

"The challenges for Sub-Saharan Africa",

in which he deals with the problems that we are debating today—the famine in Africa, and what should be done about it.

Everyone, including experts and those who have not travelled in that part for some time, agrees that there are several factors in relation to the famine, and hunger and poverty have already been mentioned. They also include the domestic agricultural policies of the African countries concerned, which range from being merely unfortunate to disastrous in terms of raising agricultural production for local people — I am not referring to cash crops for export. Other factors include the decline in recent years in overseas aid for agricultural projects. We should not criticise only the British Government—we have a right to criticise them because the debate is partly about that — but all the other major aid donors to sub-Saharan Africa. They have been reducing their spending on agriculture as a proportion of their total aid to that area. I do not know why, as the signs have been there for a considerable time.

A further factor contributing to the famine is that there has been no effective development strategy for sub-Saharan Africa. One can to a certain extent justifiably blame the World Bank, and to a lesser extent the International Monetary Fund for that. The World Bank is the major multilateral institution for co-ordinating development plans, and for injecting vast sums through the International Development Association. The World Bank must take some criticism, and I hope that those who have access to it in Washington DC and elsewhere and its various executive vice-presidents will heed our remarks.

There is a problem in increasing food production for the immediate consumption of the population of those parts which is extremely technical. I do not wish to bore the House, as the information is available and need not be put on the record. Various matters have gone wrong, including the pricing structure, which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) pointed out, has both disadvantages and advantages. There has been no concentration on rain-fed crops, only on other crops. The role of women in agricultural development has been disregarded. The state marketing organisations are often inefficient and do not encourage farmers to produce. When they do produce, they do not always succeed in marketing their produce correctly, either in their own countries, or in the rest of the world.

These are all factors which, while we can deplore, we have to leave to the African Government concerned to put right. At the same time, our aid policy could be much better directed towards increasing African agricultural production for domestic consumption and feeding the growing population. Those factors have been going wrong in the past 20 years of agricultural development in Africa. The experience of successful schemes funded by development projects such as ours should be used as an example and encouragement to African countries and

Governments to get on with the job themselves. I hope that we shall not have to wait too long for African Governments and aid donors to get the agricultural situation right in sub-Saharan Africa.

There are other factors besides agriculture in famine and hunger. One, mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), was financial flows to sub-Saharan Africa. Unquestionably, these have been reduced. My hon. Friend pointed out that net capital flows generally to the developing world from the developed world have been falling. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, they have almost got to a negative stage in net repayments on the interest charges on the debts, which are not large by world standards but are by comparison with the GNP of the country. They are an enormous burden on small countries struggling to prosper and do the best that they can for their people. The burden of debt repayment is more than outweighed by the reducing amount of aid going to those countries. They are becoming net contributors to us in the rich countries. I am talking not about the rest of the world, where there are other problems, but about sub-Saharan countries. The capital is not flowing there but outwards. Donors have, for reasons that escape me—none of the publications from which I shall quote has the answer—reduced aid to this part of the world, even those countries with a much better aid record than ours. That is obviously a problem.

Mr. McNamara in his lecture on 1 August suggested that a massive injection of funds was needed. That is in line with the Brandt reports, and the recent report with which my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall had much to do called "The Global Challenge". It concerned ways of revitalising the global economy in ways that will help the poor countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa. Mr. McNamara reckoned that all donors should immediately step up their aid by no less than 30 per cent. That does not sound such a large figure. It would be large if applied to our total aid budget, but we are talking only about aid to sub-Saharan Africa. Lest it be forgotten that Mr. McNamara was president of the World Bank, he also had harsh things to say about that institution. He has suggested that it needs to quadruple its investment and lending under IDA and other windows of World Bank lending to sub-Saharan Africa to cope with the problems.

In his lecture, Mr. McNamara had a whole section on population. I was glad that the hon. Member for Stroud (Sir A. Kershaw), the Chairman of the Select Committee, mentioned this, as did my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West. We cannot debate the problems of famine in Africa without some passing reference to the population problem. I shall quote from Mr. McNamara's lecture. He said on page 12:

"Sub-Saharan Africa, already the poorest region in the world, now has the highest population growth rate in the world, even exceeding that of the rest of Africa. It is 3·2 per cent. a year. Were that to continue, the population would double in 22 years, quadruple in 44 years, and increase eightfold in 66 years."

The year 2025 is not far away and certainly is within the lifetime of all the children in Africa aged up to 12, whom we hope will survive. Mr. McNamara says about that year:

"By the year 2025 . . . the population of sub-Saharan Africa . . . will have risen from 363 million to 1,201 million."

That is 1·2 billion people, almost four times the present level.

I was struck by the report "Africa's Development Disasters" by the Catholic Institute for International Relations. It is no secret that the Catholic Church has fairly strong views about artificial contraception. A number of hon. Members and I recently went to see Cardinal Hume, the senior Catholic prelate, to express our concern about some of the things that the Pope has been saying both in Africa and Latin America recently. Nevertheless, the CIIR, in its excellent report, had some interesting things to say about population. I regard this almost as the turning of the tide. It says:

"For Africa as a whole, though total income has risen, the greater growth of population meant that by 1983 income per head had declined to 4 per cent. below its 1970 level."

That is, in 13 years, income per head in sub-Saharan Africa had decreased in one of the poorest parts of the world.

My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall quoted the following figure in his interesting speech. The report continues:

"In most countries, food consumption per head is now less than it was in 1970 . . . The 24 African countries classified as most seriously affected by drought and famine in the period 1983-85 registered a reduction in grain production per person of around 2 per cent. a year between 1970 and 1984 . . . With an overall rate of population growth of 3 per cent. per year, Africa will have a population of 1,100 millions by the year 2010. This means that Africa will have to achieve a rate of economic growth of 3 per cent. a year just to stand still. Clearly, if Africa's economic decline continues it is difficult to see how such a population can be sustained."

I welcome those comments from the CIIR, because they show, for the first time in any Catholic publication that I have seen, a recognition of the damage caused by too fast rises in population when food supply is not organised and is deteriorating fast.

One of the lessons of this well-informed debate is that we have to take account, as I hope that the ODA and the Minister will, of the need not merely to consider increases in total aid, and within that increases in the amount of aid going to proper agricultual projects that will ensure that food is available to the poorest people, but of the ecological conditions. Some of the agricultural projects previously encouraged by the development agencies have been an ecological disaster.

There is much to do in terms not merely of increasing aid to agriculture but of ensuring that when we talk to these Governments we point out to them that one of the ways in which they can help themselves, apart from putting their own house in order both agriculturally and administratively, is to do something positive about tackling their growing population problem.

What worries me more than anything else is that eventually, as famine inexorably follows famine—if not next year but the year after that and the year after that because of population pressures and ecological degradation in this part of Africa—people in the rich countries will wake up and say, "Just a moment; we are being asked to give more and more aid just so that we can save people from starvation. We are not doing anything to increase the prosperity of these countries by improving their rate of economic growth." I am sure that all hon. Members wish that to be avoided. As one of the major donors, with great experience in this part of Africa, there is a great task ahead of Britain to show what can be achieved by the policies that we adopt. I hope that this debate will help to achieve that aim.

6.42 pm

Mr. Ian Grist (Cardiff, Central): The hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Deakins) referred to qualifications for

[Mr. Ian Grist]

speaking in this debate. I base mine on the fact that after leaving university my first two jobs took me to Africa: to the rain forests, about which great appeals are now being made, to the great grasslands of the Cameroons and to the sub-Sahelian near deserts of Chad and northern Nigeria. Therefore, I have a little experience of these areas. The love of my life has been to follow African affairs, but what a sad story it has been for so long.

I concur entirely with the hon. Member for Walthamstow's fears about overpopulation. When I first went to Nigeria the population was estimated in the last census that was taken in 1972 — because everything from idiotic administration to fears and jealousies has prevented any other since then—to be 40 million. It is thought that the population is now 90 million, give or take 20 million either way. By the turn of the century it will be 150 million and it is estimated that eventually it will steady at 500 million to 600 million. A more dangerous scenario I cannot paint.

A country of the size and power of Nigeria with that kind of population is likely to be a danger to its neighbours, as on occasion it has already proved to be. I am referring not to colonies but to the mismanaged economies of independent countries. It was in independent, not dependent, Africa that food production fell. There has been corruption on an almost unimaginable and unexampled scale.

If one wants an explanation of why some aid projects have failed, it is because the host countries did not believe in helping the peasantry and in producing food for themselves. They believed in the crackpot idea of industrialisation and urbanisation. They thought that this was the way to create a modern society. They did not believe that one could have a modern, rural society. Many people fail to understand that the United States is one of the biggest primary producers in the world and that it is also the greatest industrial nation. I believe that it was the London School of Economics that encouraged this chaotic idea. It resulted in subsidised food for the urban masses. The subsidies have failed because of failing economies. Consequently, starvation has broken out in the towns too. There have been wars, civil wars and coups. The record is catastrophic.

I do not know how many hon. Members read the article by Professor Michael Beenstock that was published in *The Times* on 31 October 1985. It is headed "Drought compounded by folly." He said:

"Government policies of keeping agricultural prices at artificially low levels have reduced smallholder incentives to produce basic foods. So there have been food valleys rather than mountains and shortages rather than plenty. Sahelian Governments have operated this inverted policy in the hope that it would keep the relatively well-off population happy with cheap food from the countryside. As a result, the farmers have hardly had the capacity to cope with normal weather conditions, let alone drought."

At the end of his article Professor Beenstock said:

"Charity should begin at home: Sahelian Governments should give agriculture a chance. Aid from Western governments will most probably do little more than support the current official impoverishment of agriculture. Instead of marching on Westminster to demand more aid we should be marching on the Sahelian embassies, calling for the removal of anti-agricultural and pro-industrial biases in their policies."

That is the truth of the matter and that is the aspect of African life that the Overseas Development Administration has to face.

That has been recognised by many Africans themselves. There was an excellent article in the magazine *West Africa* that looked at 25 years of Nigerian independence. It was written by Nnamdi Anyadike. He said:

"the 'urban-based' development that characterised Nigerian's investment patterns led to a gradual deterioration in the quality of life in rural areas, forcing the most able-bodied to decamp to the towns. Those who were left, usually the elderly, less educated or those otherwise unable to leave the villages, could hardly keep pace with production to feed the expanding population in the towns. This exodus to the cities became a stampede when oil started to overtake agriculture as the mainstay of the country's economy."

All hon. Members know what has happened because of the value of oil during the last few years. Mr. Anyadike gave an instance of what happened to production between 1970 and 1982. He said:

"Cocoa has declined by 43 per cent., rubber by 29 per cent., cotton by 65 per cent. and ground nuts by 64 per cent."

Hon. Members can probably remember the photographs, taken before the first world war, that illustrated our geography books of gentlemen standing in front of mountains of ground nuts in Nigeria. But Nigeria has begun to import ground nuts. As for palm oil, upon which Unilever was based, and also Lord Leverhulme, Mr. Anyadike said:

"Nigeria moved from being the world's largest exporter to being a net importer, primarily from Malaysia."

Malaysia is another Third world country that has got its act together better. There is a moral for Africa if it looks at the far east.

Which countries in west Africa have not been affected in this way? The Ivory Coast contains three times the number of Frenchmen that were there at independence, and it has come to terms with the International Monetary Fund. It does not suffer from starvation. It feeds its people.

The Cameroons was the host to thousands of refugees from the civil war in Chad. Nobody heard very much about that problem because the Cameroons could feed those refugees. That country grew and still grows its own food. In President Ahidjo the Cameroons had a person who came from the countryside and who wanted to promote the welfare of small farmers. Therefore, the small farmers of the Cameroons always received a reasonable price, and they were encouraged thereby. Marketing arrangements were established for small farmers. Roads were built and the farmers were able to produce food for the people of the Cameroons and also for the displaced people of other countries.

Aid must, of course, be continued for cash crops. I remember how welcome it was in the grasslands of the Cameroons when the villagers found that they could grow coffee. They also found that the coffee plants brought in cash with which they could pay for water supplies. They found that by having a cash crop they could help themselves. It is not right to decry cash crops, particularly when they become the mainstay of a country like Ghana which, when it was the Gold Coast, was the greatest producer of cocoa in the world. However, its production has slumped and the Ivory Coast next door, aided by smuggled cocoa from the lower paid Ghanaian farmers, is now the greatest producer of cocoa.

Mr. Stuart Holland: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Grist: No, not at this stage.

We ought to provide assistance for power stations. We have provided such assistance to the Sudan. The people in those countries deserve electrical power, if only to provide power for their hospitals. If one goes into hospital in Lagos, the power, because of Nigeria's economy, may be turned off.

These people live in modern states. They need roads and vehicles with which to transport food. Ought we to provide aid to transport food around a modern country? Ought not the roads to be in place and the vehicles to be there? Should not the appropriate skills be there, too, so that when vehicles break down they can be repaired? Should not there be money from cash crops, be they cotton or cocoa, to buy the tyres with which to keep vehicles on the road? Is not that the better kind of aid? Is it not better to try to promote skills and to ensure that these countries understand what is needed? They must be helped to understand that they must help their farmers to help themselves and their countries. My hon. Friend the member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) referred to the bright lights of Khartoum. One thinks of the old saying:

"How do you keep them down on the farm
Now that they've seen Paree?"

One has to ensure that the villages provide sufficient attractions to keep people in the countryside. Provided that farmers in rural countries receive a fair price, they will produce food themselves, just as the European Community farmers, or farmers anywhere else in the world, can nose out a profit and go for it.

The Chinese have discovered that moral. Since the Chinese peasants were given a price incentive to aim for, China's food production has rocketed in the past five years. Precisely the same is beginning to happen in Africa. Drought was a terrible disaster, but it was exacerbated ten times by the policies which the African Governments have put into place. Heaven help the African Governments if they have not learnt that, although the West can do much to help them, they must have sensible policies and not those which have led to the creation of urban masses, Mercedes cars and other forms of corruption. Their policies have not helped the Africans, the people that I came to know in the villages and countryside so well and whose welfare I hold deeply at heart.

6.51 pm

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): Like the hon. Member for Cardiff, Central (Mr. Grist), I have lived and worked in Africa. Unfortunately, in view of his speech, that is about all I share with him.

It is too easy to assume that all the mistakes that have been made in the African continent are the responsibility of Africans and that the West and the East—the rich world—have no responsibility for Africa.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, Central was correct when he said that after independence serious mistakes were made. Sometimes these mistakes were made with the full encouragement of the West and some of them were as disastrous as the hon. Gentleman has described. On the other hand, the hon. Gentleman should bear in mind—and I am sure that he knows this from his own experience — that we handed over power to one African Government after another but did not hand over the administrative training that was necessary to run the African economies.

I was a teacher in Africa and I remember the speed with which my pupils rocketed to the top of the civil service because they happened to be in just the right generation to do so. My pupils found themselves taking on enormous responsibilities in the civil service, in parastatals and other institutions where they had very little experience of running such enormous organisations or carrying out the required administrative work.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, Central referred to the attraction of bright lights, but he must know that that attraction was already a serious factor during the colonial period. I recall the mounting problem in the back streets, in the slum areas and the shanty towns on the outside of cities such as Nairobi that arose because of the attraction of urban life.

On previous occasions, I have said that in many ways the West has all too readily given the impression that the answer to Africa's problems was industrialisation and the urban community. The West may not have stated that explicitly at times, but by our actions we have given the impression that that is the case.

The West often blames African Governments for failing to take sufficient notice of their remoter areas. I remember visiting the Ghanaian Ministry of Education and one of the officials asked where I had been. When I told him that I had been to Tamale in northern Ghana, he was amazed. He was even more amazed when I told him that I had actually been as far as Bolgatanga. He said that he had never been to Bolgatanga and he never expected to go there.

It is all very well for the West to be critical of the Africans in that respect. It so happens that I have been neither to Lands End nor John O'Groats. It is, therefore, not surprising to find officials in the civil service in Accra or in any other capital in the world who have not travelled the length and breadth of their countries. It would be relatively easy for me to get to Lands End, John O'Groats or other remoter parts of the United Kingdom, but the areas that we are now discussing are so remote that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to grow cash crops.

Many of the West's aid policies have been aimed at encouraging Africans to develop cash crops which the Africans felt they needed in order to deal with their worsening economic circumstances. The Africans hoped that such aid would help them to produce more and more coffee, tea, cocoa and other crops. The world prices of those commodities often fell and they had to increase production in order to balance their payments and to import machinery and equipment from the industrialised world. In many respects the West has forced those problems on Africa. Much of our aid programme has been successfully directed towards the production of cash crops.

Sir Anthony Kershaw: The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) is not being entirely fair when he blames the colonial powers for not having trained the colonial territories before their departure. I recall hardly any protests from either side of the House about our not staying long enough in the colonial territories. Nor was it suggested that it was not right to leave until adequate training had been given. No one protested about that at the time. It was the fashion to get out, and get out we did.

Mr. Barnett: I do not claim for a moment that we should have remained in the colonial territories longer than we did. The political circumstances were such that we could not. Perhaps we should have foreseen the need for Africanisation of the civil service long before we did. In

[Mr. Barnett]

India we at least handed over responsibility to a Government where there was a measure of experience in the states and in the government of India itself, but I could quote case after case in African countries where such skills were not present.

Recently the British Council has made possible the training of Kenyan district commissioners in this country. The council is providing the training needed to raise standards of district administration in Kenya.

There is no doubt, however, that we should have foreseen the need for that training and the handing over of responsibility. We should have been more capable of predicting the probable dates of independence. Indeed, the Colonial Office told a colleague of mine shortly after the war ended that the probability was that no African country would become independent until the end of this century. That was the accepted wisdom of the Colonial Office.

There has been an over-concentration on cash crops, often in the areas that are well endowed with good soil, good rainfall and good climate. One exciting aspect to arise from the tragedies in Africa is the realisation that has been expressed over and over again in the debate of the need to concentrate on the remote, semi-arid areas. That need is becoming increasingly apparent both to the African Governments and to the West.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) and others referred to the great increase in public interest in overseas development. I should like to mention one interesting figure. When the Brent lobby took place in 1981, everyone was astonished that 10,000 people should lobby the House of Commons on behalf of people other than themselves. The lobby that took place in October consisted of twice that number. That is another example of the enormous growth in interest.

I believe unquestionably that the reason for the growth in interest is that people have been affected by the appalling pictures of the famine in Sudan and Ethiopia that they witnessed on their television sets. But there was something more than a quantitative increase in people's interest. For many years people were concerned about the effect of famine, and their natural reaction was, "We must feed that child and that family". But there is now a great realisation among the public of the need for long-term development in the semi-arid areas.

Mention has already been made of the report "UK Aid to African Agriculture". I was a member of that working party, which was chaired by the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester). I wish to refer to only one part of it, because it is relevant to our debate. We discovered in our researches that the contribution that Britain makes to agriculture in Africa as a proportion of our aid to that continent is far smaller than it should be, and that our contribution to the semi-arid areas is very poor indeed.

Having quoted figures, the report says:

"It emerges from these figures that there has been little movement on UK aid to African agriculture despite the growing crisis of food production in the region."

We are talking of four countries that we visited. It continues:

"The share of UK bilateral aid directly or indirectly to agriculture varied between 26 per cent. and 35 per cent. of UK aid to Africa allocable by sector, or between 23 per cent. and 29 per cent. of total UK bilateral aid to Africa".

The report then goes on:

"The amounts have decreased in real terms."

That is the first point that must be made. The second is that we have concentrated a large percentage of that aid on the more favoured areas and on cash crops, and we have made very little contribution to the kind of rural development projects in the semi-arid areas that could do most to help the people who are most vulnerable to the possibilities of famine in the future.

It has been said that this area of development is perhaps the most difficult. It is an area in which we shall have to make a contribution over many years before we begin to see the result. But if we are really responding to the mood of this country, that is where we expect the Government to make an increase and to ensure that a larger percentage of their aid is devoted to it. That is what the British electorate wants.

Many African Governments are realising the necessity for that, and, despite the difficulties that might be involved, it is important that we develop in those areas so that in future they become less vulnerable to the possibility of famine and the failure of the rains.

7.4 pm

Mr. Robert Harvey (Clwyd, South-West): The House can draw some relief from the fact that the December rains are now coming to ease the famine situation. It can also draw some relief from the fact that emergency European Community and other aid has in the end more than matched the problem. We should congratulate those voluntary organisations that have also helped. The western world rose to the challenge, and the response was magnificent.

However, three things are to be regretted. First, as the Select Committee report points out, in rising to the challenge, the Government found the necessary funds from within the existing aid budget and did not increase the overall provision. If anything justified a one-off emergency increase in funds, it was surely this. We do ourselves no good by appearing to be begrudging and ungenerous when we are not and by failing to understand the importance of aid in securing respect and influence throughout the world.

Secondly, the House should wholeheartedly deplore the attitude of the eastern countries, which throughout the famine provided their allies with generous quantities of arms but no food.

Thirdly, we should recognise that there is a limit to what can be done in the long term to lessen the effects of a disaster which is part natural and climatic and which is due also to agricultural policies practised in Ethiopia by a Government who place a greater premium on killing their own citizens than on saving them.

Another disaster to which other hon. Members have already alluded affects the development of these countries and their future defences against famine. It is man-made, and western Governments bear a responsibility, even though it is a responsibility of accident rather than the conspiracy theory that is so often suggested by the Opposition. I am referring to the debt crisis which is squeezing the life out of Africa and Latin America.

The dimensions of that crisis cannot be exaggerated. For nearly four years, real incomes in those two continents have fallen sharply after two decades of sustained economic expansion. In the shanty towns of the non-Asian Third world, where once there was hope, there is now an average loss of income of about 20 per cent. Malnutrition, infant mortality and crime are on the increase. Where once

income flowed from the richest countries to the poorest, billions are now being shipped the other way. The non-Asian countries are no longer underdeveloped—they are undeveloping.

The reasons for the debt crisis are well documented and go back to the 1979-80 oil price shock which sucked about $600 billion mainly out of developing world economies, but also out of industrialised economies, to swell the coffers of a few oil-producing nations. Those oil producers could not spend the money fast enough and put much of it on short-term deposit with the commercial banks. The commercial banks could not find a home for those funds in the developed world, which was practising very restrictive economic policies, so they sent their loan managers to the Third world to offload money there.

The scale of the irresponsible lending of those days beggars belief. Some of it went on worthwhile projects or to correct balance of payments deficits that were badly interrupted by the oil price shock, but of the $300 billion or so that went into Latin America during that period at least $100 billion went straight out again into foreign bank accounts. In big cities such as Lagos in Nigeria and Santiago in Chile, much of the money went into short-lived property booms. It all came to an end very quickly.

A fair measure of blame must attach to the irresponsibility of the local Governments—most of them unelected—who borrowed the money. But the major western financial institutions that made it all possible also bear a large part of the responsibility, not to mention the western Governments that failed to regulate them. It is at least a consolation that most British banks were so much wiser and more cautious than their American counterparts.

But, setting responsibility to one side, let us consider the way out of this financial holocaust for the Third world. For the West's ill-equipped financial regulatory institutions it has been a holding operation, of sending for the IMF with its prescriptions for putting economies right and of insisting on as many debt and service payments being met as possible. Yet the holding operation may no longer be sustainable and, indeed, may be becoming downright dangerous. The United States may no longer be able to run up the huge trade deficits which have allowed those countries to correct their balance of payments deficit.

The risk of one country engaging in a sudden default or joining other countries in a concerted default have grown. In Peru a president has been elected who has effectively defaulted. For President Alfonsin of Argentina, for the democratic President of Brazil and even for the unelected President of Chile, the instant popularity that may be derived from standing up to the gringo bankers is pretty tempting. Even conservative opinion in those countries now considers that default is preferable to generating larger and larger balance of payments surpluses merely to keep the debt from growing in real terms.

There is a considerable danger that the debt is playing into the hands of extremists in those countries. The debt problem is not easing for those countries in spite of the sacrifices that have been made. After four years of belt tightening the Latin American debt burden has grown from £200 billion to nearly £300 billion.

For Africa, which lacks Latin America's financial muscle, the situation is desperate. Between 1973 and 1983 Africa's debt increased by 22 per cent. per annum which greatly exceeded the growth of output or exports. At the end of 1983 the total debt burden was £58 billion. In addition, £5 billion was owed to the IMF and short-term debt and arrears amounted to £18 billion. This puts the total debt at £81 billion. Unofficial estimates of the debt range from £107 billion to £150 billion. The growth of the debt has not been matched by an increase in Africa's capacity to pay. Over the past decade all the main debt indicators deteriorated sharply. The debt service ratio increased from 9·2 per cent. to 22 per cent. When payment of short-term debts and arrears of payment to the IMF are included, the debt service ratio exceeded 50 per cent. in Africa. For some countries it exceeds 100 per cent.

In Africa, as in Latin America, very little investment or modernisation is taking place. This can only prolong their recessions, diminish their competitiveness and create the conditions which have allowed famine to spread in Africa. In Africa the foreign exchange reserves have fallen to less than the value of one month's imports. Between 1980 and 1983 the level of new commitments to Africa fell by 45 per cent. Authoritative projections suggest that, even if there is a sustained recovery in OECD growth, Africa cannot expect to see any improvements in living standards over the coming decade and can probably expect to see the situation getting much worse.

In the view of many economists, default in Africa and Latin America would clear the air. Today, with the possibility of default hanging over Latin America and Africa, no banker in his right mind is lending anything other than to ensure that his debts will be repaid. Economists argue that once default takes place Latin America and Africa's growth prospects will be improved as those countries will be relieved of their debt service burden. After defaulting once, out of dire necessity, debtor countries will be concerned to re-establish their credit-worthiness and a second default can be ruled out in the medium term.

The present bail-out policies have only served to prolong the uncertainty in the world financial markets. That is unhealthy for all. It makes sense to act before default. All kinds of mechanisms have been suggested. Reference has been made to the Baker plan, and that plan is a step in the right direction. The long-term solution is for the American Government and Governments like the British Government whose banks have some exposure in the Third world to step in with a once-and-for-all cash guarantee for those banks that undertake to write off most of their debts. This would be inflationary, but it would be containable at a time when world inflation is under control. This would, at a stroke, end the world debt uncertainty. It would win the West friends throughout the developing world and undermine extremists. It would allow those countries to resume their development which is beneficial to the world economy.

Such a rescue must not be unconditional. The banks need to be penalised to some extent for the profligacy of their lending and should be required to contribute a percentage of their capital to the write-off. Measures should be taken to ensure that no bank is again permitted to expose itself in sovereign risk lending at past levels. The Governments and central banks should urge commercial banks or possibly development banks to resume lending to the developed world on a more modest scale for projects that guarantee profitability. Governments and central banks, while guaranteeing domestic deposit holders, might consider penalising overseas depositors to a degree that the retention of confidence in the banking system allows. This would get at both the exporters of capital from

[Mr. Robert Harvey]

the Third world and the oil producers whose accumulation of financial surpluses, often at the expense of the developing world, led to the mad spending spree in the first place.

The growing impoverishment of the Third world cannot continue. The poorest third of mankind cannot go on transferring money to the richest in punishment for offences which they should never have been allowed to commit. It has been said that a third of mankind is being crucified on a cross of debt. If the burden proves fatal, the ground will tremble under the feet of the crucifiers. It is time for the western Governments to assume responsibility for the matter, or they risk not just famine but political and economic upheaval which they may not be able to control.

7.16 pm

Mr. Reg Freeson (Brent, East): It gives me pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Harvey). What the hon. Gentleman and other Members have said requires some response.

I, like others, have raised some of the issues over previous months and years but we have been—I say this bluntly—fobbed off by replies, not necessarily from the Minister. The replies of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to my questions on the debt question have not been satisfactory.

We have had a kind of holding operation but it cannot hold much longer. There must be some suggestion from the Government as to their policy and their aims in terms of a fundamental restructuring of the debt problem. If there is a restructuring, achieved by the write-off of debts, it needs to be coupled with a restructuring of the financial institutions and their relationship with the countries in Africa and elsewhere that they have funded. I emphasise the word funded. This will be a difficult and long-term problem to resolve.

Time does not permit me to speculate or explore these matters. I wish to discuss one or two other points to which I have listened with great interest and concern this evening and which I have followed elsewhere on previous occasions. The level of aid has been referred to time and again. Even if we were to reach the United Nations target, that would not be good enough. The Labour Government, of which I was a member, did not do enough either, but the present Government have nearly halved the level of aid. We are entitled to a response on that.

What is to be the level of support, under whatever heading, for agricultural development? I have sat through most of the debate and listened with great interest, but there has been hardly any mention of the relationship between the limited resources going on development aid and the obscenely huge resources going on arms trading and arms programmes. Arms trading is no longer a marginal acivity. It is essential to Britain and is becoming increasingly central to the industrial economies of ever more countries.

Unless we recognise that relationship in moral terms —by heaven, that is good enough—and in economic terms, we are hypocritical if we put our hands on our hearts and say that we really want to resolve the problem of hunger. The problem could be resolved. Unless, however, we are prepared to redirect resources away from arms trading, which increases instability and therefore insecurity and the threat of war, we shall achieve nothing. The criticism does not lie just with the Soviet Union in Ethiopia—it extends to Britain and other countries in the middle east, Africa and other parts of the world. Unless we are prepared to take on board that economic, political and moral link, we are hypocritical in saying that we want to end hunger.

That is all that I want to say today. I hope that we shall get a genuine response from the Minister to the issues that I have summarised, having listened to most of the debate.

7.23 pm

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Timothy Raison): The right hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Freeson) has widened a fairly wide-ranging debate still further and I cannot guarantee to answer all of the points that he has raised. However, I shall try to cover as much ground as possible in what has been, by general consent, an excellent debate. The hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Deakins) said that it was the best informed debate on a foreign policy subject that he had heard in the House. I do not think that we ought to congratulate ourselves too much, but it can be said quite fairly that it involved people with a great deal of knowledge.

Debates on aid have increased in quality in the past few years. Perhaps the House is matching the growing interest that is to be found among the British public. I have found it interesting to listen to our debates.

I pay tribute to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee and especially to its Chairman, my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Sir A. Kershaw). The Committee has served us well with the care with which it has studied these issues. My hon. Friend asked whether our development programme has been lamed by famine—a vivid phrase. He talked a little about the role of the European Community in famine relief and food aid and of the need for agricultural policies which will encourage food production. That was another of the debate's motifs.

My hon. Friends the Members for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) and for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) and the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) and others mentioned resources. The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed made a passionate plea that commercial considerations should have nothing to do with the aid programme. I could not help noticing that the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) popped in a few moments ago. Did he mention the word "Westland"? I wonder whether there is a concerted Liberal party line on these matters.

In paragraphs 12 and 13 of its first report, the Select Committee argues that if the money from slippages had not been spent on famine relief in Africa it would have been spent on development projects and that it is not possible to establish how the ODA's expectation, as opposed to firm plans for the disbursement of the ODA programme, has been altered to allow for this provision of £27·75 million of famine relief in this financial year. It says that much of what we have spent on famine relief would otherwise have been spent on development activities. My hon. Friend the Member for Stroud seemed to imply that it would all have been spent on development activities, and talked of £85 million—the spending rate this year—if it had not been for the emergency famine relief operation.

I do not claim that none of the money spent on famine relief might in other circumstances have been spent on longer-term development. I have never claimed that and did not do so in our response to the Select Committee. I said:

"Most of our relief aid to famine-affected countries in Africa during the last twelve months has come from allocations already agreed for food aid, for disaster relief and for emergency action under the European Development Fund. None of our long-term development assistance programme has been cut to make room for emergency assistance; there has been unavoidable slippage of expenditure which has enabled some funds to be switched to emergency use."

It might be helpful if I were to say what was available in 1984-85 when we spent £95 million on famine-related operations in Africa. It is easier to take that financial year because it is over and the figures are available. We provided £17 million from the in-year contingency reserve in the aid programme, £15 million from our annual bilateral food aid allocations—we have repeatedly said that emergency food aid should have first call on food aid budgets—£47 million for food aid and famine relief contributed through the EC, £10 million, not £86 million, allocated as a result of unavoidable slippage in other activities in the aid programme and £6 million of additional money from the Ministry of Defence last year towards the cost of the Ethiopian airlift.

It is clear that the great bulk of that money would not have been spent on development if there had been no famine. No bilateral or multilateral programme has been reduced in 1984-85 or this year to make way for emergency assistance. Cuts in planned activities seriously disrupt any attempt to run a long-term development programme and we are anxious to avoid them. By flexible management of the funds available, however, we have succeeded in avoiding cuts and concentrating on greatest needs. In 1984-85, only £10 million of the slippage money could have been expected to go to development work, although not necessarily. Some of the contingency reserve might also have been directed to that area. The essential purpose of the contingency reserve is to deal with emergencies and the unexpected, not with long-term development that clearly requires planning.

Although I acknowledge that some of the money could have gone to development, from the facts it is clear that we have not knocked a huge sum of money off the development programme to provide for famine relief. We have used our resources to best effect. I repeat that the Community is now increasingly, although belatedly, targeting its food aid programme to areas where there is real hunger rather than pursuing the indiscriminate and untargeted food aid policy for which it has been criticised for a long time. We are now making progress.

Mr. Stuart Holland: The Minister is seeking to excuse slippage because it is small, but the House is worried that the aid budget is too small and is concerned about cuts.

Mr. Raison: That is a different point which is open to debate. The Select Committee's charge is that there has been a substantial diversion of funds. I believe that the facts that I have given to the House dispel that accusation.

Mr. Bowen Wells: Will my right hon. Friend explain whether the £47 million worth of food aid through the EC would have been expended in a year in which there was no famine?

Mr. Raison: Almost all of the sum would have been expended. I shall write to my hon. Friend on the details of that if he wishes. That amount is our share of Community action, of which we pay just under one fifth.

I shall say a few words about the areas of Africa where famine poses the greatest threat. For understood reasons, Britain has concentrated on Ethiopia and the Sudan. That does not imply that other countries do not face and continue to face serious problems, but multilateral institutions and the French, because of their relationship with francophone Africa, have concentrated their efforts in those areas. Britain has contributed an enormous amount to Ethiopia. As the House would wish, I must refer to the marvellous effort, which is ending this week, of the RAF Hercules team in Ethiopia. It returns amid the plaudits of everyone.

Of the 1·3 million tonnes of food aid pledged, more than 1 million tonnes has been delivered to Ethiopia. The shortage of road transport vehicles that was very bad earlier is now much relieved by the establishment of a new truck fleet under the auspices of the world food programme. Sufficient money has been pledged to cover the operating costs of the new fleet. There has been considerable improvement.

The prospects for 1986 look brighter, but it cannot be said that the famine is over, and further assistance will be needed. The recent Food and Agricultural Organisation's crop assessment mission's first rough estimate of the harvest recently collected is that the total food crop will be about 6·3 million tonnes. That is about 13 per cent. below the normal level in the early 1980s of 7·3 million tonnes. On those estimates, 5·8 million people will continue to face food shortages and about 950,000 tonnes of food aid will still be required for Ethiopia. I cannot give the House details, but the signs are that the required amount will be met by pledges, which have not yet been delivered, from the United States, the European Community and Britain. We must ensure that that happens. The international community is committed to ensuring that that is the case.

It is not possible for us to turn our attention away from the basic food aid programme, but we can consider the next phase of rehabilitation. As I told the House recently, we are providing £2 million for agricultural rehabilitation and £1 million to improve the water supply in Wollo. The EC is also setting up a rehabilitation programme.

There have been and still are great problems in the Sudan. I intend to visit the Sudan shortly after Christmas to see the circumstances myself. I shall not give the House details, but the essence is that there has been a good harvest. However, there will be a problem getting the food from where it is grown to other parts of the country that are in desperate need. I do not need to remind the House of the terrible difficulties that have been experienced in transporting food in the Sudan during the past year, but there are signs of improvement. I assure the House that we are deeply concerned about what happens in that country and we shall do all that we can to help.

The longer-term problem of assistance to basic agriculture has marked the debate. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have mentioned the importance of population policies, which are interwoven with the problem. It is vital to help basic subsistence and peasant agriculture. I have heard some wise words about cash crops. The mania about cash crops that occasionally arises is nonsensical. Cash crops have an important place, but it

[Mr. Raison]

is essential to ensure that the basic agriculture of developing countries is helped. That is a major part of our aid programme. I should like to couple that view with what has been said about debt. I cannot go into much detail, but I shall give a topical instance of the way in which we are doing our best, through the aid programme, to deal with those major problems.

Zambia has had enormous economic difficulties because of its dependence on the copper industry, which is in serious decline. Zambia is faced with severe debt problems but it has great agricultural potential, which is not being fulfilled. A meeting is taking place today in Paris, organised by the World Bank, to tackle Zambia's specific problem. At the meeting, our representatives have undertaken to provide a further £13 million worth of aid for Zambia's requirements during 1986. That sum consists of £8 million from our regular funds and £5 million in association with the World Bank's special facility. Those amounts are grants and we recognise that Zambia is not in a position to undertake new loan obligations. We propose to provide a special grant of £1·5 million to permit the clearance of arrears of payment on aid loans made some time ago, which the Government of Zambia owe the British Government, up to the end of this month. We have pledged almost £30 million to Zambia in six months. I hope that other donors will respond in the same spirit. I believe that other donors will respond in the same spirit. I believe that that shows that the Government can mount a well directed substantial aid programme that will be widely appreciated.

My hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Harvey) and the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) mentioned the problem of debt. In effect, my hon. Friend and the hon. Member called for the writing off of Africa's debt.

Mr. Stuart Holland: My request concerned at least a major share of the debt of the lesser and least developed sub-Saharan African countries.

Mr. Raison: I accept that. No doubt my hon. Friend would have made a similar qualification. The Government do not believe that that sort of global approach to debt is the right solution. We do not believe that writing off debt in a massive way lays the foundation for a lasting solution to Africa's problems. It could have a dramatic short-term effect, but in our view it would not meet the fundamental needs of Africa. We believe that the debt must be tackled in the light of each country's circumstances and in the context of basic policy reform and adjustment measures. We believe that this can normally be achieved best in conjunction with support from the IMF and the World Bank.

Debt rescheduling is being faced by the Paris club arrangements. As the record shows, they have proved responsive to the needs of individual countries and seem to be the right approach. We do not believe that the answer lies in global solutions, which inevitably will undermine the confidence of the banking community as a whole. It is no good saying, "What does that matter?", because it is that community which produces the money. It is no good going for a massive global panacea. We must have a realistic policy, and that is what we are pursuing. It must be coupled with the policy reforms which are being recognised increasingly as the essence of what has to be done in Africa.

The House knows that there is a great measure of agreement between the principal donors, both institutional and national, about policy needs, such as pricing policy for agriculture and realistic currency valuation. That is all to the good. Particularly encouraging are the increasing signs of acceptance in African countries that what I have described is that which needs to be done.

Mention has been made of the Harare declaration. I add to that, perhaps to my own surprise, that the communiqué at the end of the OAU summit meeting in July included some remarks about the development of agriculture in Africa. I do not wish to be patronising, but that seemed to show very good sense. The remarks of the OAU are much in line with the policies that we are advancing. I accept fully the argument of those who say that the problems that must be faced are of enormous size. No one can doubt that, but there is emerging gradually a form of coherent strategy. It is a painful process, but a strategy is emerging. If we have the guts to pursue it and if we can persuade the African Governments to pursue it, there is hope that we shall get somewhere. The Baker plan at Seoul was in line with that, and we have studied it with great care and sympathy.

I believe that the debate has been of real value to the House, especially to myself. I am grateful to all those who have participated in it. I hope that the House will accept that the policies that we are pursuing are those that stand the best chance of working to deal with the grave problem of which we are all aware.

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, the Question was deferred pursuant to paragraph (2)(c) of Standing Order No. 19 (Consideration of Estimates) and to the resolution [12 December].

Register of Members' Interests

Mr. Speaker: I have selected amendment (b) in the name of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and others, amendment (d) in the name of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) and others, amendment (e) in the name of the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) and others, and amendment (g) in the name of the right hon. Members for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams).

I propose that there should be a joint debate on the main Question and on the selected amendments. At 10 o'clock, in accordance with today's business of the House motion, I shall call upon Members to move their amendments formally in the order in which they appear on the Order Paper. When the amendments have been disposed of, I shall put the main Question.

Many right hon. and hon. Members wish to take part in the debate, and as it will continue for only a relatively short time I appeal for short contributions.

7.44 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the Report of the Select Committee on Members' Interests in the last Session of Parliament; welcomes the intention of the Committee stated in paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Report to keep under review both Parliamentary lobbying and the appropriate scope of the declaration and registration required of Members who are so engaged; emphasises that it is the personal responsibility of each Member to have regard to his public position and the good name of Parliament in any work he undertakes or any interests he acquires; confirms that the scope of the requirement to register remunerated trades, professions or vocations includes any remunerated activity in the fields of public relations and political and parliamentary advice and consultancy; and in particular agrees with the Select Committee in its statement in paragraph 10 of its Report in regard to the registration and declaring of clients that the services which require such registration and, where appropriate, declaration: 'include as well as any action connected with any proceedings in the House or its Committees, the sponsoring of functions in the Palace, making representations to Ministers, Civil Servants and other Members, accompanying delegations to Ministers and the like.'.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that I may be the first to conform with your exhortation for tolerably brief contributions. I believe that the motion is drawn to enable a reasonably wide-ranging debate on Members' interests. I shall deal first with the modest proposals of the Select Committee and then turn to the wider issues. I shall speak very briefly to meet your wishes, Mr. Speaker.

The Select Committee's report made three specific recommendations which the Committee believed would lead to greater openness among those with access to Parliament—for example, Lobby journalists, research assistants and officers of all-party groups. These recommendations are contained in amendment (e) in the names of my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) and others. The motion does not propose acceptance of these specific proposals, and the reason is straightforward. I think that the major current public interest concerns the interests of Members. Therefore, I do not recommend acceptance of amendment (e). I emphasise that my view is related more to timing and tactics than to the merits of the argument.

I turn to the aspects of the Select Committee's report which relate to Members. The Committee undertook to keep under review parliamentary lobbying and the appropriate scope of the declaration required of Members engaged in this activity. Furthermore, the Committee set out a clear definition of the type of services which, if performed for individual clients, would require the registration and, where appropriate, declaration of these clients' names. This definition made particular reference to the sponsoring of functions within the Palace, making representations to Ministers, civil servants and other Members, and accompanying delegations to Ministers. This clarification is embodied in the motion. This will make clear what constitutes lobbying activities which are expected to be registered. It will also sustain the register as a support for the formal declaration of interest which has been the means whereby the House has been able to judge these matters in debate over the decades.

Traditionally, proceedings in this place have worked on a basis of trust and honour among Members. The way in which the practice of declaring an interest has developed is a clear sign that declaring and, more recently, registering can work only in an atmosphere of co-operation.

In 1969, the Select Committee on Members' Interests recommended that the requirement to declare one's interests during any proceedings of the House or its Committees, or in any communication with Ministers, other Members and civil servants, should be reinforced by a resolution of the House.

That resolution was passed on 22 March 1974, when a decision in principle was taken that there should be an additional requirement to register. The continuing original requirement to declare as well as to register is a sign that the register is intended to buttress the practice of declaring and not to replace it. Indeed, declaration in debate and in the proceedings of Select Committee work remains central and crucial in enabling the House to assess and evaluate any interest.

Some have argued that the register is vitiated because it is incomplete. The resolution of the House sets out categories of interest that should be registered; but the interpretation is left to individual Members. Given the nature of the register and the assumption on which it is based, I think that this degree of self-regulation is a common sense approach.

On the other hand, a small number of Members have declined to co-operate and to file a return of interests. Hitherto, the House has not attempted to exact any discipline for this disregard of a resolution of the House. I believe that a Member who avowedly disregards a resolution of this House of Commons diminishes his parliamentary stature.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): He has resigned.

Mr. Biffen: Some have suggested that a register might have statutory force. I believe that this proposal encounters the most formidable problems of definition, and would compound rather than ease our difficulties. The House, I think, has been modest but realistic to require declaration and registration within the framework of a resolution of the House.

Of course, I agree that the register has only limited objectives. Even so, I think that it has a valuable role, taken alongside the practice of declaration. That role is clearly enhanced by the full declaration by Members of the

[Mr. Biffen]

required information, and by the frequent updating of that information. I believe that the Select Committee will continue to pay attention to those matters and to advise and remind Members accordingly. Meanwhile, the House would be well advised to take realistic measures that will add to the authority of the register, and I believe that it has that opportunity this evening.

I wish to refer to the wider issues of interest which properly concern the House.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): While we are talking about wider measures, some of us would like to raise the matter of the value of such contacts with outside business interests or with investments being included in the register. Last Thursday I intervened in business questions and asked the Leader of the House whether the Prime Minister would be coming to the debate. I suggested that if she did not attend, it might be because she is more interested in pursuing local authorities such as Liverpool and less interested in pursuing the antics of Lloyd's, because one in eight Tory Members is a member of Lloyd's. The Leader of the House accused me of low-grade McCarthyism when I made that point. I take this opportunity to apologise to him. I had my facts entirely wrong. It is not 47 Tory Members who are members of Lloyd's, but 55. Therefore, one in seven Tory Members is moonlighting in the House when his real interests lie in business outside.

Mr. Biffen: As ever, I appear as an inadequate alternative to the Prime Minister. I can judge only on the extraordinary moderation of my language last Thursday. I shall now continue with the issues of interest that go wider than the register.

Amendment (g) in the name of the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) reminds us of those wider considerations. It is 10 years since the matter was debated in the House. Thus, I think it is wholly understandable that the right hon. Gentleman should seek to have further consideration on issues such as the declaration of the financial nature of an interest, and whether an interest should affect the right to vote on public Bills, as well as the declaration of interests during Question Time.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Biffen: Please allow me to go a little further. I shall not detain the House too long, but I should like to place on record my view of the general issues.

Some hon. Members have argued that Members should not be permitted outside interests. I do not share that view. I believe that there is advantage in the House having Members with outside paid interests. I think that it adds to the experience and judgment of the House. However, I also believe that such a tradition of outside interests can proceed only if we have an effective convention of declaration.

I believe that the House is best served by the declaration of interest in the proceedings of the House in the traditional sense covering debate and the work of Select Committees. I believe that it can operate only if there is mutual respect between Members and an acceptance of good faith and propriety. That somewhat traditional view of declaring an interest has been supplemented with the use of a register. The register should be sustained for its supportive role to declaration.

Mr. Lofthouse: Can a register mean anything if it allows people to get financial gain from a particular company and, providing he registers that gain, can continue to lobby in the House and cast votes? I believe that a person who has vested interests in obtaining financial reward from a company should not be able to vote for that company.

Mr. Biffen: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point. I said that I would give my own view on that issue and that I would say whether it is appropriate, whatever may be my view, for the matter to be referred to the Select Committee for further consideration.

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding) *rose*——

Mr. Biffen: I shall not give way.

In my view, our current convention involving declaration and register strikes a balance between openness in declaring the source of the interest and legitimate privacy by not expecting the Member to declare the financial extent of that interest. It is a balance that has served the House, and I do not favour its disturbance. Furthermore, I take that view not only on account of privacy. I believe that the practical problems of definition would frustrate the objective of recording the financial scale of interests.

However, I recognise the general interest in that question and, having made my own views clear, I am content with amendment (g) in the name of the right hon. Member for Swansea, West, which suggests that the Select Committee should pay particular attention to the amount of remuneration contained in an interest.

The second major problem that arises from the amendment of the right hon. Member for Swansea, West concerns whether interest should limit a Member's ability to vote on a public Bill. It has long been held that interest precluded voting on a private Bill, but there have been no corresponding inhibitions on a public Bill.

Once again, I think it is reasonable to seek the opinions of the Select Committee on the matter and I am certainly content that the House should so decide. None the less, I feel that Members' interests and the ambit of legislation run so wide and are so elastic as to make it near impossible to devise a workable rule in those matters. Even so, as with the amount of a remunerated interest, the House could be misunderstood if it was not prepared to have those broad matters generally and constructively considered by the Select Committee.

I feel that I have said sufficient to open the debate. I conclude by thanking the Select Committee for its report and by asking the House to endorse its helpful recommendations on Members' registration of lobbying interests.

I ask the House to desist, at least for the time being, from extending the register to the lobby and research assistants. I acknowledge that we should refer to the Select Committee the matters of interest and parliamentary questions, of quantified financial interest, and restrictions on voting. The House should be seen to be prepared to have considered all those matters, although I have made my own views clear on their merit and practicability. However, above all, I hope that the debate will assert our

concern that Parliament will continue to be helpfully served by interest and that the existence of interest will be proclaimed in such a manner that hon. Members will properly describe the reality and the forum of the House.

7.57 pm

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): I beg to move——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the right hon. Gentleman must have misheard me. He should move his amendment at the end of the debate.

Mr. Williams: I wanted to be sure that we would debate all the individual points. I shall be as quick as possible and I shall forgo any attempt to wind up because I want as many hon. Members as possible from both sides of the House to be able to take part.

We should emphasise that this should essentially be a House of Commons debate, not a party debate.

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Watford) *indicated assent.*

Mr. Williams: The Whip seems to agree.

In making our points, I hope that we shall not make a football of the reputation of the House. I was reminded of that in a rather amusing way by a telephone call that I received yesterday morning from a charming young lady from a television channel that I shall not identify. She asked me what line I would be taking in the debate on behalf of the Opposition. After I had explained, she said that I had been very reasonable but she asked whether I would mind if she interviewed someone else instead.

I accept the conclusion of the Chairman, the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith), and his colleagues in the early part of the report of the Select Committee on Members' Interests that it would be inappropriate to have an exclusive register of lobbyists, not because we do not want to know who the lobbyists are, but because we would be creating an elite who would gain a commercial advantage from the existence of such a register even if it could be properly defined. The conclusions of the report are well reached and well argued.

I shall deal with the proposals in the report as embedded in the amendment in the name of the Chairman. On the section relating to the lobby and the Press Gallery, I welcome the steps that have already been taken by the lobby through its practice notes to try to ensure that it limits the misuse of information that is available to it. We must bear it in mind that the lobby enjoys early information, often well before hon. Members enjoy it. They enjoy easy access to Ministers, hon. Members and off-record briefings.

For that reason, it does not seem unreasonable to me that we should adopt the recommendation in paragraph 1 of the amendment of the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith), which requires the declaration of relevant interests. That is an important point to emphasise. We are asking not for information that is irrelevant, but just for relevant information in relation to lobby journalists' privileged positions.

The amendment also refers to secretaries and researchers. I accept that there are some abuses, although with most secretaries and researchers there is no such allegation from either side of the House. However, I wonder whether the hon. Member for Wealden's amendment goes a little too far. I should welcome his comments. He requires relevance for the lobby journalists, who have greater privilege and preference in access in the House, but for secretaries and researchers he requires registration of any gainful occupation. I do not think that it matters if the secretary does a little work on a Saturday afternoon, typing for the retailer at the end of the high street. While I am sure that that is not what the hon. Gentleman intended, I suspect that that is what is captured in the amendment. The same applies to the all-party and registered groups. I agree that there should be registration and disclosure, but I wonder why the Committee chose to exclude the use of the word "relevant" in those two cases. The amendment would have been strengthened if relevance had been required in all three categories.

I am grateful to the Leader of the House for his support for the amendment in my name and that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore). It is an attempt to take us a step ahead. We are not attempting to prejudge or predetermine the outcome, but there are areas of key concern that have been voiced on both sides of the House that merit investigation. That is all that we are asking for—that the Committee, on behalf of the House, gathers together all the evidence and brings up to date the recommendations that it would like to put before the House.

The first issue is voting. I readily accept that there are problems. For example, what do we do on Second Reading if an hon. Member has a nominal interest in one subsection? Is he debarred from voting on the whole Bill? That difficult issue needs to be looked at. I do not want to go into specific instances, but the difficulty is more acute in the context of a Standing Committee or a Select Committee when there is a relatively small number of votes and people have vested interests. Therefore, we should consider whether in some circumstances we should extend the current restrictions in relation to private legislation. I hope that the hon. Member for Wealden's Committee will take that on board.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I intervene not on the basis of party politics. However, we know that several hon. Members are sponsored by a trade union. It would be absurd if they could not vote on industrial relations legislation or legislation connected with an industry in which they were sponsored. How would the right hon. Gentleman phrase any such legislation or a recommendation to prevent that happening?

Mr. Williams: The hon. Gentleman is asking me to do the very thing that I have tried not to do and asked the House not to do — to prejudge the issue. I accept readily, and have said to my hon. Friends, that if we are not careful, the measure could rebound to the disadvantage of both sides, inappropriately. We need to bear that in mind.

A formula has been suggested for parliamentary questions involving taxable income. That would be for the Committee to look at and it is not for me to give snap judgments on the basis of no evidence or information.

Mr. Terry Lewis (Worsley): This point should be answered. There is a great difference between a sponsored Member of Parliament who receives nothing through being sponsored by a trade union—the pittance that he is paid goes to the constituency party — and a Member who receives £8,500, which was quoted in a recent television programme. That amount was received by a Conservative Member representing a Channel tunnel company.

Mr. Williams: I am not dissenting from the basis of my hon. Friend's point, but all that he is doing is emphasising the need for the matter to be examined coolly and outside the rather overheated atmosphere of the Chamber. Indirect or non-monetary interests will have to be considered. Benefits in kind need to be taken into account and evaluated. All that we are asking is that the Committee should look at that.

With regard to parliamentary questions, we must bear in mind that a question can attract as much publicity as a speech. A question costs money and can provide rapid access to new information or be an easy way of supplying processed information to the questioner. It is a valuable service for those who have access to it. I float this as an idea. This option might be difficult for supplementaries, but there would be no problem in having a second box on the question form where one puts an "x", as we do when we want a priority written answer, when one submits a question in which one has an interest. When the question appears on the Order Paper, whether it is written or oral, there would be an asterisk showing that an interest has been declared. That would resolve the problem. It is done in the European Assembly, but I hardly dare mention that as an example.

Our amendment also refers to the amount of remuneration. That matter is of particular concern to my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick). He wanted to be here but, as the Leader of the House understands, there are unavoidable reasons preventing him from being present. We must recollect that declaration of amounts was rejected in the Select Committee report 10 years ago. We accepted that evidence, but we should look at it again. There have been changes and an expansion in the interests of the House. In the context of the study that we are proposing, it would be appropriate to study whether the amount should be declared and, if so, what the guidelines should be and how they should be arrived at. An example is the value of a share in an unquoted company, and the value of benefits in kind.

I do not want to appear to avoid the crunch question of enforceability. It is not in our amendment. Like many hon. Members, we lived under what proved to be the illusion that the register is unenforceable. I should welcome the guidance of the Leader of the House. I read the speeches of the then right hon. Member for South Down, Mr. Enoch Powell, in 1975. A specious argument was put forward at the time. I ask for the Leader of the House's guidance on whether the register as it stands is enforceable. No one suggests that a resolution of the House should supersede statute law, which is what Mr. Powell claimed in 1975. The resolution is not intended to do that. Paragraph 37 of the Committee's report in 1974 is headed:

"Enforcement of the Requirements to Register".

It states:

"As the Clerk of the House pointed out, 'The ultimate sanction behind the obligation upon Members to register would be the fact that it was imposed by Resolution of the House . . . There can be no doubt that the House might consider either a refusal to register as required by its Resolutions or the wilful furnishing of misleading or false information to be a contempt'."

On that basis, it seems that the same remedies are available in our internal disciplines in the House as when, for example, Mr. Speaker deals with other issues relating to contempt of the House.

Mr. Douglas Hogg (Grantham): The right hon. Gentleman has been fair, but I ask him to look at amendment (d) in the name of his hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) and others. Is not that a disqualification? If an hon. Member does not declare in the register, he may not take his seat. Is not that a matter for primary legislation, not resolution of this place?

Mr. Williams: I looked at the amendment closely. My name is not on it because I do not have the hon. Gentleman's advantage of being a lawyer. I could not make up my mind whether it is as he describes. If my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) wants to deal with that himself, I am only too happy to relinquish the responsibility to him. I suspect that it is unnecessary, regardless of whether it is correct or incorrect, although I would welcome the guidance of the Leader of the House on whether my proposition is valid.

Is it necessary, as the Select Committee suggested in 1975-76 in the House of Commons document 479, that the House should render the resolution binding by incorporating it in the Standing Orders? As the matter stands now, does it have any mandatory basis? If the Leader of the House can give satisfactory answers when he replies on that aspect, it could preclude us from seeking to divide the House on certain other issues.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): What the House can do does not depend on memoranda written by Clerks. From time out of mind when the House has passed a resolution saying something is a contempt, that does not have to be embodied in Standing Orders and so it remains until and unless the House alters that resolution. The House can expel hon. Members who place themselves in contempt of its resolutions. It does not need a memorandum from the Clerk to make that known to each and every hon. Member.

Mr. Williams: I quoted what the Clerk said because it seemed to me that he would stand in greater repute on legal matters than I and it was contained in the report that came to the House.

It seemed to me that the resolution was already enforceable and that is why I asked the Leader of the House whether he would make it clear whether the recommendation made in 1975-76 was necessary. My reading of the matter is that the resolution as it stands is already enforceable.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): On a point of order Mr. Speaker. As you have selected amendment (b) in the name of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), two of his hon. Friends and three Members of the Liberal party, not a single one of whom has had the courtesy to turn up in the House, is it your intention that that should be voted upon?

Mr. Speaker: They may turn up, and in any event I have already announced my selection.

8.12 pm

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): May I take your advice, Mr. Speaker, and, I hope, be given your help? The right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) made an interesting comment about my amendment and suggested that the insertion in two of the recommendations of the word "relevant" might make them acceptable to the House. Would it be all right if one of my hon. Friends—I know that one is present—moved a

manuscript amendment later today so that the word "relevant" could be inserted? Although the recommendations are sound, it might make for greater acceptance if that were done.

Mr. Speaker: May I consider the hon. Gentleman's point before I rule on it?

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Leader of the House for finding time to debate the Select Committee's report. It is the first time that we have had one of our reports debated and I am thankful for that. I also welcome his comments and the fact that he endorses so much of it, but naturally I am sorry that he does not agree with our three main recommendations. However, I understand his reasons and I am sure he would equally understand if I pursue the matter. I also express my gratitude to the right hon. Member for Swansea, West for the way in which he has received the report in even more generous terms.

It is particularly important for the Select Committee to have an opportunity to test the opinion of the House. The cohesion and strength of purpose of the Committee depends on its understanding of what the House will or will not bear. There is little value in producing a report which impinges so personally on hon. Members if the Committee ends up either hopelessly divided or completely out of touch with the feeling of the House. That is no way to make progress. I hope that the House will note that the Committee has met, deliberated on the matters and presented a unanimous report.

I welcome the debate for a wider reason. The House is conscious, and rightly so—my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House made this point—of the need to maintain its integrity. It recognises the fact that to do so it is essential that hon. Members are indeed honourable and open and honest with one another. Whatever political differences divide us, we know that this place depends on trust and that it is trust in one another's integrity which unites us as well as maintaining our confidence in our proceedings.

Equally—it is a point worth making in view of the interest shown by the media—we are answerable to the electorate who recognise our need to demonstrate to the public our concern and so earn their confidence in us and in the good name of Parliament. I think that we can all agree that the Select Committee is just one part of that process. It cannot do the whole job. That is why in 1969 the Select Committee recommended that the House make the declaration of interest mandatory and the register was set up in 1974. I emphasis the word "mandatory". The need to declare is not, as has often been said, and most recently repeated ad nauseam in the media, a voluntary requirement; it is mandatory. So far only one hon. Member——

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Ex-Member.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: —one former Member has refused to declare and register his interests. We all know that nothing has happened as a consequence. The resolution of the House has not been enforced. We have invited the House on previous occasions so to do but it has decided not to enforce it. If that is the view of the House, the Committee would be most happy to reconsider the matter. Undoubtedly the present system is cumbersome and unwieldy and is sometimes described as a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

Be that as it may, in 1977 the Select Committee recommended to the House that we might pursue the matter of enforcement through a Standing Order and the Standing Order——

Mr. Cormack: Does my hon. Friend agree that if he accepted the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) the problem could be solved?

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: It is one way of solving it. I have great respect for the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) who is a hard-working Member of the Committee. I would prefer not to pass any judgment but just to draw to the attention of the House the fact that there is another way of dealing with the matter through the Standing Order procedure.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Making it a Standing Order does not deal with it. The only thing that deals with it is a motion proposed by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to take enforcement action against a Member who has divided, whether it be a Standing Order or a resolution. Merely making it a Standing Order does not deal with it if the Standing Order is not enforced.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: It seemed to the Committee in 1977 a rather less cumbersome and simpler way of enforcement than going through the procedure of asking the House to agree to a resolution and therefore to bring a Member into the contempt of the House. Those are matters we are only too happy to look at.

I hope that right hon. and hon. Members will forgive me if I say one or two things that may be obvious to some but not to others and less so perhaps to those who read our affairs and those who are involved in public relations, lobbying and other practices. Therefore, I hope that I may have the indulgence of hon. Members.

We well accept that the report is limited in scope. No Committee members considered that it was the last word on the subject of lobbying or Members' interests. However, contrary to what some may think, once the Committee produces a report it is not just disbanded. It can consider representations and complaints and to keep matters under active review.

I am grateful that the motion of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House acknowledges and welcomes the fact that we intend to keep these matters under review. The motion says that it

"welcomes the intention of the Committee . . . to keep under review both Parliamentary lobbying and the appropriate scope of the declaration and registration required of Members who are so engaged."

Surely that is right.

Among the duties laid upon us by Standing Order No. 107 is the duty

"to consider any proposals made by Members or others as to the form and contents of the Register . . . to consider what classes of person (if any) other than Members ought to be required to register and to make recommendations upon these and other matters which are relevant."

Some three years ago the Select Committee decided to consider whether classes of person other than Members should be required to register. The Select Committee had previously considered that question in 1974 and concluded that registration should be restricted to hon. Members

[Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith]

only. However, the Committee envisaged that, with the passage of time, the balance of advantage might change. Indeed, with the passage of time we have become aware of the growth in lobbying, that access to the precincts of this House has become more sought after, that the number of all-party and registered parliamentary groups has increased and that there has been a veritable flood of research assistants, notably this summer, who invade the House——

Mr. Adley: Haunt it.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: I would not say that they haunt it — indeed, some of them are extremely attractive.

The committee embarked upon its inquiry into whether the register should be extended——

Mr. Nellist: Will the hon. Gentleman take on board the fact that there may be people — especially outside the Chamber — more interested in the fact that 55 Tory Members of Parliament are moonlighting by working here when their real interests lie outside the House? The right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) holds the chairmanship of 29 companies and a further three directorships. I do not know how he manages to attend the House at all. Remarks about secretaries and research assistants pale into insignificance—*[Interruption.]* Come on, Mr. Speaker, let me have a bit of protection.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will sit down. He intervened to ask a question, but he appears to be making a contribution to the debate. He must put his question.

Mr. Nellist: Do not remarks about secretaries and research assistants pale into insignificance compared with the number of Tory Members of Parliament who moonlight by turning up in this Chamber when their real careers lie outside the House?

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Does the hon. Gentleman moonlight when he is here or when he is serving as a county councillor?

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) is not following my argument. If he shows a little more patience, I am sure that he will find that everything that should be put into its proper perspective will be so put.

While we are conscious of the growth of professional lobbying during recent years, we are also aware of the risk of conflict of interest where hon. Members are professionally engaged in that area. We all recognise that an hon. Member must be free to discharge his duties on behalf of his constituents and the country at large. Equally, it is the right of any citizen to represent his interests through his Member of Parliament and to lobby. Whether they are companies, trade unions or charitable bodies, they all do it; it is part of the democratic process.

It was in trying to balance those considerations about lobbyists, both in terms of difficulties of definition and the wish not to appear to give any group special privilege, that the Committee rejected the idea of a register. I am grateful to have the endorsement of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on that point.

On whether to extend the scope of what hon. Members are currently asked to declare, the Committee decided that the balance struck between openness and privacy was about right. Nevertheless, it had received worrying evidence about doubtful practices, so it undertook to keep the matter under review, together with any further developments in lobbying techniques. The right hon. Member for Swansea, West will gather from what I have said that keeping the matter under review is exactly what we mean. Indeed, the Committee decided that it would be reasonable to consider some of the current practices and whether the constraints imposed upon voting intentions and the amounts earned should be declared.

The Committee considered whether to extend the register to other classes of person. It found that unexpected use was being made of the privileged access to Parliament by some of those holding passes to the Palace. Allegations were made that those with access to the building were providing a paid service to people who were other than their stated employers. That is why the Committee recommended that, for example, journalists should register other interests.

The Committee received evidence that some of those engaged in professional public relations work secured passes as Members' research assistants and secretaries to gain full and prompt access to parliamentary papers. The Committee said that they should declare their interests if they were earning over and above what they could earn for the express purpose stated for their attending the House. It is important that when hon. Members talk to a lobby journalist or research assistant they should be sure that they actually work here and do not represent some other interests.

It was not strictly within the Committee's competence to consider the use of subterfuge. However, many people find it disagreeable, as did the Committee, that the use of subterfuge is necessary to be able promptly to obtain parliamentary papers. It is clear that the solution is to provide a parliamentary bookshop with public access. I know that one is planned for the new building, but that is some years ahead. In the meantime, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will consider setting up a temporary bookshop.

The Committee considered the question of what to do with all-party groups — now called registered groups, although they are not always registered. It discovered that some of those groups received support from outside organisations, but that that was not always declared. It felt that the House should know about that, and recommended that the groups should declare any outside sources of income. If the groups had working for them someone who was not an hon. Member but someone representing another organisation, the House should know about that also.

The Committee's recommendations are set out in the amendment and are designed to secure openness. What we are requesting should be registered is far less than that which Members are asked to declare publicly. The register would not be made public, but maintained for the use of hon. Members. I am sure that the officers of all-party and registered groups would be happy to furnish the necessary information, and the representatives of secretaries and research assistants have expressed their willingness to register.

Curiously enough, and I do not wish to offend the powerful fourth estate as many of them are friends of mine, to date it has been only the representatives of the Lobby and Gallery — those journalists who are

demanding that the Members' register should be extended — who have objected to being asked to register the gainful uses to which they put their privileged access to the House.

I should like to refer to the Committee's future work and put it into perspective. I hope that the right hon. Member for Swansea, West heard the message, when he was at the far end of the Chamber, that we shall look into his suggestions. The Committee has already discussed informally and agreed to an hon. Member's request that we should consider whether an hon. Member should be called upon to declare the amount of remuneration as well as the source. It will not be easy to determine this matter, especially as some hon. Members who have put their names to one motion believe that Members should rely solely on their parliamentary salaries.

I do not want to debate the issue but shall make one point as an illustration of the problems that we are likely to face. Due to the vagaries of the election process, there is a rapid turnover of Members. Members come here knowing that their life expectancy in the first round is probably only four or five years. It is not surprising that some people with family responsibilities, knowing that they have a short spell ahead of them, cling to the lifeline of an outside interest, and I think that we should be generous in that respect. We all know that Members' needs and personal responsibilities vary. There is no career structure, no merit award system, no grading of salaries for seniority, experience or responsibility, and no demerit awards for garrulity. Minister, too, are subject to the vagaries of parliamentary fortune. They, too, can fall from grace through a mistake, a change in the election or a leader's whim. We all know that this can happen.

Constraints on voting are normally matters for the Select Committee on Procedure. However, if the Select Committee on Members' Interests is asked to consider this issue, I would expect those constraints to come within our terms of reference, providing they are discussed in a financial context. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will give some advice on that.

We all know that the constraints under which a Minister of the Crown operates are tightly drawn. Ministers of the Crown can have no outside interests. They can draw only one salary. We all know the reasons for that. In contrast, a Back Bencher has no executive powers. In that respect, he has less power than some councillors we know. However, Members have influence — some more than others — although it is subject to all kinds of scrutiny, not least by Members themselves who have an uncanny knack from time to time of judging the merits of the influence or value of the advice of one Member against another. If it is right not to devalue that influence, it is surely common sense not to exaggerate it either. The same goes for lobbyists, who sometimes like to claim that they have more influence than they know to be the case.

The House is full of checks and balances. It is only by recognising the need to preserve the balances without weakening the checks on abuse and failing to see the need for new ones that the Select Committee on Members' Interests can proceed and earn in its own right the confidence of the House and, I hope, of those outside.

8.33 pm

Mr. Roy Mason (Barnsley, Central): I should like to refer to the 14 Select Committees which were established after the 1979 general election. The parliamentary Labour party was foolish to continue manning them after the 1983 election. The Labour party has about 200 Members of Parliament. We have difficulty in manning the Standing Committees on Bills and the 14 extra Select Committees. They take about one quarter of our parliamentary strength. I suppose that, after the 1983 election, some Members of Parliament wanted the glamour of being on a Select Committee. It was an innovation, a chance to get at the Executive, to have a few swans abroad and to pick current newsy political topics for examination, followed by a burst of publicity and then, usually, a 24-hour blurb in the press.

Select Committees meet 40 per cent. of the time the House is sitting — hence empty Chambers and snide remarks from the press, making it easier for Ministers because there is less interrogation and pressure. Above all, the Government take little notice of the reports and recommendations and, apart from the reports of the Committee of Public Accounts, fewer than 5 per cent. of the Select Committee reports since 1979 have been debated.

I suppose that too many parliamentarians have a vested interest in Select Committees continuing, useless though they are. No doubt there are some more knowledgeable parliamentarians, especially those who take the subjects seriously, but only about 60 per cent. attend regularly. They get swamped with bureaucratic bumf; some do not read it all; and Ministers, civil servants and industrialists know when questioned whether the Member of Parliament has done his homework.

I have appeared before and sat on Select Committees and therefore have some knowledge of them. Now we also have a civil servant-like structure propping them up — clerks, secretaries and typists, plus an established career structure. Those people do not want Select Committees to be curtailed or abolished either. An alliance has therefore been formed.

The 14 Select Committees represent a massive investment of money, time and travel for practically no return. Whitehall is full of dust-covered Select Committee reports which will never be heeded or debated. It is a national system — a national boring system — employing hundreds of Whitehall civil servants and House of Commons clerks, a paper-grown empire of relatively worthless activity. I believe that the Select Committees should be abolished.

This brings me to our report and the question whether it will be heeded. We are not one of those 14 Select Committees. We are not shadowing or stalking a Department. We do not have money to travel. We are a Housebound Committee examining Members' interests and how they affect the House. We sat for more than 18 months examining witnesses, lobbyists, members of the Press Gallery and others. The Committee does not have a totally free hand, because many of the in-House activities are covered by the Services Committee and complaints about Members using House facilities must be referred to that Committee.

We have prepared a report which has three main recommendations. According to the motion in the name of the Leader of the House — on this occasion, the mouthpiece of Government — the Government have decided to ignore the lot. Why have we been sitting for two Sessions? What a sheer waste of time. The Government are laughing their heads off, tucking Members away so they cannot cause any trouble. We are to be treated like

[Mr. Roy Mason]

the rest of the Select Committees. The Leader of the House regards our report just like the vast majority of others—as dustbin material.

We recommend that, because of nefarious, dubious, money-making activities by some journalists and research assistants using, abusing and exploiting facilities in the House through the use of their job passes, three registers should be established—for lobbyists, Gallery journalists and research assistants. If there is to be a clean-up—if that is the "in" phrase—let them register their extra press jobs, public relations activities and extra-mural commercial dealings.

Of course I respect the integrity of the vast majority of our press men. There is no doubt that the majority stick to the Lobby and Gallery rooms and work solely for the paper accredited on their pass. I ask the House not to be diverted too much by the recent hoo-hah by a handful of Tory Members involved in the Channel tunnel contracts. They have been flushed out anyway and have suffered politically as a result. By concentrating on that aspect of our parliamentary affairs, the press is shrouding its own misdemeanours. Look at last Sunday's headlines: the *Sunday Telegraph*—

"The real issues of MPs' extras";

The Sunday Times—

"New bid to make MPs come clean";

and *The Observer*—

"MPs must come clean on lobbyists".

There was no mention of our report or our recommendations, and no mention of cleaning up the press.

I shall support amendment (g), which was probably tabled because of the hoo-hah in recent days. The Tories swept into power in 1983 and brought in many young men who had never expected to be Members—executives, directors and those involved in public relations and advertising. They are not giving up their jobs, because they fear going out at the next sweep. They are not registering their remuneration. Their constituents would like to know, because it proves that they have no faith in staying here.

I warn my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) that there is a Biffen trap here in relation to trade union-sponsored MPs. The Committee may be given terms of reference to look at that issue—for example, how much a trade union pays a sponsored MP or his constituency party; whether the trade union employs his secretary and research assistant; how much of his general election expenses it pays; and how much it gives for weekend schools and conferences? Do the trade unions want all that revealed? On the basis of remuneration revealed — substantial sums may be involved — the Conservatives will have not a 140 majority on trade union legislation; they might have a 240 majority because we should be barring some of our own trade union colleagues from voting. We should beware of that.

Lobby and Gallery journalists have facilities made available to them on the strict understanding that they are used solely for the dissemination of news to the general public through their newspapers, news agencies, radio and news magazines. It is an abuse of Gallery and lobby membership for a member to pass on material gained through being a member, using his parliamentary press card, to interests outside journalism; in other words, to other outside interests.

This House is used by some journalists—we do not know how widespread is the practice—as a base for feeding information to non-news outlets, to commercial and industrial organisations, and it can be a very lucrative business. What do the Lobby and Gallery do about it? Nothing at all. It is a big cover-up, a closed shop. They know it exists, and they probably know the culprits. They can besmirch a Member of Parliament and this House, but do not want it known that they have black sheep in their family.

I urge the House to read the evidence given by Mr. Russell, the Deliverer of the Vote, beginning at page 74 of the report. Answering questions, he said:

"We have a number of the press and Lobby correspondents, whom again we can identify, as using the resources of the Vote Office for their own sidelines in public relations. Those two categories are quite easily identifiable. . . . I am talking about professional parliamentary services given to groups".

When asked about research assistants, he said, revealing something similar:

"The same thing does arise in cases of members of the press, yes. There are several organisations, one particular one which we regard as extremely suspect in regard to its activities within the House because we do not believe that they do in fact perform the correct duties of Lobby correspondents—they are acting as an agency and obtaining an enormous amount of documents from us . . . In March of this year one particular press organisation, which has seven accredited members to it, took a total of £850 worth of documents other than Votes and Proceedings from the Vote Office—in the month of March."

What a racket. He had to chase them week after week to force them to pay that back, because he recognised that he had to be able to defend himself should he have to appear before the Committee. There is no doubt about what is going on, and if Mr. Russell knows, the journalists know, too.

That is why our Committee wants a register for the Lobby and Gallery. They have privileged access for commercial gain. There is no telling who outside is benefiting. They could be feeding embassies and other not so friendly organisations, disseminating special material, sometimes well ahead of the time when it would normally be available to them. Some organisation will pay handsomely for that. That is why we would like to see them registered, just like Members, and that is all.

The research assistants and secretaries agree, especially the latter. At page 79 of the report hon. Members will see that Mrs. J. Griffin-Smith, on their behalf, stated:

"Yes, of course we will comply; it is less than you are asking Members of Parliament to do."

We simply ask for a register on which to declare any other remunerated occupation, yet the Leader of the House will not accept that. I should have thought that the House would regard that recommendation of ours as a prerequisite to Members being called on to declare what remuneration they receive, because those in the Gallery and Lobby who besmirch Members on that score are as guilty themselves. Their purpose in recent weeks has been to attack hon. Members, taking the spotlight away from themselves and diverting the investigative Committee reporting of their lucrative undercover operations.

What will the Leader of the House and the Serjeant at Arms do about it? We have revealed what is happening and the evidence is there—

"providing political advice and intelligence for reward"—

and that was part of our terms of reference. If no notice is taken of our report, the Committee might as well pack up and the Members' Register be abolished, too. We ask of others only what we are obliged to do.

8.46 pm

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): In one of the newspaper articles by which he mainly supported his family during the 1930s, Winston Churchill wrote that historians tended to overlook the not unimportant fact that politicians and their families had to eat, like everyone else.

As we know, some of our greatest statesmen have been beset by financial difficulties. Benjamin Disraeli solved his problems by marrying a rich widow many years older than himself, and Pitt the younger by not marrying at all and dying in his forties. Such drastic solutions are unlikely to commend themselves to every hon. Member, and after careful consideration I rejected both of them myself.

Many of us at some stage in our parliamentary careers have had to worry about our bread and butter, if only to guard against the possibility, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) pointed out, of losing our seats—a fate that overtook both of us at about the same time.

There are, broadly, only three categories of hon. Member for whom the financial problem does not arise. They are those with inherited wealth or rich wives; the brilliant or lucky who quickly attain ministerial office of such a prestigious nature that it guarantees them subsequent commercial employment for life; and those who are so dedicated and ascetic that they are happily prepared to accept considerable material sacrifice for themselves and their families for the honour of serving their country and constituents here.

One of our strengths in this House is that we are a broad church. There will always be many hon. Members who do not fall into any one of those three categories but who have a real contribution to make to our discussions.

The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) stated his position with his usual clarity and force, and let us be under no illusion that a great many people outside the House whose general political views might be less radical than his nevertheless sincerely hold the view that hon. Members should not have any sources of earned income other than their parliamentary salaries.

Indeed, that is the general view held throughout the United States. When I go there, as I did last week, people expressed astonishment on hearing that I had a modest commercial career as well as being a Member of Parliament. It is something to which those of us believe that it is important that we should retain the tradition of outside interests should apply our minds. We cannot allow the argument to go by default. It is to that rather broader aspect of the problem that I wish to address my remarks. My hon. Friend the Member for Wealden has already dealt extremely authoritatively with the technical aspects of the report of the Committee that he chaired.

If we followed the policy of not allowing Members to have outside earned incomes, it would eventually produce a membership of the House which would be unrepresentative of the country. Above all, this is supposed to be and always has been a representative assembly.

Mr. Nellist: Given that there are 5 million people without jobs, 8·5 million people in work who are below the poverty line and 13 million people dependent upon some form of supplementary benefit to eke out an existence, does not the hon. Gentleman think that the House is already a little unrepresentative when one in seven Tory Members of Parliament has at least £100,000 cash to enable them to walk through the doors of Lloyd's, and start up as a name in a gambling syndicate?

Sir Peter Tapsell: I have from time to time expressed my views on how we could deal with the unemployment problem. I have applied my mind to how one can acquire the money to become a country member of Lloyd's, although I am not such a member.

If we abolished outside interests as we at present understand them, one of the rather bizarre results that the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East should recognise is that we would, as in the United States, become heavily overweighted in this House by the rich. That is what has happened in the United States.

When I was in Cleveland, Ohio, last week I was talking to the campaign manager of Senator Gary Hart, who told me that Senator Hart was one of the few top politicians in the United States who was not a rich man. It was a big problem for him. It is now virtually impossible to have a major political career in the United States unless one is rich. That is one of the results of abolishing outside interests there.

We would not just have a House of Commons which was over-weighted by the rich; there would come to be an unduly high proportion of cranks and crooks in the House. The sad fact is, as experience in many other countries has clearly shown, that the full-time professional politician with little money of his own is peculiarly susceptible to corruption and a target for the potential corrupter. Those who advocate the banning of honest, declared——

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My hon. Friend has the reputation of being one of the more independent Members of the House. Does he agree that the possession of an external interest enhances the independence of Back Benchers? If we prohibit them, Back Benchers will be even more dependent than they currently are on the favour of the Whips' Office; that is in no one's interest.

Sir Peter Tapsell: It has occurred to me occasionally, as I have become less poor in recent years than I was when I first entered the House, that I should not, perhaps, have been able to maintain my customary high morale for 26 years on the Back Benches if I had had nothing else to do except to look at the denizens of the Treasury Bench, intriguing though so many of them sometimes are.

Those who advocate the banning of honest, declared outside business interests on the premise that it is the only sure way to maintain impeccable standards of behaviour among Members of Parliament have a mistaken grasp of human psychology. Honesty springs from the man and not from his method of remuneration.

There is another important consideration. The House will be aware of the definition of an economist as someone who knows 70 different ways of making love but has never met a woman. I cannot believe that it would be in the national interest to have a House of Commons consisting entirely of Members who knew 70 different ways of raising taxes and 70 different ways of spending other people's money but who had never made or lost any money for themselves.

There is already some danger that we are moving in that direction. When I first entered the House there were quite a few Members on both sides who had done or were doing something fairly worthwhile outside the House. There were captains of industry, trade union leaders and

[Sir Peter Tapsell]

distinguished barristers. There were those who had held high rank in the armed services—Jacky Smyth had won a Victoria Cross — or held high rank in the colonial service.

In the Labour party, there was a large and greatly respected group of men who had spent many years at the pit face before coming to the House to represent mining constituencies. On the Tory side, there were the knights of the shires, the genuine article which is almost extinct in the House today. The miners and the knights usually paired with one another, drank together and shared a mutual scepticism of their Front Benches, which they never expected to join. They did not much interest themselves in arcane matters such as proper management of the economy. They provided a ballast and set a tone which is not always evident today. Above all, they were honest. They did not need to be told the difference between right and wrong by young men drawing on the full weight of their experience at polytechnics and advertising agencies.

Of course, this place needs and always has had plenty of full-time politicians. It would not work without them. They perform an invaluable service to the country. They must be catered for by proper salaries and allowances and, I would argue, by much better pension arrangements for them and their widows. But to limit membership of the House entirely to full-time professionals would be to lower its quality, to reduce the variety of its knowledge and to weaken its collective wisdom.

I should, perhaps, interpose here, in view of the intervention of the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East, that I do not think that I have an interest to declare tonight, because I am at least as well equipped to abandon all my outside commercial interests as the next man. I forbear to do so only out of pity for my party Whips.

No one is more repelled by financial dishonesty or by the shady and underhand conduct of affairs than I am. I detest and despise those of that ilk in the House and the City, and always have. I remember my Presbyterian grandfather, in whose home I grew up, saying when I was not more than five years old, "Never be funny about money." That simple phrase has stuck in my mind ever since, and I have always acted on it.

In any group of men, and perhaps even women, although it is more unusual among women, there will always be a few rotten apples in the barrel, but that is no reason to stop eating apples. There must be full and open disclosure of outside commercial interests. How they can best be declared and if necessary controlled is a matter for discussion, but declared they must be. That has long been the rule and the practice. I much prefer the traditional verbal convention to the written register, but if the register is here to stay, it must be made compulsory. Certainly, the Select Committee of Privileges should proceed sternly against any hon. Member who is found deliberately to have concealed a relevant outside interest. Yet it would be a black day for the House and the country if no hon. Member had any outside interest to declare.

9 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): The irony of the debate is that, while we are demanding an end to self-regulation in the City because of a deterioration in standards, some hon. Members are arguing that self-regulation is sufficient in the House, where there has also been a deterioration in standards. The truth is that some hon. Members have allowed inducements to influence their judgments, and increasingly we are hiding behind the term "honourable Gentlemen" to disguise what is in reality an erosion of the standards expected of us. The public are worried and ask, "What will Parliament do about it?"

My hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) argued adequately and with great subtlety for the Select Committee's recommendations, particularly in respect of journalists, research assistants, and all-party groups. I wish not to rehearse those matters, but to deal with the terms of my narrow amendment, which to some extent goes to the heart of the problem. The problem is that we are simply not enforcing the register. It is not only that one hon. Member has failed to declare his interest, as the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith), the Chairman of the Committee, said. During the past one and a half years there have been many occasions when hon. Members, including some of my hon. Friends, have refused to sign the register and declare an interest. The reason is simple. Unless the register is enforced for those who deliberately set out to avoid it, they will not comply with it. I refer specifically to Mr. Enoch Powell.

When hon. Members are asked about the credibility and integrity of the register, they always refer to the position of Mr. Enoch Powell. The House has been unwilling to find the right hon. Gentleman in contempt of our House. In a speech in a debate on Members' interests, Mr. Powell made his position clear. Referring to the rule of the House, which the House was about to decide on, he said that it

"is ineffective and degrading . . . unlawful and unconstitutional."

I shall deal with the arguments that he deployed. Mr. Powell commenced his speech with a cautionary note expressing the view that the issue — the excesses of some hon. Members—was being generated only by the press. He argued that the rule would be ineffective, and said:

"A sufficient number of hon. Members know very well quite enough about the background of their colleagues . . . This is a place where, whatever we may individually think, we walk about as naked and visible as if we were under some kind of imaginary X-rays.

So the idea that the register will disclose astonishing facts about Members of this House of which the rest of us have been ignorant and which, either dishonourably or in a fit of amnesia, those hon. Members have not happened to mention, is really an absurdity."

I would say that his view was an absurdity, because the register has provided an abundance of information. It has done the reverse of what Mr. Powell was suggesting.

Mr. Powell then said that it was degrading to have a rule whereby Members are required to register. He said:

"we degrade ourselves by implying that our honour and our traditions are not adequate to maintain proper standards in this House."

That is equally absurd. Definitions of the code of honour are highly subjective. It might be said that when the right hon. Gentleman, accused the Prime Minister of being treacherous as he did the other week, he offended my sense of honour. It might be that my comments about the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior) last Friday and his interest in GEC may have offended the code of honour or understanding of honour adopted by the Leader of the House or Conservative Members.

The point is that honour is a highly subjective assessment. What constitutes honour? Our duty is to create some form of benchmark. The code or rule sets the benchmark.

Mr. Powell then argued that the introduction of a rule on registration would be unlawful and unconstitutional. He said:

"it is the representation of the people for which we are seeking to legislate by a resolution of the House. We are saying that no one should seek to be a Member of Parliament, and no one is fit to sit and speak and vote as a Member of Parliament who does not comply with the condition of completing an entry in a register. That is something that the House has no power to do. We have no power to alter the law of the land by a resolution of the House." — [*Official Report*, 12 June 1975; Vol. 893, c. 742-45.]

That has given birth to all the arguments about the need to legislate for the register if it is to be fully enforced.

I am not saying that no one should seek to be a Member of Parliament unless he has complied with the register. People are free to stand and be elected under my amendment. The hon. Member for Belfast, West (Mr. Adams) is a Member of Parliament, although he has not taken the oath. He has stood, has been duly elected and is known as a Member of Parliament. He is able to carry out his functions as a Member if he so wishes, to some extent. All that we are saying under the rules of the House is that, if he wishes to participate in the Chamber, past the Bar, he must apply our rules and before taking the oath comply with the register. That is what my amendment would seek to do.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak) *rose*——

Mr. Douglas Hogg *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am sorry, but my hon. Friends would like to speak, and I wish to finish my speech.

According to "Erskine May", 20th edition, page 283, a Member who has not taken the oath is nevertheless

"entitled to all the other privileges of a Member, (but not his salary)."

Therefore, he can receive his mail, correspond with Ministers, enjoy the services of the House, be provided with accommodation, use our cafeterias and bars. He can even come into the Chamber as long as he does not pass the Bar, the white line. Indeed, he can attend meetings of our Committees and speak, although he has not taken the oath. We are not preventing, by way of a rule, a Member being a Member of Parliament. We are simply preventing him from participating in the Chamber.

There is a precedent for this. On the same page of "Erskine May" there are these precedents for hon. Members who formerly did what I have referred to. It says:

"On 13 April 1715 it was resolved 'that Sir Joseph Jekyll was capable of being chosen of a committee of secrecy, though he had not been sworn at the Clerk's table.' On 11 May 1858, acting upon this precedent, the House added Baron Rothschild, who had then continued a Member for eleven years without having taken the oaths, to the committee appointed to draw up reasons to be offered to the Lords for disagreeing to the Lords' amendments to the Oaths Bill, at a conference of which he was appointed one of the managers. On 11 May 1880 Mr. Bright was appointed a member of the Parliamentary Oath Committee upon which he served and voted, before he had made his affirmation."

There is adequate precedent for hon. Members to come to the House and participate fully in all aspects of our activities. They are precluded only from engaging in debate in this Chamber. All that we are doing is denying access to a particular location.

There is even a precedent for this. There is a precedent for exclusion areas within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster. There is a precedent for conditionality to the performance of a parliamentary function. That is in the case of an opposed private Bill Committee where a declaration by the Member that he has no personal pecuniary interest must be made prior to the Member serving on that Committee. There are, therefore, other areas of this House that are forbidden those who fail to submit to the rules of the House.

I am simply maintaining tonight that that is the precedent. To talk of legislation is to mislead the House. In the event of my amendment being carried at the end of this debate, we shall have added another rule. We shall have prevented nobody from being elected to this House. Such a person will enjoy all of our facilities, apart from one. He will not be allowed into the Chamber unless, prior to taking the oath, he has signed the register and declared his interests.

9.12 pm

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): The House has just listened to an interesting and extremely tortuous argument by the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours). I cannot help thinking that he plays into the hands of the former right hon. Member for South Down, Mr. Powell. He is proposing a form of disqualification that this House cannot impose. If it is important that there should be an enforceable register of Members' interests, why on earth does not the House legislate to overcome the difficulties that were put forward by Mr. Powell? If it is so important, there would be no real difficulty because, as far as I know, there is only one hon. Member who would oppose the legislation. The Government could therefore legislate, which would avoid the tortuousness of the argument of the hon. Member for Workington.

I very much approve of the Select Committee's approach and that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), but there is one point about which I venture to disagree. The suggestion that there should be a register of professional lobbyists has been dismissed. The Committee had some doubts about dismissing it, but I think that my right hon. Friend had fewer doubts about doing so. I do not believe that the definition problem is very important because those who know who are professional lobbyists are the professional lobbyists themselves. If a professional lobbyist is found to be lobbying professionally but has not registered, he will be in an even worse position than hon. Members who get into certain difficulties and he will be exposed. In any case, it is not too difficult to define a professional lobbyist, so I hope that the Committee will look again at this matter. It is a little artificial to refer to giving privileges to people. If control is ever to be exercised, there must be a register. If it is right that there should be a register for hon. Members, there should also be a register for professional lobbyists. Therefore, I hope that my right hon. Friend and the Committee will look again at this matter.

I do not go quite so far as my hon. Friend the Member for East Lindsey (Sir P. Tapsell), but I should like to deal briefly with two of the fallacies about interests and people's worries about those interests. A number of people

[Sir Ian Gilmour]

seem to think that if an hon. Member has an interest, that interest disturbs the general judicial judgment which all hon. Members bring to bear on all matters. If one does not have an interest, people tend to think that we consider the matter and immerse ourselves in the subject and become very well informed and so produce our judicial judgment unswayed by anything.

All hon. Members know that we do not do that and there has not been a debate in that sense in the House this century. An interest is not a piece of mud thrown into an otherwise clear, limpid pool; it is a piece of mud thrown into a lot of other mud.

Hon. Members have many different interests. Hon. Members on both sides of the House are very intent on pleasing the Patronage Secretary. That is a reasonable thing to do as he is a very good man and a very good man to please. But such an interest is likely to sway an hon. Member's judgment, as with a number of other matters. For example, other hon. Members may be swayed by a desire for publicity.

It is a fallacy to say that if an hon. Member has a pecuniary interest in a matter his judgment will be far worse than that of another hon. Member. If there were such people—and there may be one or two in the House—it is not my view that they would be better than an hon. Member who has no interest at all, as such a Member may well be a crank or a fanatic. I would prefer hon. Members to have interests rather than to be cranks or fanatics.

There are some hon. Members who are completely dominated by ideology, and I am not being unfair if I cite the example of the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist). I believe that most hon. Members would agree that the hon. Gentleman is a useful Member of the House. However, most hon. Members would agree that if the House were composed entirely of hon. Members like the hon. Gentleman there would be too many of his kind.

Mr. Nellist: Unlike the Tory Members who are too busy with directorships and consultancies to play a full role in the House, I bring the experience of spending two years six months out of three years on the dole before I came to the House. The House would be a lot better if there were far fewer business men, consultants, bankers and members of Lloyd's and more people who have had direct experience of the Tory Government's mass unemployment policies and who have lived in some of the housing in which the Government have condemned people to live.

Sir Ian Gilmour: I agree that the experience of the hon. Member on the dole is highly relevant. That is not something one would choose to have experience of, but I respect that experience. The hon. Gentleman will agree that the Labour party has enough difficulty choosing its own members without him trying to choose members for the Conservative party.

The majority of the Labour party has always been very sound on the interests point. That is why they have the block vote. As Sidney Webb said, they needed many trade union people with interests to control the madmen in the constituency Labour parties. It has been a tradition of the Labour party to understand the value of interest.

A great deal of nonsense has been written in the press about the Channel tunnel. Nobody thinks that the Channel tunnel question will be decided by the House. It will be decided by the two Governments involved and all hon. Members will dutifully vote for it and a little lobbying here or there will make no difference to the outcome. The question of the Channel tunnel has been greatly exaggerated.

It is important that there should be disclosure and I have made one or two suggestions to increase that disclosure, but the press should calm down, and hon. Members should also remain calm.

9.19 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): It was a great pleasure to listen to the elegant speech of the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour). I part company with him on his central point—the question of interest—because although his points were fairly made, we are here talking about pecuniary interest.

This was the first Select Committee on which I have served, and it was a pleasure to do so under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith). The report now before us touches on a narrower aspect than the debate in which we are now engaged. It touches on the specific aspect of lobbying, and it has come up with a sensible set of recommendations that were fairly outlined by the hon. Member for Wealden.

The report is a sensible and commendable first step in dealing with a developing problem. Many will say that it does not go far enough, and many would wish to have seen temporary as well as permanent research assistants brought within the register proposed by the Select Committee. Many others might feel that the amount that Members of Parliament receive for their lobbying activities should be listed. But hon. Members who have sat on Select Committees will know that these matters require delicate balance in order to receive the support of the whole Committee.

Some may say that the report does not go far enough, whereas others may feel that it goes too far. But, as the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) effectively said, many members of the press believe that it goes too far in its recommendations relating to them, judging by the intemperate and wholly inaccurate comments that have been made. This report should be seen as a first step to be built on later, no doubt in the light of the comments made in this debate.

I totally support the view that the declaration of financial interests should be made obligatory. That declaration is in danger of being reduced to the level of a farce if it is not made obligatory by some means or other. I listened with care to the interesting, though slightly Byzantine, speech of the hon. Member for Workington, (Mr. Campbell-Savours) and although I would have preferred the amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen)—[HON. MEMBERS: "Where is he?"] That amendment has not been selected, and having listened to the interesting arguments of the hon. Member for Workington, I think that his proposal is better. I am glad that it has been selected, and I shall support it.

Another amendment in the name of my right hon. and hon. Friends requires that we should declare all sources over and above parliamentary salaries, including the amounts received. The Select Committee considered whether that would infringe the privacy of Members of Parliament or their clients, but in my view when a person joins this House he is involved in the business of public

affairs and must therefore relinquish some of that privacy. It is right and proper that such a person and others with whom he is in contact should be prepared to forgo some of the privacy so that the affairs with which we are dealing can be seen to be more open.

Privacy often leads to secrecy, and secrecy is the blanket behind which corruption can take place. I do not say that it does. I therefore believe that there is a need to declare all sources over and above parliamentary salaries. Personally, I would go even further. There is only one loyalty that Members of this House have, and that loyalty is derived from the vote cast in the ballot box. It is that which makes their loyalty signally and exclusively to the British people.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): The British School of Motoring.

Mr. Ashdown: In the interests of brevity——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Ashdown.

Mr. Ashdown: I will have to answer that challenge. We hear some curious sophistries from the Labour party about how union funds which are passed not into its hands —not into individual hands or members' hands—but to constituencies in no way need declaration and that they do not intend to corrupt a Member of Parliament's judgment and need not be declared. What a curious piece of sophistry. The British School of Motoring fund was a contribution not to a Member — *[Interruption]* — of Parliament or to his constituency but to a party.

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is so much noise from below the Gangway that I cannot hear myself.

Mr. Ashdown: I merely draw attention to the fact that, when the amendment upon which this farrago was based — relating to driving instruction — came before the House of Lords it received Liberal and SDP support and Labour party support. This is a matter upon which, I am delighted to note, *Labour Weekly* recently commented — perhaps more honestly than Labour Members of Parliament. *Labour Weekly* said:

"We apologise unreservedly to BSM and its Chairman . . . and we are happy to take this opportunity to put the record straight."

It is a great pity that *Labour Weekly* seems to have more honesty in this matter than many Labour Members of Parliament.

If I may now return to the substance——

Mr. Terry Lewis *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman said that he would mention that slightly contentious matter. Could he now be heard in silence?

Mr. Ashdown: I hope that hon. Members will forgive me if I try to make some progress.

I believe that there is one primary loyalty, which is exercised exclusively and which derives from the ballot box. Any other source of paid employment must create conditions which—I do not say "necessarily result"—encourage, if not corruption certainly dilution of that primary loyalty. This is an opposite view to that taken by the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham but it is an honestly held individual view.

The hon. Member for East Lindsey (Sir P. Tapsell), who is not now in his place, talked about the need to pay Members of Parliament effectively and sufficiently if they are to answer only to that primary loyalty. In my view, it is not a question of Members' salaries, which are in themselves adequate, but allowances for secretarial and research assistants, which are not.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): What about pension?

Mr. Ashdown: I have one salary which I receive as a Member of Parliament and I have neither pension nor any other outside remuneration. Furthermore, I wish to make it clear that I have to spend more than £6,000 of my parliamentary salary for my research assistants and the resources that I need to do my job effectively. We need —*[Interruption.]*

Sir Kenneth Lewis *rose*——

Mr. Ashdown: I can see the time. I have a point to make and I intend to make it. I see the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) looking at his watch. Just at the moment, I am on my feet and I intend to stay on my feet and make those points even if I have the whole House baying at me. The result is that other hon. Members who have something to say will not be able to do so. I suggest that they might learn to sit back and listen. That might be an appropriate way for them to behave in the House. They dishonour the House by such behaviour as this. I shall continue so long as I get a decent hearing.

Paying Members of Parliament at the present level is appropriate for their needs, but we also need adequate resources to pay for the staff that we need to help us do our job effectively, and we do not have sufficient resources for that at the moment. In this regard, we have something to learn from the United States. I understand that representatives of the people there are not entitled to any other outside payment.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: They are paid enough.

Mr. Ashdown: Precisely. They must be paid adequately for that to happen. It is true that the United States system is corrupted by the process of campaign funds. Just as they look to our system of campaign funds and wish that they had a similar one to prevent corruption, we might look to their system of paying representatives adequately so that, in service, they cannot be corrupted.

It has been made quite clear that I am in a minority. I fully recognise that, but I take strength from the belief that what I have advanced will prove to be the prevailing view. I understand that it was Ibsen who said that in a democracy, the minority is always right. I think that my party sometimes takes comfort from that.

The amendment is a first step. It does not end up where I should like it to but I hope that it will be accepted. The Government have lectured the country about values but the Government's values have elevated private greed to a public virtue. We have seen how those values have infected the City of London with corruption and how it has spread like a cancer into Lloyd's. Those great institutions are in danger of descending into a cesspit of sharp practice and corrupt dealing. It would be all too easy for those values, created by the atmosphere that the Government have fostered, to spread into this House. Many people outside, having seen such dramatic programmes as that which was recently shown on "Newsnight," I believe that that is in imminent danger of happening. I believe that such fears are groundless and that the House and the

[Mr. Ashdown]

Members of it are still worthy of the title "honourable." It is up to us, however, to come to terms and to be seen to come to terms with the threat that is now posed.

The Select Committee report is a useful start in a limited area. I commend it, not as a solution but as a first step in a continuing process to put our own house in order and to ensure that our integrity and our right to represent the people of Britain is protected and unsullied.

9.33 pm

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) will forgive me if I do not follow his tortured deliberations. I agree with him in one respect. My hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) chaired the Committee extremely agreeably and satisfactorily and all of us who served on it thank him.

I strongly agree with the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) that the Select Committee's conclusions undoubtedly upset the press, which has tried to ridicule our proposals and divert attention from the contents of our report. It is clear from this evening's proceedings that the press has no shortage of willing helpers.

I shall deal with three false assumptions which I believe overlie most of the public discussion on hon. Members' interests and connected matters. The assumption of several Opposition Members that money affects the behaviour of hon. Members more than any other factor is rubbish. One Opposition Member has been persistent, and properly so, in his representations to the Committee about declarations of interests, but he is not present this evening because he is facing a reselection process in his constituency. No one could pretend that the pressures that he faces from those who control his destiny bear any resemblance to the pressure brought about by moneys that hon. Members earn through activities outside the House. No one could suggest that outside earnings exert more influence over the behaviour of hon. Members than constituency Labour parties.

Many of us understand what some hon. Members sponsored by the National Union of Mineworkers went through during the miners' strike because they were unable to state publicly the views they held privately about Arthur Scargill. That pressure has not been mentioned tonight, but it is more insidious than sums of money.

The second assumption is that hon. Members have outside interests only to pursue parliamentary campaigns. That is rubbish. Many hon. Members, whether they are business men, professional people or whatever their occupation, have given years of their lives acquiring experience which is not only of value to those they serve but which enriches the advice that they lend to the House.

For many years, since before I came to the House, I have been involved with a hotel group. A few years ago I was offered a senior position in that company on condition that I left the service of the House. I declined. It is nonsense to perpetuate the assumption that Members of Parliament pursue outside interests only to influence other hon. Members and Ministers.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) has already touched on the third assumption. During the current discussion on the Channel fixed link, it was seen that Ministers on occasions have to deal with decisions that could benefit commercial companies. Those occasions are extremely rare. The reality is that many lobby organisations take money from their clients under false pretences. They pretend to their clients that by hiring the services of a parliamentary consultancy the companies will gain the inside track and the ear of hon. Members and Ministers to influence decisions. Generally, that is absolute nonsense. It suits those organisations to exaggerate the influence of Back Benchers. We should have nothing to do with that.

We should examine further some of the proposals that have been put forward tonight. I utterly reject the proposition that hon. Members should not have outside interests, for many of the reasons already put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for East Linsey (Sir P. Tapsell). If no outside interest were allowed, many with real ability might refuse to stand for Parliament and that could not be good for the country.

If changes are to be made, let us not only consider the United States example. Recently a delegation from Hungary visited Britain. None of its Members of Parliament is paid and all have outside occupations. Perhaps we should consider receiving no pay, but continuing with our outside occupations to bring the experience of trade union leaders or business men to bear. However, that would probably be unacceptable.

Perhaps a slightly odd suggestion would be that Members' pay should be related to what they were earning before coming to the House and not to a fixed sum. At least that would separate the sheep from the goats. The other alternative to outside interests is to pay Members a going rate on the basis of other legislatures. I do not want to share the United States experience, which would mean that one would have to be rich to become a Member. That would be wrong. On the whole, we have an open and honest society. Let us examine some of the propositions that have been made this evening, but let us not get carried away on a wave of hysteria which bears no relation to reality.

9.40 pm

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South) The hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) raised two issues that rang bells in my mind. First, I was reselected last Friday by a party which accepts disagreement with me and believes that that is part of political life. The hon. Gentleman mentioned Members of Parliament in Hungary. I am advised that they meet six days a year. I agree very much with the amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours). If we vote in favour of it this evening, the 15 Ulster Unionist Members, when they return in the new year, and among them Mr. Enoch Powell, will be hoist by the words of my hon. Friend's amendment.

As for the hon. Member for East Lindsey (Sir P. Tapsell), I observe that it is not only eminent statesmen who are short of money. I have known Members of this place with private incomes who have been cranks and sometimes barmy. It is not only those with another income who are independent of political forces. It is not only country gentlemen who can look sceptically at their Front Bench.

The hon. Member for Christchurch raised an issue briefly and then dismissed it, but I am concerned about the Channel tunnel, especially during the next five or six months when it is discussed in this place. It is an issue that will not be covered by the register. If all those concerned

registered their interest in the firms involved in the project, my concern would not be removed. The motion emphasises that it is:

"the personal responsibility of each Member to have regard to his public position and the good name of Parliament in any work that he undertakes or any interest he acquires".

If I have learnt anything in this place, it is that many so-called parliamentary consultants and lobbyists obtain money for doing precious little. There are so many in industry who believe that they are receiving a service of importance, and one that, in fact, cannot be delivered. However, that is their fault. It is a measure of the lack of knowledge of the way in which Government works that they are prepared to pay so-called consultants and lobbyists.

Last week, the Secretary of State for Transport said that it had not been decided whether there would be a fixed link nor which of the four schemes was preferable. He mentioned the four valid proposals and said that they would be assessed by the Anglo-French group. He told us that after the President of France and the Prime Minister had made a decision, a White Paper would be produced. He explained that the hybrid Bill procedure would be adopted and that then the House would decide.

Only rarely in Government, as an Army Minister or an Air Force Minister, did I ever decide anything about the provision of equipment for the armed forces. As Home Secretary, I certainly did not decide who was to build a prison. That was certainly not the position in Northern Ireland, because there one decides who will not build a prison.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: The House will not have the chance of deciding between one project and another. The choice will be merely yes or no on the only choice before us. That is rather different.

Mr. Rees: I understand that, but the House will decide and that is why we stupidly get Christmas cards from Channel tunnel promoters. I believe that two companies have done that. If I was making the decision, those are the two companies that would not get the contract because the people running them must be daft if they think that that will influence anybody in the House. That important issue will influence the south of England and ports in other parts of the country, and we shall play a part in the decision.

I believe that no Member of Parliament should receive any payment for acting as a consultant lobbyist for any one of the four Channel tunnel schemes. It was said this evening that under the private Bill procedure one must sign a statement to the effect that there is no pecuniary advantage. There is an element of private Bill procedure in the hybrid arrangements for discussing the Bill. If that is good enough for the private Bill procedure, and the private Bill procedure is embedded in the hybrid procedure, the same thing should apply. It would be wrong for any hon. Member to receive anything for being involved in lobbying for something on which we are to take a decision.

In addition to that, at the end of the day it is the Government's job to provide information about the four schemes. It should not come from lobbyists. If I want to interest myself in the four schemes, I do not wish to go to a lobbyist to find out about them. If I were a Minister I would obtain information from officials on which to decide about the four schemes. There would be procedures in the cinema downstairs and one would spell out the advantages and have people in to discuss the scheme. I have raised the issue, albeit briefly, because in the past week or 10 days, having read through all the Select Committee's reports, it has struck me that a register by itself will not do. The register simply asks hon. Members to list those things in which they have an interest.

Before the register there must have been occasions in private Bill procedures when hon. Members had an interest—for example when the railways and the canals were built in the 18th century.

The House and the Government must do something because too many people are asking whether I saw the "Newsnight" programme the other day, showing the way in which people are obtaining money on an issue for which the House is directly responsible. That is not the sort of thing that the hon. Member for Christchurch mentioned —money for doing nothing—because industrialists and people in commerce do not know what they are doing. That is for real and we should do something about it.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): One of the current problems in the register is that it is filled in at about this time of the year. Some of the issues such as the Channel tunnel can suddenly come up halfway through the year, and they have been debated and decided by the House before the register has been completed.

Mr. Rees: I understand that nowadays the register is filled in monthly—[HON. MEMBERS: "Weekly".] If I am to be involved in anything, I write upstairs to tell them what is happening. I do not think that there is a problem in that respect. Indeed, the film on "Newsnight" showed that one hon. Member, it having been revealed that he was receiving money, then filled in the form.

That one issue is not covered by the register. The House will play a part by contracting in a different way. I accept that. It will be similar to local government. There are rules in local government in that respect and there should be rules about the Channel tunnel. It reflects badly on hon. Members if we do not act in time.

9.49 pm

Mr. Peter Griffiths (Portsmouth, North): The Select Committee was charged with examining, on behalf of the House, whether it would be possible to protect the reputation of the House and its proceedings by developing the way in which the declaration of relevant financial interests has operated since 1974.

One thing that the Select Committee was not prepared to do and was never asked to do was to pander to idle curiosity or reverse snobbery. Its task was to look specifically at the ways in which the reputation of the House could be protected. Two potential routes could have been followed. One would have been to increase the complexity and severity of the requirements that are placed upon Members of Parliament, but it was not chosen, one reason being that the moment that one starts to pry more closely into the affairs of any Member of Parliament, the question arises as to the extent to which one should look at the interests of hon. Members' families. That raises a new series of questions about how far the House is entitled to pry into hon. Members' private affairs.

I have a nil declaration in the Register of Members' Interests. I take no pride in that, and it is no cause for pleasure. However, it is important that the register is as complete as possible, and it should be enforced. The

[Mr. Peter Griffiths]

Committee decided that there were other people in the House in a privileged position to obtain information and access to Members of Parliament, and that those people should have drawn regularly to their attention the responsibilities that go with their privileges. That is why the Select Committee made three major recommendations, which are included in amendment (e).

I profoundly disagreed with my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House when he suggested that now is not the time or the tactical moment to introduce those restrictions. If we do not ensure that all those in a privileged position in the House are treated similarly, it will not give us a proper base from which the Committee can move to see whether there are further loopholes or areas in which it is necessary to tighten up the present restrictions.

Therefore, I trust that hon. Members, having entrusted to the Select Committee the task of making recommendations, will now recognise that the Committee has deliberated carefully and has put forward modest but sensible and positive proposals. Right hon. and hon. Members should consider most seriously whether they should reveal that they have a basic confidence in the Committee, and should support the recommendations in the amendment.

9.52 pm

Mr. Biffen: It is no disrespect——

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it a point of order or a complaint?

Mr. Nellist: It is a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I realise that in a brief debate you have difficulties in calling hon. Members, but when the House selects 12 or 13 hon. Members to form a Select Committee, draw up a report and bring it back to the House, is it in order that six out of the nine Back-Bench Members who were called were members of that Committee and that those who might wish to criticise the report did not get a chance to speak? Why should we send those hon. Members away to the Committee when they are the only ones called to talk about the report when they come back?

Mr. Speaker: The Chair seeks to achieve a balance in all such matters. I took into account the fact that the hon. Gentleman rose to intervene on numerous occasions. That was one of the reasons why he was not called tonight.

Mr. Biffen: I feel fraternal sympathy towards the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) as a member of the endangered species. His departure would be much regretted. By making interventions, he demonstrated that there are more effective ways to speak even than making speeches.

My anxiety is that I have but a few moments to answer the debate. I have deliberately restricted myself to so disciplined a time because I felt that the best service that I could pay would be to give rise to the widest possible debate from the Back Benches and for the Front Benches to be suitably disciplined. Therefore, I want to construct my remarks around the four amendments called for possible Division.

The amendment tabled by the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen)—[HON. MEMBERS: "Where is he?"] A warm toast to absent friends. Were he here he might have convinced me otherwise, but in his absence I have to say that he is inviting the House to make its own judgment about the desirability of the registration of the amounts of financial interest without having the benefit of the study, judgment and reflection of the Select Committee. I advise the House to reject that approach and to take a much more measured policy in those matters.

The amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) was spoken to with great skill. It was of necessity complex. One hon. Member below the Gangway referred to it as Byzantine. I would not go that far, but it is a complex argument to deal with a novel situation which is suggesting that a resolution of the House might have the effect of preventing a Member from taking his seat until the register had been signed. This is a complex constitutional issue, touching upon the rights of taking one's seat. After all, the oath is taken under the Parliamentary Oaths Act 1866, so this would be prescribing something which did not have constitutional enactment. Therefore, it is only proper that my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) has said that he would be prepared for the Select Committee to consider the matter further. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will withdraw his amendment and we could go forward on that basis.

The right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) asked about a Member who does not sign the register. The position is set out fairly in the 1974-75 report. It is clear that the House could determine what action it took subsequently, but it is a question of measuring the sanction against that rare quality common sense, and there the matter must and will remain until we resolve otherwise.

I said clearly that I wished to reject the amendment in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden but I am not a Stalinist in my role as Leader of the House and I found that there was not a single friend for it; thus I had that unique minority situation of Ibsen, so we understand from the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). Therefore, although I said that my opposition was based purely on timing and tactics, I realise that the mood of the House is for the acceptance of the amendment and I am content that that should be the decision, swayed also as I was by the powerful advocacy of the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason). Doubtless, as hundreds of research assistants file a nil return in the coming months, they will reflect that I am following the Mason line.

Amendment (g) in the name of the right hon. Member for Swansea, West seeks to establish two things—the primacy in the use of the Select Committee as our guide in these matters and the need not to rush precipitately into anything until and unless it has been properly and in measured form considered by that Select Committee. Going on from that principle, he has established three areas where he thinks matters need to be reconsidered. It is not that the reconsideration is in any sense novel. I am sure that he will be the first to agree that these issues have been examined by the Select Committee in the past, but after a passage of 10 years or so it is perfectly legitimate that the House should think that the matter might be further considered. In particular, there has been some public comment, and we are properly sensitive to that.

I say "properly sensitive", because we are not here to pry into each other's codes of conduct, although that is obviously a pleasing and enjoyable part of the Tuesday and Thursday knockabout We are all here as collective

guardians of the reputation of the House of Commons, of understanding how it works, of knowing that often the most effective methods of control operate by other than mere mechanical or legalistic fashions. Therefore, we want to test what we understand to be outside interest with our own knowledge of our own selves and our own faith in our own procedures. One way in which we can do that is the proper use of the Select Committee. On that basis, I commend the right hon. Gentleman's amendment and my substantive motion.

Amendment (b) proposed, in line 2, leave out from 'Parliament' to end and add

'but believes that their recommendations will be meaningless unless Right honourable and honourable Members declare all sources of money received over and above their Parliamentary salaries, including the clients of any Parliamentary consultancies held, and the amounts of money received from each source.'.—*[Mr. Alton.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Adley *(seated and covered)*: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We have had a serious and earnest debate, and my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has responded magnificently to the mood of the House. We are now being asked to vote on a proposal by right hon. and hon. Members, not one of whom had the courtesy to address the House and only one of whom has been present for only part of the time. I think that the behaviour of the leaders of the SDP and the Liberal party is an abuse of the House and a gross dereliction of good manners.

Mr. Speaker: I selected the amendment, which was properly moved by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton).

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. With respect, when you selected the amendment you were not to know that the leader of the SDP would show such utter contempt for this House, not only by not bothering to be here to move his amendment, but by not even bothering to appear in the debate at all. Do you have no power to reconsider your selection in order to demonstrate that hon. Members must show more respect both for this House and for your authority?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman must know that it is perfectly in order for an hon. Member whose name stands on the Order Paper in support of an amendment to move that amendment.

The House having divided: Ayes 63, Noes 213.

Division No. 30] **[10.00 pm**

AYES

Ashdown, Paddy
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Donald
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Forman, Nigel
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hardy, Peter
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kennedy, Charles
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Madden, Max
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'kl'ds E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Tinn, James
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert
Wilson, Gordon

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Alton and
Mr. John Cartwright

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Budgen, Nick
Butcher, John
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Haynes, Frank
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamond, James
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Marlow, Antony
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman

Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Rifkind, Malcolm
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stevens, Martin *(Fulham)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ian Lang and
Mr. Tim Sainsbury.

Question accordingly negatived.

It being after Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the order this day, to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the motion relating to Register of Members' Interests.*

Amendment (d) proposed, in line 2, after 'Parliament', insert

'orders that in future no Member after his election shall take his seat unless he has first made a declaration to the Registrar;'.
—[Mr. Campbell-Savours.]

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 128, Noes 174.

Division No. 31] **[10.13 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Barron, Kevin
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cormack, Patrick
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Flannery, Martin
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Gale, Roger
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, John
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, J.
Haynes, Frank
Hicks, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Knowles, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Raffan, Keith
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shersby, Michael
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Snape, Peter
Speed, Keith
Spencer, Derek
Squire, Robin
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Tinn, James
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Watts, John
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nigel Spearing and
Mrs. Ann Clwyd.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Budgen, Nick
Butcher, John
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Cope, John
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Harvey, Robert
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren

Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lamond, James
Lang, Ian
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter, *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pollock, Alexander
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Proctor, K. Harvey
Rhodes James, Robert
Rifkind, Malcolm
Robinson, Mark *(N port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Silvester, Fred
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, John
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Martin *(Fulham)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Terlezki, Stefan
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes
Mr. Michael Neubert and
Mr. Francis Maude

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We have spent the past two hours debating honour and worth, and during the course of the debate, by a sedentary intervention and from the Dispatch Box, my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) asked the Leader of the House whether there would be a free vote tonight. We were told by two Whips that there was to be a free vote. Tonight, the payroll voted against my amendment. That was not a free vote.

Mr. Speaker: I have no knowledge of such things.

Before calling the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) to move amendment (e), I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the word "relevant" has been inadvertently omitted before the word "gainful" in paragraphs 2 and 3. I am permitting the amendment to be moved in the corrected form.

Amendment (e) made, at end add

'and further agrees with its recommendations in the interests of greater openness, namely that:

1. those holding permanent passes as lobby journalists, as journalists accredited to the Parliamentary Press Gallery or for parliamentary broadcasting be required to register not only the employment for which they had received their pass, but also any other paid occupation or employment where their privileged access to Parliament is relevant;
2. holders of permanent passes as Members' secretaries or Members' research assistants be required to register any relevant gainful occupation which they may pursue other than that for which the pass is issued; and
3. Commons officers of All Party and Registered Groups be required to register the names of the officers of the Group, the source and extent of any benefits financial or in kind from outside sources which they may enjoy, together with any other relevant gainful occupation of any staff which they may have. Where a public relations agency provides the assistance, the ultimate client should be named;

and that copies of these Registers be placed in the Library for the use of Members'. —*[Sir G. Johnson Smith.]*

Amendment (g) made, at end add

"and asks that the Committee considers further measures to strengthen disclosure provisions including the possibility of identifying interests in Parliamentary Questions, whether the amount of remuneration should be declared as well as the interest, and whether there is the need to consider constraints on voting." —*[Mr. Alan Williams.]*

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of the Report of the Select Committee on Members' Interests in the last Session of Parliament; welcomes the intention of the Committee stated in paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Report to keep under review both Parliamentary lobbying and the appropriate scope of the declaration and registration required of Members who are so engaged; emphasises that it is the personal responsibility of each Member to have regard to his public position and the good name of Parliament in any work he undertakes or any interests he acquires; confirms that the scope of the requirement to register remunerated trades, professions or vocations includes any remunerated activity in the fields of public relations and political and parliamentary advice and consultancy; and in particular agrees with the Select Committee in its statement in paragraph 10 of its Report in regard to the registration and declaring of clients that the services which require such registration and, where appropriate, declaration: "include as well as any action connected with any proceedings in the House or its Committees, the sponsoring of functions in the Palace, making representations to Ministers, Civil Servants and other Members, accompanying delegations to Ministers and the like"; and further agrees with its recommendations in the interests of greater openness, namely that:

1. those holding permanent passes as lobby journalists, as journalists accredited to the Parliamentary Press Gallery or for parliamentary broadcasting be required to register not only the employment for which they had received their pass, but also any other paid occupation or employment where their privileged access to Parliament is relevant;
2. holders of permanent passes as Members' secretaries or Members' research assistants be required to register any relevant gainful occupation which they may pursue other than that for which the pass is issued; and
3. Commons officers of All Party and Registered Groups be required to register the names of the officers of the Group, the source and extent of any benefits financial or in kind from outside sources which they may enjoy, together with any other relevant gainful occupation of any staff which they may have. Where a public relations agency provides the assistance, the ultimate

[Mr. Speaker]

client should be named;
and that copies of these Registers be placed in the Library for the use of Members; and asks that the Committee considers further measures to strengthen disclosure provisions including the possibility of identifying interests in Parliamentary Questions, whether the amount of remuneration should be declared as well as the interest, and whether there is a need to consider constraints on voting.

It being after Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *proceeded to put forthwith the deferred Question necessary to dispose of the proceedings on Supplementary Estimates, 1985-86 (Class II, Vote 7).*

CLASS II, VOTE 7

Resolved,

That a supplementary sum not exceeding £1,000 be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1986 for expenditure by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Overseas Development Administration) on the official United Kingdom Aid Programme including capital subscriptions, other contributions and payments under guarantees to certain multilateral development banks and other bodies; subscriptions and grants in aid to certain international and regional organisations; bilateral capital aid and technical co-operation; refugee and other relief assistance; the cost of in-house Scientific Units; assistance, including grants in aid, to certain UK based institutions and voluntary agencies; loans to the Commonwealth Development Corporation; and pensions and allowances in respect of overseas service.

Mr. Speaker *proceeded to put forthwith the Questions which he was directed to put pursuant to paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 19 (Consideration of Estimates).*

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1985-86

Resolved,

That a further supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,622,415,000, be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray charges for Defence and Civil Services which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1986, as set out in House of Commons Paper No. 9.

ESTIMATES 1986-87 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT)

Resolved,

That a sum, not exceeding £43,136,812,000, be granted to her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund, on account, for or towards defraying the charges for Defence and Civil Services for the year ending on 31st March 1987, as set out in House of Commons Papers Nos. 6, 10 and 16.

Bill ordered to be brought in upon the foregoing Resolutions by the Chairman of Ways and Means, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. John Moore, Mr. Ian Stewart and Mr. Peter Brooke.

CONSOLIDATED FUND

Mr. John Moore accordingly presented a Bill to apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on 31 March 1986 and 1987: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 18.]

Water Authorities (Return on Assets)

10.29 pm

Dr. David Clark (South Shields): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No. 2) Order 1985 (S.I., 1985, No. 1805), dated 21st November 1985, a copy of which was laid before this House on 25th November, be annulled.

This statutory instrument is quite reprehensible. The Government have clearly exposed in it the weakness of their monetarist approach. In essence, it is a tax on water. That tax has been deplored throughout the length and breadth of the country. We might have been forgiven if we had believed last summer that a tax on water might have solved all of the Government's problems. It is ironic that a Government who are dedicated to tax reductions should tax one of the basic necessities of life.

All hon. Members accept that the basic necessities of life — food and clothing — should not be taxed. Nevertheless, the Government have taxed heat in the form of gas and electricity. One wonders whether they have considered the taxation of air. Indeed, it might come to that eventually.

The statutory instrument might appear to be innocuous. The figures show a rate of return that varies from 1·5 per cent. to 1·73 per cent. Many hon. Members must think that this is a purely notional rate of return. However, the key point, which was so succinctly raised when this issue was debated earlier this year, is: a return on what? Many hon. Members, including Opposition Members, believe that the assets upon which this rate of return is based are false. They are based upon an incorrect accounting procedure. Therefore, 1·5 per cent. to 1·73 per cent. is a very much larger percentage that has to be paid by local authorities to the Exchequer.

The asset figure upon which it is based is not the historic valuation. We are referring to assets which in many cases are over 100 years old. To adopt the current cost accounting procedure as the valuation is a false and incorrect way to handle the issue. We believe that there should be a better way to work out the necessary rate of return.

Opposition Members oppose this concept, but there is wide condemnation of the Government's approach by a very wide sphere of interest, including bodies that are normally the Government's allies. However, increasingly of late I do not believe that the Confederation of British Industry can be counted as one of the Government's closest allies, especially over investment in the infrastructure. The CBI argues, rightly, that the Government's policy will put unnecessary burdens on to the shoulders of industry. As the value of the pound falls and fluctuates, Opposition Members believe that this is not the best time to start to impose additional costs upon industry.

Why are there dire warnings about this order? If one considers the best possible estimate of the effects of the order it is felt that there will be an increase in water charges that ranges between 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. However, most independent assessments predict that the increase will be much nearer 10 per cent. than 5 per cent. This follows a rise of 10 per cent. in the past financial year. It is the declared intention of the Government and the water authorities that increases should not rise faster than the rate of inflation, yet here we have increases that will mean that domestic and industrial water users will be paying a tax direct to the Exchequer. That is a weak way of dealing with the accounting of the water boards. Indeed, the CBI goes as far as to say that it

"can detract from investment in Britain".

It is useful to see what the Government's allies say on this issue. The CBI also states:

"Whilst . . . it is essential to control borrowing effectively, the Government's policy of reducing water authority borrowing to zero has the effect of imposing on today's customers the cost of funding not only the provision of existing services but also providing assets which will last far into the future. It is sound business practice to borrow for long-life capital projects and water authorities should be allowed to do this".

That is the opinion of the Opposition. Given the outdated infrastructure in much of the water industry — in both the supply and sewerage sectors — it is ridiculous that the borrowing limit for some authorities is to be reduced to almost zero.

The Severn-Trent authority — not exactly an affluent area — is having its borrowing powers reduced to £2·5 million, and the South-West authority to £4 million. The correspondence that I have received from that authority shows that there is a continuing problem of sewage outflow on to the beaches which the authority wants to tackle but is unable so to do. Yet the Government are reducing its ability to borrow money.

If this trend continues the water authorities will be raising considerable amounts of surplus cash for the Exchequer while driving up charges to the users. These target rates of return are inappropriate and inapplicable.

The Water Act required the Government to establish consultative consumer panels. How many of those panels have been consulted, and how many of them support the Government? I have received a letter from the consumer panel for the Northumbrian area, which includes the most depressed part of England, with the highest level of unemployment and industrial inaction. That panel is worried about the effects of the Government's policies, and it writes that

"any increase in charges has severe repercussions in an already disadvantaged area such as the North East Region and, according to reports in the press, we are again faced with a similar situation this year with a threatened rise of 10 per cent. in charges for Northumbrian Water's consumers".

That is against a background of an astronomic rise in water charges during the period of this Government's tutelage. Between 1979 and 1985 — in the six years of this Government in power — the average increase has been 105 per cent. In some areas such as Northumbria it has been 137 per cent. That is inflation gone mad. It is time that the Government called off the monetarist approach and helped industries and consumers in areas that have suffered from these massive increases in water charges.

There is a strong feeling that water authorities should not be paying this tax to the Government but that, if there is excess capital, it should be invested in infrastructure to clear up sewage around our coast, for example. We should use the capital to ensure a regular and pure water supply.

It is astonishing that between one quarter and one third of water leaks are from mains pipes. In areas such as Liverpool, more than half of the water is lost before it reaches the consumer. That is wasteful and cannot be tolerated. There could be no more appropriate time than this to debate this order as we had the graphic example of

[Dr. David Clark]

the burst water main in Leeds only last week, when 200,000 homes were without water and people were put to great personal inconvenience.

What happened in Leeds could happen in any of our major industrial towns. The Government have been warned by their own advisers and supporters. If the same happens to other towns, responsibility will lie squarely with the Government. The money should not go to the Exchequer but stay with water authorities to be reinvested in the infrastructure.

The problem with sewage is even worse. I am glad that Environment Ministers are present. What is happening to our rivers is quite scandalous. I can remember the efforts of a Conservative Government in the early 1970s to clean up our rivers. They did an extremely good job and the matter has been pursued by both parties. I am glad to say that it is now possible to catch trout and salmon right up the headstreams of the river Tyne. Since 1979, however, things have changed. In 1984, 709 km of rivers in England and Wales were declared grossly polluted. That is 16 per cent. worse than the figure for 1980. That considerable worsening applies to almost every region. No hon. Member can be proud of it.

The north-west has a

"widespread problem of poor water quality and low pressures."

It has also suffered 600 major sewerage collapses each year. In Merseyside, the Secretary of State for Defence described matters as

"an affront to the standards of a civilised society".

No less than 29 per cent. of Yorkshire's water fails to conform to the EC standard for drinking. That is especially true in the old wool towns of Halifax and Huddersfield. I can vouch for the fact that water often runs brown there.

The Severn-Trent area applied for derogations from EC standards. The Northumbria region is cutting the operational costs of its sewerage works. For example, in 1979, a 21·7 kg of pollution load per person was recorded. That had fallen to just over 16 kg by 1984. There were 21 km of polluted rivers in the northern region in 1979, which was a good record, but there were 36 km in 1984. What happens in these regions could apply to others.

We feel that the Government should be taking the issue seriously. We know that they are trying to put pressure on the water authorities to meet certain operating levels. They are trying to persuade the authorities to sell off their assets, their family silver, as it was so graphically described in another place.

I ask the Minister to give a specific answer to a question which I raised with him when environmental questions were most recently before the House. We understand that in many of the territories of the water authorities in the northern region, especially in the forest of Bowland of the North-West water authority, the moors belonging to the Northumbrian water authority and the moorland in Yorkshire and the Severn-Trent area, and the national parks, there has been de facto access for exercise on foot for generations. When the Minister orders authorities to sell off that land, will he give a guarantee to the House that he will ensure that the people from the northern industrial cities and from elsewhere will continue to have the right of access and exercise, which they have had for generations, without them having to prove 20 years' unchallenged access to retain it?

I understand that the Government's ultimate objective is to privatise the water industry. I wonder whether the Minister will confirm that. Will he bear in mind the comment of the CBI, which supports the Government's water privatisation plan? The CBI concludes that in the meantime boards of water authorities should be allowed greater freedom to manage their affairs, especially their pricing, financing and investment.

I look forward to hearing the Minister justifying this preposterous tax to those outside, to my right hon. Friends and to 34 Conservative Members who signed early-day motion 129, which calls upon the Government not to impose a tax on water. That is a view with which we concur and I urge the Government not to press ahead with this preposterous tax.

10.48 pm

The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten): No one inside or outside the House much likes paying bills. The payment of water bills seems to excite more controversy and upset than most other payments. That is largely because water seems to be a free item. Although it recycles itself endlessly, it costs a fair amount to purify and deliver, but the public seem to resent paying much for it. That is a feeling that runs deep. They resent even more having to pay for sewerage. Alas and alack, it is difficult and costly to deliver sometimes in some areas, and it has to be paid for. Sewage is hard to get rid of sometimes. The hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) has rightly referred to the considerable task that faces us in the delivery of high-quality water, which is one of our aims. We aim also to get rid of lead from water by 1989 and to improve the standard of bathing water around our shores.

The rationale for seeking to improve the return on assets earned by the water authorities which deliver the water, get rid of the sewage, protect our coasts and look after land drainage, was brilliantly, clearly and explicitly set out in the admirable speech of my predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), in February. I recommend his speech to anyone who is interested in this critical issue. I particularly draw the attention of the House to his use of an excellent letter by Dr. Johannes Witteween in 1976 when the International Monetary Fund was called in to the country. My hon. Friend pointed out in his speech in February two intentions that lay behind the rate of return order. They remain the same today—first, to increase the investment that water authorities can make and, secondly, to do so with less public sector borrowing. I was pleased to note that when the chairman of Thames water announced his financial results for the first half of the year up to the year ending 30 September 1985, he took credit for the improvement in his authority's financial position, which has been to a large extent the result of those policies. Mr. Watts says that between September 1984 and September 1985 the authority repaid £50 million of its outstanding loans, so that it is on track to meet all its financial targets for the current year. That is a significant statement by the chairman of Thames water.

I want to look at the general picture, the rates of return and their relationship with investment, which was referred to by the hon. Member for South Shields. I know that that will interest many of my right hon. and hon. Friends. It will be noted that the order laid on 25 November specifies rates of return which are, on average, a little lower than those predicted at the time of the speech of my hon. Friend

the Member for Eastbourne. We have found it possible to set a lower average rate of return—about 1·6 per cent. for 1986-87—and at the same time fund a higher level of investment than we thought was possible earlier in the year, without increasing the planned borrowing figure. That is a significant improvement.

We do not just expect, we know, that next year investment in the water industry, in water supply and sewerage, will reach a record level. Never in the history of the water industry will so much money be invested as in 1986-87—about £900 million. It will soon be £1 billion a year. We have moderated the financial target. That will have an effect on the charges that we can expect. At the same time we have made it possible significantly to increase the levels of investment in water delivery, sewerage, flood protection, land drainage, coastal protection and the improvement in water quality, which is the concern of my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Environment, Countryside and Local Government.

It is significant to realise that the increases in capital investment in the infrastructure of the water industry are part and parcel of an across-the-board increase in investment in infrastructure announced in the autumn statement by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There will be more money for housing, roads, hospital construction and renovation and also more money for water investment and sewerage investment.

As a result of the better-than-expected picture, we are able to set a lower than expected average rate of return. Water charges are likely to increase less than we expected six or seven months ago—by about 8 per cent. Water investment will increase by rather more—about 10 per cent. That is a considerable sum.

I have no doubt that that improvement will be welcomed by hon. Members on both sides of the House and by water consumers everywhere. I hope that it will be. The figures that I have given are, of course, national averages. They will vary regionally. I have good news for the hon. Member for South Shields. Northumbria Water will not find it too difficult to keep its charges this year close to the going rate of inflation. That is different from the gloomy picture that the hon. Gentleman gave us in his speech, and the predictions by his hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) last year, when he said that Thames Water would impose a 30 per cent. increase in charges over three years. By how much is it increasing its charges this year? By 3 per cent. That is rather a different picture.

Even the South-West water authority, about which my hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) is concerned, expects to increase its water rate by between 6 and 7 per cent. and at the same time substantially to increase the amount of investment that it hopes to make in that year to about £40 million overall. Nowhere in the country do I expect any water authority to have to raise prices by a full 10 per cent., although I expect that some will come close to it.

Efficiency improvements are helping to limit the charges that are necessary. I pay tribute to the water authorities and their chairmen for the substantial increases in efficiency and improvements in producitivity and manpower levels that they have achieved. That is so different from what we inherited in 1979.

Next year we shall review the water authorities' financial targets and their investment and borrowing requirements before decisions are taken in respect of 1987-88 and subsequent years. We are also seriously considering the prospects for privatisation.

I answer the final question asked by the hon. Member for South Shields. Privatisation would mean reviewing every aspect of water authorities' finances. I note that no fewer than 70 of my discerning right hon. and hon. Friends have subscribed to an amendment to early-day motion 176, in support of privatisation. It is interesting to learn of that support from Conservative Members. The Government will note the strength of feeling reflected in that amendment to the early-day motion.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): In the past, profits have been made from the supply of water—indeed, that still occurs in some places. Does the Minister agree that profits have never been made from the transfer and disposal of sewage? As he is now taxing sewage disposal by way of contribution to the Consolidated Fund, whereas before the Consolidated Fund assisted sewage disposal, what is the philosophical reason for getting private profits from the disposal of sewage?

Mr. Patten: I am no philosopher, just a simple politician. *[Interruption.]* I welcome the support of my right hon. and hon. Friends.

Should water privatisation go ahead, the integrated river basin management system would be vital. That system is one of this country's great achievements. It means water in and water out, water supplied, and sewage out. People who might be interested in the— *[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mr. Golding) wishes to interrupt from a sedentary position or intervene from an upright position to talk about the angling issues which I know concern him, I shall give way. In the meantime, I should like to finish my non-philosophical and entirely pragmatic response to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing).

Should any water authority be privatised at any stage in future, those people seeking to purchase any water authority will have to weigh the benefits of the sale of water and other services against the disbenefits of having to provide sewerage and other services. I shall give way to the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme. I expect it is on the angling issue.

Mr. John Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): No. May I draw the Minister's attention to the look of shock and horror on the face of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his hon. Friend the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Local Government when he referred to the cleaning of rivers as one of the great achievements. It was their expressions that amused me. It would be better if the Minister spoke with a mirror on a stick so that he could see the reaction on his side of the Chamber.

Mr. Patten: I now understand what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment meant when he said that it was an interesting experience to serve for many hours with the hon. Gentleman in Standing Committee on the British Telecommunications Bill. I hope that he will forgive me if I do not give way to him again during the course of my speech.

The hon. Member for South Shields asked four questions. First, he asked about footpaths. I understand how important it is in the lives of people in an industrial or any urban centre, south or north, to get out into the

[Mr. Patten]

country. Fabian fell walking is also very much part of Labour party tradition and we do not want to do anything to get in the way of that. I can tell the hon. Gentleman that water authorities which dispose of their lands will dispose of them with whatever rights of access the public may already have. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that. Rather than debating the issue across the Dispatch Box now, I would prefer to write him a long letter setting all this out in some detail in an attempt to satisfy him. I have given the assurance that I have given in carefully worded terms and if it is wrong there will be all hell to pay for the people who wrote it.

Dr. David Clark: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way and I shall not trespass on his time. We are not only talking about footpaths but about de facto access. As he has guaranteed us that access, I know that everyone will be grateful for that gesture.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman had better listen again to these carefully composed words. Water authorities which dispose of their lands will dispose of them with whatever rights of access—"rights" is rather different from de facto access, as the hon. Gentleman will doubtless accept—the public may have.

Secondly, let me deal with back-door taxation. There is nothing wrong at all with a rate of return of between 1 and 2 per cent. on water industry assets. Any business would expect to earn considerably more. Water authority debt is pretty formidable at the moment. It is about £4·5 billion. Interest charges take up no less than a quarter of all revenue from customers. That is a high percentage. Few businesses would be happy with that sort of interest burden. Some authorities have started to repay past debts, thereby reducing their interest rate liabilities. That strikes me as good husbandry and sound management.

The hon. Gentleman's third question related to current cost accounting. I know that that is a somewhat controversial issue. I am no accountant by training. The pros and cons were set out in the speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne earlier this year in February and I can do no better than repeat what he had to say then on why we think that historic cost accounting has a couple of weaknesses.

The first reason is that it fails to reflect the effect of inflation on the value of assets whose lives can exceed 100 years, which are still doing valuable service and which have to be replaced. Secondly, we must somehow take into account the fact that in 1973 significant numbers of assets were transferred to the new water authorities at zero value. The 18th report of the Committee of Public Accounts, published earlier this year, commented in an interesting way on the monitoring and control of water authorities and explicitly endorsed the employment of current cost accounting in setting financial targets for the industry. It is an important debate, which we shall probably never resolve. I would not claim that this or any other Government have yet found the exact fair mechanism for charging for water and all related services. We have simply tried to do the best we could within the current cost framework.

Fourthly, I shall say a word about Leeds. There has been a great deal of concern about the loss of water supply in Leeds during the past week. We were lucky that we had the Army prepared and ready to go in to Leeds to do such sterling service. My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces was in Leeds on Friday. Events there are now under control and there are no substantial problems. I commend the co-operation of all the agencies and recognise the long hours worked by the staff of the water authority, the fire service and the Army, who came in at short notice.

The burst was unusually severe, but the hon. Gentleman should be a little more cautious before he says, "Water mains burst in Leeds equals the proving of the case that there is under-investment in the water industry." That is simply not the case. The chairman of the Yorkshire water authority, who is holding a full inquiry into the matter, said that the cause of the burst may have been earth movements construction work or all sorts of other possibilities. It is wrong to pick an example of one major burst and suggest that that proves that there is not sufficient investment.

I do not want to indulge in across-the-Dispatch-Box discussions about records — indeed, that would be fruitless now that we have been in government for six and a half years. We take pride in what we have done. During those six and a half years, we have increased investment in the water industry by 30 per cent. in real terms, taking into account inflation, which compares favourably with the 50 per cent. cut imposed by the last Labour Government. By all means help the debate about infrastructure, but be a little cautious before taking on the Government on their record. We have increased investment while the last Labour Government cut investment.

The order is a further step in the progress of our policy of strengthening the water authorities so that they can discharge their responsibilities to the public effectively and cheaply. The industry is no longer a poor relation of local government, and everyone recognises that. Its reorganisation in 1974 on the basis of river basins has provided the right technical framework. With our encouragement, it now has sound finance and competent, commercially orientated management. I hope to see the day when this evolution can take a step forward and the authorities will have the benefit of being set free to serve the public as independent viable businesses in their own right.

11.8 pm

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): The Minister should make inquiries about what people think of the charges being imposed upon water consumers because of the taxes that the Government are imposing upon water authorities. The wrath expressed last year demonstrated the general feeling about that, which has been demonstrated again this year.

We must remember that a number of people on fixed incomes and pensions will suffer the most from the 10 per cent. increase in charges that faces 4·5 million people in Yorkshire. Those in the lower income group and with lower rateable value properties will, because of standing charges, face an increase in excess of 10 per cent. The Minister should have regard to this imposition on water authorities.

The debate was initiated because of the impact of the Government's financial policy on water charges this year. The Minister has confirmed that current charges will range from between 5 per cent. and 10 per cent., but in many cases the charge could be more. In addition to the

pensioners and those on fixed incomes, the working poor, who have to rely on Government incentives to take low-paid jobs, will suffer the greatest hardship. My hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) said that the increase in water charges, which is greater than the increase in inflation, will not be welcomed by consumers. It will not be welcome in any budget, especially that of industry.

In Yorkshire, the food processing, chemical, textile, paper and brewing industries will be hit especially hard. The fact that the increase in water charges will be higher than the increase in inflation does nothing to sustain the shrine at which the Government worship. The increase of 10 per cent.—more, in some cases—will hit industries in Yorkshire in particular and throughout Britain in general.

The CBI, which usually rallies behind the Government, has said that the high water charges, in addition to the charges for other services, such as gas and electricity, will have adverse effects on international competitiveness and might detract from investment in Britain. I hope that the Government will have regard to such statements. I believe that it is generally accepted by hon. Members and those outside that the Government are proposing a tax on water and sewerage. If we are to be honest with the consumers, we should make that point abundantly clear. The Government are taxing by the back door. Industry will have to pay the greatest amount of tax. The Government's policy of reducing water authorities' borrowing to zero will impose on consumers the cost not only of funding existing services but of providing assets that will last far into the future. The CBI has said that it is sound business practice to borrow for long-life capital projects and that water authorities should be allowed to do so. The Minister has said that any sound business organisation would take certain action in certain circumstances. He should note that that is the advice that business people give to the Government. Industrialists say that it is sound policy to borrow for long-term projects.

We still have private water companies. What would be said if they wished to impose a 10 to 12 per cent. increase? Would they be accused of acting illegally? Here we have public water authorities imposing extra charges on consumers. There could be said to be double standards, with one set for customers of private water authorities, and another for customers of public water authorities.

My hon. Friend the Member for South Shields said that two authorities would this year have their borrowing reduced to zero. He referred to the Severn-Trent and the South-West authorities. It seems that the Southern authority will not be permitted to borrow at all, while the Thames authority will be required to raise £85 million more than it requires to cover all its outgoings, including its capital investment programme.

I have with me the report of the consumer consultative committee for the Thames water authority—the report related to the corporate plan for 1984—in which the committee came out firmly in support of that authority's policy and against the Government's policy of imposing financial targets at a level leading to the premature repayment of debt. One member of the consultative committee argued that investment was more important than the early repayment of debt. While, on the one hand, the Minister holds up Government policy as an example of the way in which water authorities should operate, on the other, the body representing water consumers in the Thames area is against Government policy.

It is right to ask what support the Government have received for their policy from consumer consultative committees. I have checked with the four consumer bodies in Yorkshire, especially about the Government's pricing policy for water authorities, and it is clear that the consumers have no support for the Government.

I recently asked the Minister to explain the procedure if consumers made representations through a local consultative committee—remembering that no consumer can now attend water authority meetings—to the local water authority and the matter could not be resolved. Replying, the Minister told me that in the event of a stalemate, the complainant would have the right to complain to the local ombudsman.

In asking that question, I was not concerned with maladministration but with the whole issue of pricing and consumer complaints. After all, a consumer would not need to go through the consultative committee procedure to approach the local ombudsman. I take it from the Minister's reply, therefore, that, as constituted, consultative committees have no real responsibilities. They exist in name only. They have no power or authority. I hope that something will be done to ensure that consumers are properly represented. If the consultative committees are not operating successfully water authority meetings should be open to allow the public to attend and see what is taking place.

It is claimed that the water authorities should be allowed greater freedom to manage their affairs, in particular, with regard to their pricing, financing and investment policies. That was one of the principles and intentions of the Water Act, 1983. I hope that the Minister will accept that water authorities should have greater freedom.

My hon. Friend the Member for South Shields said that there was wide interest in and objection to the Government's water pricing policy. That is reflected by the number of organisations and individuals who oppose the extra taxes being imposed upon water authorities.

The Minister referred to the incident in Leeds. I represent part of Leeds and that incident plainly aroused a great deal of interest. The Minister said that Mr. Jones, the chairman of the Yorkshire water authority, has instigated an internal inquiry. Should there not be a public inquiry into such an occurrence? My hon. Friend the Member for South Shields said that there is a danger that the Leeds incident is the first of a number that could occur because of the age of the assets and the way that water authorities have to make do with them.

The chairman of the Yorkshire water authority has more than once asked that the authority be allowed to borrow more money to solve the problems that are developing with water and sewage pipes. What would happen if a major sewage pipe fractured? The position would be much more serious and the problem would be much worse than what happened in Leeds. That is why something must be done to improve capital expenditure on such major assets.

I hope that the Minister will take note of the problems that exist. It is no use burying our heads in the political sand and saying that the problems do not exist. They do. I hope that the chairman of the Yorkshire water authority will allow every word of the inquiry's findings to be made public. If not, I shall be asking for a public inquiry.

[Mr. William O'Brien]

Reference has also been made to the amount of water going to waste. In some places, 25 to 30 per cent. of the water pumped at source goes to waste before it reaches the consumer. That is because many of the pipes are like sieves. They want replacing. Water authorities are asking to be allowed to replace them by borrowing money or financing the repairs from capital.

I make the point which I have made more than once—I also made it in the Public Accounts Committee—that domestic consumers pay twice for waste water. We could save 25 per cent. of the cost of energy used to pump and raise water from the ground or reservoirs if we could arrest the waste of water. I hope that the Minister will take that important point on board.

Finally, water authorities have said that they oppose privatisation [HON. MEMBERS: "Which authorities?"] Yorkshire water authority and others, and consumer organisations are on record as saying that they oppose privatisation. If the Minister has not seen the records, they can be provided. At this time last year only Thames water authority said that privatisation should be considered, while the rest suggested that it would not be in the best interests of the industry. If the Minister is not aware of that, he should take on board some of the reports of consumer consultative bodies in the various water authority areas. Some water authority members are speaking plainly against privatisation.

The Minister did not refer to the glaring question of meters. In view of the report, I would have expected——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): The hon. Member is going a little wide of the order. He should stick to the return on the assets of the industry.

Mr. O'Brien: This is important to the return on the assets because, if meters are installed, they must be financed. The report suggests that there should be experimental areas, which, if the report is implemented, must be financed. Therefore, it is important that the Minister makes a statement tonight on that subject. Any decision about the financial provisions of water authorities will influence that. As no statement was made, I doubt the validity of the report that the press suggest is now available. For that reason that subject is relevant to our debate and I appeal to the Minister to comment on it. Millions of people, some of whom are in favour and some of whom are against metering, will be affected.

I remind that Minister that 4·5 million people in Yorkshire will follow tonight's discussion. Last year they faced up to a 15 per cent. increase in water charges, and it will be the same again this year. That is far above the rate of inflation. If increases are caused by inflation, the level of water charge increases throughout the country should be at the inflation rate.

11.28 pm

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Some hon. Members will remember that this is not the first time that I have disagreed with my Front Bench on water charges. I have listened with interest to the Opposition Front Bench, and it would be complete hypocrisy if the Opposition did not carry their prayer to a Division tonight, which I presume they will do.

We are faced with increases in charges in excess of inflation. The inflation rate is about 5·5 per cent. Moreover, there is no rebate on the charges for people with small incomes, as there was prior to 1973. This is a form of taxation which is imposed behind closed doors by the water authorities, and the Government are imposing a rate of return which no business, however businesslike, would conceive of practising on the basis of a real valuation of its so-called assets. Mile after mile of rotten pipes leak like a sieve and stain the water so that people cannot even wash clothes in it. The book value that such nonsense has is then expected to give a return that may look deceptively modest when we see the figures in the order.

My hon. Friend the Minister has not given any reason for the disparities in the rates of return that he wants the House to pray against, such as the South-West water authority, together with Northumberland, at 1·73, compared with 1·5 in the north-west, when much of the provision that the south-west has to make is for the rest of the country coming on holiday in a dry season, in terms of water collection. That is why there was a rate equalisation system for water charges from the previous Administration across the country.

We now have water authorities alternatively exhorted to behave as if they are businesses and then forbidden to do so. No business would use current earnings for a capital investment programme of the kind necessary to replace the rotten water distribution system. *[Interruption.]* If there is zero borrowing, one does it either out of current earnings or not at all—unless my hon. Friend is suggesting that it should not be done at all.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I did not say a word.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Unless he is suggesting that, that is what one would have to do.

Mr. Holt: I said nothing.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: My hon. Friend was speaking from a sedentary position, even if he did not realise it.

Mr. Holt: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I find it wrong that any hon. Member should attack another hon. Member for speaking when he has not said a word.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: I withdraw what I said, although I did not name my hon. Friend. Another of my hon. Friends spoke. However, if my hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) chooses to wear the cap, he is entitled to.

No business operating as a business would replace long-life capital assets of this kind on zero borrowing. The Government Front Bench should make up its mind whether it wishes the water authorities to behave as a business would behave or not.

It is not just the provision of water or the clearing away of sewage, not just the checking of the coast line and flood prevention on water courses that are involved. Other facilities provided by the water authorities are outside their statutory duty but within their statutory competence. Those are not business decisions but fairly political decisions, but the public are not admitted to the meetings at which they are taken. If my hon. Friend the Minister feels that I might have taken that view rather earlier. I can point out that I voted for an amendment when the Bill was going through the House to the effect that the public should be present.

The order will raise personal costs and industrial costs by more than they need to be raised. The water-consuming

industries, which are often found in peripheral areas, often have major cost drawbacks anyway, because they are by definition at a considerable distance from their market. Therefore, they have high transport costs. If I may have the ear of my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction——

Mr. John Patten: My hon. Friend has it.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: —I shall draw to his attention the fact that the paper industry is in fierce competition with both European Community countries and those countries that were members of the European Free Trade Association where there are still cross-trade barrier permissions that put our industry at a severe disadvantage. The Government are powerless to remedy that. However, having ensured that, compared with our continental competitors some of the energy price disparities have been reduced so that in many cases energy costs are now comparable, the Government must not bump up water charges, which would mean that those industries that need to use a lot of water, or that need to make use of a lot water and then return it to their productive processes, are rendered uncompetitive yet again.

For those reasons, as well as many others that hon. Members may wish to deploy in the short time remaining for this debate, I shall vote for the prayer.

11.36 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Tonight's events show that we have not quite done away with the controversy in February when the matter was last before the House. The hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) who is, as it were, the shadow behind tonight's proceedings was then exposed to what can only be described as an attack from all sides. He would probably have been exposed to even greater attack had the matter not been delayed for some months while palliative measures were discussed. The underlying reasons for that attack remain. Although matters have moved on a little, valid objections remain and I want to allude briefly to them.

I share many of the views of the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop). We are dealing with a form of taxation that has been arrived at in secret by authorities appointed by the Minister. For obvious historical reasons, people find this particularly objectionable. This has happened at a time when we need greater investment in the water industry because its assets are coming increasingly quickly to the end of their useful life. In many cases they are now between 60 and 100 years old, and increasingly they are leaking. The industry says that it wants to put the matter right and to do a good job. It has never acceded to the Government's view that it is appropriate that the Government should impose an additional return on assets requirement.

The fundamental objection is that the money that is to be raised from the consumer, which is always raised with some reluctance, should be translated directly into the Treasury coffers to deal with the general economic policy of the Government instead of being applied to the needs of the water industry, which are as great as those of any other part of the infrastructure.

The Minister did not deal with the fact that lying behind all this is the spectre of privatisation. It is well known that the Government are contemplating privatisation, and it is apparent from the Minister's reply that the Government are seeking to increase the appeal of the industry so that it will be easier to hive it off. However, they are reducing the industry's ability to carry out urgent tasks. May I remind the Minister of what I understand the Water Authorities Association would most like in terms of a water policy, because some of the things that the Minister hinted at do not quite deliver the goods. First, they want a system of proper objectives to motivate not only chairmen but also all officers and employees, so that——

Mr. John Patten: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hughes: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to make another related point so that he can deal with them together. The authorities need objectives that reveal themselves in terms of financial planning.

This order is the second of a series, of which last year's was the breakthrough first order. None the less, from what the Minister has said, there is no clear planning basis for the figures for the coming years. The industry wants to simplify its system and to reduce Government interference and imposition so that it can reduce its charges. It also wants a series of targets for more than one year ahead, yet the Minister avoided doing just that. The industry would like targets for three years, but the Minister has not done that because before they are up he anticipates privatisation —there is no secret about that and his gestures suggest it—even though that is not the necessary conclusion of the road down which we are going. In any event, it is not the only helpful way of assisting the industry.

Irrespective of the Government's privatisation plans, with which I disagree, it would be helpful if the targets were spelled out now so that the water industry can see what is required of it and plan accordingly.

The industry would also like to have flexibility in raising finance. It does not want to charge the substantial increases that it is now being forced to charge. In some areas that was 10 per cent. last year and 10 per cent. this year. That is way above the rate of inflation, and it imposes an additional, severe burden with no rebate for those who are often the least able to pay. Although this is not an enormous part of a person's budget, it is a substantial and relevant part. It is taxation above the rate of inflation with no parallel increase in the service provided.

I understand that the chairman of the Thames water authority is an advocate and supporter of privatisation, but last year he complained vociferously about the Government's imposition of these targets. He would argue that his authority's operating costs are largely fixed, that it has a large revenue base, that it has done a lot to reduce costs and that it is not necessary for the Government to require this return on assets.

There are also problems for the Welsh water authority because of the difficulty of marrying the effect of the return on assets order with the attempts to make the system more just as between the high-rated and low-rated authorities. That results in a double imposition.

Equally, other regions are concerned that present policy means that they are not able to obtain proper expenditure, given this imposed additional taxation. The North-West water authority is among them, and I understand that it has tried to get the rate of return reduced because it does not believe that charges—14 per cent. last year, of which 9 per cent. was due entirely to this order — should be increased by anything like that amount this year.

[Mr. Hughes]

Given that there is such a clawback of money for the Revenue, one must ask whether the use to which it is put is justifiable. That brings me to a specific point about the North-West water authority's liability for the victims of the Abbeystead pumping station disaster. The Minister will be aware that the explosion last May resulted in substantial loss of life, including three employees of the water authority and injury to many others. Every hope has been given that some of the water authority's assets would be used to alleviate the pain and suffering of the victims. So far, however, they have had only £20,000—£10,000 from the North-West water authority almost immediately and another £10,000 last week.

The Department of Employment Minister who went up to St. Michael's in Lancashire on behalf of the Government said that it seemed that the water authority was liable, as it would have been liable even if a tramp had been blown up while asleep on the authority's premises. Parliamentary answers to questions properly asked by Lancashire Members of Parliament have made it clear that Government funds were available. I do not mind who pays, but there have been precedents such as Bradford and Brussels, which could come to the rescue now to meet the hardship of those who are suffering.

The latest estimate is that the first realistic date at which to expect court money is next year. The Minister replied to a question asked by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Liberal party recently, so he will know that the families of the victims are impatient. The water authority has substantial assets and it has been said that the funds for compensation exist, but no money is forthcoming. It is just this type of failure to use assets at times of need which justifies complaint. I hope that the Minister will direct attention to that case to achieve a satisfactory result before the end of the court case.

I hope also that the needs of the old and others who find water charges an imposition will be met. That can be achieved only by the Government reducing their charges. The water industry should be allowed to assess what it needs and impose charges accordingly. The Government should not tighten the screw by adding to charges which consumers cannot control because those who make the decisions are not accountable to them.

11.47 pm

Mr. Roger Freeman (Kettering): I accept the order because, in present circumstances, it presents an acceptable balance between raising finance for capital investment from the revenue cash flow of the industry, which is what a return on assets is all about, and the external financing limits in aggregate, which is what the public expenditure White Paper is all about.

There are three developments, however, which should give the House cause for some optimism, that we will not have to consider such orders in the future. The three developments are directly relevant to the order because it is about financing capital investment. The first is the new development in Anglian Water — my region — of the introduction of private capital at Flag Fen. Introducing private capital through franchising or joint venture obviates the need for capital investment financed through the PSBR. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will pursue that important development in conjunction with the Treasury.

The second development applies in the medium term. I am a strong supporter of privatisation and hope that it comes in region by region. There are many private water authorities and it is perfectly reasonable to privatise each of the major water authorities one by one and for them to operate under regulation just as many hundreds already do.

The third development is metering. We have recently received the report of the Watts committee. Compulsory residential metering would reduce demand by perhaps 10 or 15 per cent. and therefore obviate capital investment in some authority areas. That means that an authority may not need to raise finance for investment in new reservoirs. The second important value of residential metering is that it is important as a matter of equity.

In the long run, we are all in favour of permitting the industry to make its own decisions about the necessary levels of capital investment. In this instance I agree with the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). Only the industry can make these decisions, and it can do so only if it can participate in the full play of market forces.

11.50 pm

Mr. John Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): For many of us, water is not for industrial purposes. For Conservative Members, water is often not for drinking. For my right hon. and hon. Friends, water is not for bathing; they prefer asses' milk generally. As everyone knows, water has only one real use, and that is to provide fishing.

I shall address myself to angling. The angler is in danger of greater exploitation by water authorities because of the imposition of a rate of return. I have been told that I must not abuse my right hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) within the terms of the order, so instead I shall speak in support of the Midland Federation of Fly Fishers, which is concerned about the privatisation of reservoirs.

I am glad that the Secretary of State for the Environment is not present, because he would suffer from shock on hearing what I am about to say. I do not oppose all privatisation of reservoirs. In fact, I am the president of the Tittesworthe fishing club, which has experienced privatisation. The club has taken over the reservoir and the fishing has improved since it was under the control of the Severn-Trent authority. Likewise, in the area of the Anglian authority, Ravensthorpe fishery was privatised last year. It has come under good ownership and control and it is extremely successful.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will explain how he relates these matters to the substance of the order, which is return on assets.

Mr. Golding: That is obvious, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If money is lost running a fishery, the rate of return is affected. If money is made running a fishery, that obviously relates to the rate of return. My remarks are addressed to whether profit is made or not, and I believe that they are relevant.

The Midland Federation of Fly Fishers is worried always about rates of return on capital, and it is concerned about the privatisation of Rutland, Graffham and Pitsford reservoirs. Why is that? The federation believes that privatisation of large reservoirs under the control of the Anglian authority will be harmful. The ornithological,

boating and angling interests have come together successfully and they have learnt to live together. It has been possible for anglers to enjoy fishing on the reservoirs. The federation is worried that the Anglian authority, thinking that it can maximise revenue by privatising, will privatise vast reservoirs. It claims that they will not be so successful as the small reservoirs. So vast are some of the reservoirs that it will require multi-million pound companies to take control of them. The fishermen are concerned that when that happens they will be taken over by entertainment and marina companies and that there will be all sorts of sports such as water ski-ing, which are incompatible with angling. The Midland Federation of Fly Fishers thinks, and I agree with it, that it would be dreadful for national angling institutions such as Rutland, Graffham and to a lesser extent, Pitsford, to be privatised in that way.

As the international fly fishing competition is to be held at Rutland and Graffham in 1987, it would be a disaster if people came from abroad to fish and saw water skiers on the water in the interest of maximising revenue. That brings me within the order once again.

The anglers are most upset about what the Anglian water authority seems to be doing to pave the way. The authority increased the cost for two anglers to go fishing at Rutland to £33. The anglers found that expensive but were prepared to accept it because there are very good power boats at Rutland. The Anglian water authority then extended those charges under financial pressure from the Government. That brings me within the order again. The authority then extended them to the other fisheries at Graffham and Pitsford. At Graffham the boats are ancient and not worth the price that was being charged.

The water authority was killing off the business. Anglers are generally very generous men and few of them are cynical, but they began to think that the authority was trying to kill off the business to have an excuse to privatise it. Those generous people, with rarely a suspicious thought in their heads, began to suspect that of the water authority.

The anglers have other grievances. They believe that the charging of £25,000 or £30,000 overheads on the fishery accounts has been done to pave the way for the privatisation of the vast waters. I am speaking on behalf of the anglers of Anglia; we do not want that. We want national institutions to remain national. It is acceptable for the smaller waters that will be managed as fisheries to be privatised, particularly if they will have to close.

I shall talk about the wider issue of privatisation.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): One minute to go.

Mr. Golding: One minute is nothing when we are dealing with angling and privatisation.

It is certain that there is tremendous opposition among anglers to the privatisation of water. That does not just apply to the ordinary common working-class fisherman. In the past few months I have been surprised at meetings of the anglers' co-operative association, the anti-pollution body and other angling organisations that there is a tremendous fear that privatisation of water will come. They think that privatisation will mean a reduced quality of angling. The Minister must not under-estimate the opposition to the privatisation of water among those who depend on water for their pleasure.

I regret, particularly in the absence of——

It being one and half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, the debate stood adjourned, pursuant to order this day.

Taxis (Heathrow)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lang.]*

11.59 pm

Mr. Vivian Bendall (Ilford, North): I declare an interest in the matter, in that I represent the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association. My interest is declared in the Register of Members' Interests.

Not long ago we had a meeting with the Minister, for which I thank him, when we said that members of the taxi trade have been extremely concerned about the 50p tariff proposed by the British Airports Authority for the feeder park at Heathrow. I have also been in correspondence with Sir Norman Payne of the British Airports Authority to ask him to reconsider his decision about a charge for entrance to the feeder park. Unfortunately, when I wrote to him several weeks ago, he was not prepared to do so.

I should give the House a little background to how this unfortunate situation arose. Some time ago it was realised by the airport authority that there were problems with the taxi ranks at the airport, and taxis were using airport roads and getting in the way of the normal flow of traffic. Perhaps with more forward planning, taking into account the increase of the number of passengers going through the airport, that could have been realised some years ago and adequate provision made for it. However, that was not so and adequate provision was not made.

The airport authority rightly, to try to resolve the problem, suggested that taxis should be put through a feeder park. Some years ago, in conjunction with the licensed trade, talks took place on having a feeder park. General agreement was reached and certain aspects of it were contained in the 1983 byelaws. However, at the outset there was no mention of any charge to be made at that time or in the near future. Now drivers are being penalised by being charged 50p to enter the feeder park.

On the average Heathrow to central London run, depending on what part of London it is, on the present tariff, the taxi driver is likely to get £17 or £18. The problem arises when a cab from the feeder park has to go on a more local call such as in Isleworth or Hounslow, which are quite close to the airport. If the fare is fairly low, 50p for entering the feeder park is a considerable sum. The taxi can come back to the front of the feeder rank after a short journey only after it has been to some specific hotels adjacent to the airport. There will be confusion in the feeder park as cab drivers who have been waiting there for a considerable time will not be too happy about other taxis coming in front of them, even if they have been on a short journey.

The LTDA has informed me that the likely cost to the taxi trade of a feeder park charge of 50p is about £40,000 a month. There have been problems at Heathrow. There has been a boycott of the airport by a number of taxi drivers. The LTDA has supported that boycott. In such a situation, it is the public who are liable to be the losers.

The Minister should be made aware that since the boycott began several anomalies have arisen. Mini-cabs have been exploiting the situation to great effect. Cases have been reported to the LTDA and, in turn, to me of mini-cabs which have in the last few weeks charged tourists and visitors as much as £97 to come to central London from Heathrow. In one case a trip to the Hilton hotel cost £60. Some mini-cab drivers have suggested that if they take more than one passenger to central London the charge will be £20 for each passenger.

The English tourist board has taken an interest in the matter and it wrote to Mr. Feigen of the LTDA on 12 December. That letter pointed out that its infrastructure committee was extremely concerned about the 50p parking charge that was to be levied at the airport. It believed and hoped that it would not result in the deterioration of the taxi service and asked for the LTDA's advice on that. A copy of that letter was forwarded to Mr. Bell of the British Airports Authority.

Although the trade is boycotting Heathrow, it has acted in a proper and responsible manner. In other countries when such a situation has arisen there has been, quite wrongly, the blocking of airports—a ridiculous attitude towards the problem. The LTDA wishes it to be made clear that it would have nothing to do with such action because it would have serious consequences for emergency services in the event of an unfortunate accident.

There have been meetings today between the British Airports Authority and the members of the taxi trade interested in the problem. However, I am afraid that no agreement has been reached. The British Airports Authority's suggestion was that perhaps charges should be held until the end of January. That would only put off the situation for a few weeks. I can understand the British Airports Authority's concern with Christmas coming given the number of passengers going through Heathrow. Naturally it is concerned about the passengers and how they can disperse from the airport and get to it.

Another suggestion is to hold charges until May and in the meantime a committee could be set up to try to find ways of passing the charges on in a combined commercial venture. I do not understand whether that involves the trade because I have not yet had an opportunity to consider the finer points.

A member of the LTDA has asked for a judicial review, and I understand that that has been granted. I should have thought that it would have been prudent and sensible of the British Airports Authority to have held or withdrawn its charges pending the judicial review. That would stop the boycott immediately and would give time for the judicial review to be heard and for a decision to be reached.

I understand that in future legislation the British Airports Authority is liable to be privatised. I support the Minister in that. But what is liable to happen to charges on feeder parks once privatisation takes place? Will there be any control of increases? To some degree that trade has been let down.

Some years ago British Rail tried to introduce charges on taxi ranks outside stations. It decided that it was not practical and withdrew the proposition. Now that the BAA has introduced charges, I can envisage British Rail reconsidering its position. If it introduced charges, that would increase costs to the general public.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the tariffs charged to the public by taxi drivers. It is rather unfair that their tariffs are controlled in one area, but in another area they must face this increase. The Minister was asked to consider an increase in the tariff. I can understand his problem, because how can we separate taxis coming from Heathrow from taxis in London?

The BAA should reconsider the matter. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will intervene and will discuss the issue with the BAA. I understand that the original direction may have come from his Department, which is interested in increasing revenue from airports. I do not understand why that increase should be to the detriment of the taxi trade.

The taxi trade in London is an integral part of the transport system of Greater London. It is important because it is properly controlled and properly licensed and its drivers have to pass a knowledge test, unlike many parts of the private car hire system. In those circumstances, it is not fair to penalise those who are running a good service as an integral part of London's transport system. I hope that the matter will be reconsidered. I believe that it can be resolved — and, I hope, resolved before the continuing boycott at Heathrow really begins to affect the public.

12.12 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) for raising this matter, and so giving the House the opportunity to consider the real issues that lie behind it.

The facts of the matter may be simply stated. The British Airports Authority incurs identifiable costs of some £500,000 associated with the marshalling of taxis at Heathrow. After extensive consultation with the London taxi trade, The authority decided to recover that cost by means of a levy of 50p on each vehicle entering the taxi feeder park. That charge was introduced on 27 November, since which date the taxi trade has boycotted the feeder park. I am sure that my hon. Friend will correct me if that is not his understanding of the position.

Before discussing the implications of this, I must state at the outset that the decision to introduce that charge was an administrative matter for the British Airports Authority acting under the Airports Authority Act 1975. It was not something for which I or my colleagues were responsible. I shall not comment on whether the authority had the vires to make that charge as I understand that this specific question is now the subject of a judicial review.

As I see it, this matter gives rise to two relatively distinct questions. The first is whether it was right for the authority to levy this charge at all, and the second is whether such a charge should be recovered from taxi passengers in the form of a surcharge on the fare for hirings made at the airport. I see my hon. Friend indicating that I have identified the key issues.

Taking the first question of whether a charge should be levied, I think that it is common ground that the authority has the power to provide these facilities for marshalling taxis at Heathrow. Indeed, under the 1975 Act it has a duty "to provide such services and facilities as are necessary or desirable at its airports".

I think that it is also accepted that the provision of these particular facilities costs in the order of £500,000 per annum, which has to be met from one source or another. At the moment it is a charge on the general revenue that the authority receives from its activities—that is, it is primarily recovered from aircraft landing charges.

We know that there is a cost and how it is being met. What are the effects? First, it makes flying into Heathrow a little more expensive for the airlines, but they pass that cost on to their passengers. Every passenger passing through Heathrow is making a contribution toward meeting the cost of marshalling taxis—a taxi tax on all the users of the airport. It seems to us not wholly unreasonable that the charge should be on the taxi operators who benefit from it.

A taxi charge on all the users might be justified on social grounds, but I do not think that my hon. Friend was claiming that the London taxi trade was a disadvantaged group in need of social support. The closest analogy that I can find is with the road haulage industry, which meets through taxes and duties the cost of the damage that its vehicles do to the roads. No one has yet claimed that we should increase excise duty on all vehicles to relieve the industry of this burden. The costs are identifiable. The road haulage industry gives rise to them, and it pays. This is the same principle that is being applied in the present case.

Let us examine the argument that the taxi trade is providing a service to the airport authority by carrying "its" passengers and should not be charged for doing so. But the shops in the terminal buildings are also providing a service and it is not said that they should not pay for the privilege of serving this lucrative market. It could be said that that is not a fair analogy. It has been asserted that London taxis have a right to ply for hire throughout London, including Heathrow. However, the airport is on private land and bus operators, who are licensed to ply for hire anywhere in Great Britain, pay a fee towards meeting the costs that they give rise to at the airport. That is directly analogous to the position of taxi drivers.

Of course the taxi trade does not like paying for something that it has previously had for nothing — I understand why my hon. Friend raised this matter of behalf of the taxi drivers—but I am afraid that all the logic lies in favour of putting these costs on those who benefit—the taxi drivers who choose to ply their trade at the airport.

Mr. Bendall: Will my hon. Friend concede that shops at Heathrow do not have the prices at which they sell their goods controlled?

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. Friend has made an important point, to which I shall come in a moment.

That brings me to the second strand of the argument —that, if the taxi trade is to bear this cost, it should be permitted to pass it on to passengers in the form of a surcharge on the fare. My hon. Friend claims that it is totally unreasonable that fares should be controlled and that the taxi trade should be unable to respond to an increase in costs by increasing its prices. At first sight, I was sympathetic to this argument. That was before I made further inquiries.

Soon after we first took over this responsibility from the Home Office, my officials came to me saying that it was time to increase London taxi fares. I must admit that my first reaction was one of amazement that the prices in this industry are controlled by central Government. What was so unique about the London taxi trade that it alone in the entire economy should be controlled in this way? Why cannot each taxi driver decide on the price at which to sell his services?

I was then presented with the following argument: first, to protect the consumer, all taxis must charge the same fare; secondly, the fare must be set by some authority; and, thirdly, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport had drawn the short straw. We have accepted

[Mr. Mitchell]

this—so far—but I would state unequivocally that, if there were true competition between taxi drivers charging different fares, I would have no objection whatsoever to them taking this levy into account when deciding what fare to charge from Heathrow.

That is not the present situation. As I have said, we control taxi fares to protect the consumer. Let us examine the effect that the present tariff has on services at Heathrow. Apparently, hundreds of taxi drivers are willing to queue for several hours for a hiring from the airport. Why? Not all passengers are American tourists or Arab sheikhs, from whom the driver might expect a handsome tip.

The reason is that the fare tariff makes hirings at Heathrow particularly lucrative. That is because the meter rate is increased by 50 per cent. when the journey passes the six-mile mark. That was not an unreasonable provision for the normal taxi driver compelled, say, to take somebody to Bromley or Enfield, from where he was unlikely to get a return fare. Often it is the case that a taxi picks someone up in the middle of London or at a station, takes her or him to whatever the destination may be and there is no fare back. To compensate for that, there was put into the system this 50 per cent. increase.

The increased earnings on the outward journey cover the cost of returning some way towards the central area, where the driver might reasonably expect to get another hire. But this same surcharge applies to hirings at Heathrow airport, most of which leave the cab in the middle of central London, where the driver can immediately be in the best possible position to pick up another hiring. I can see little justification for a tariff structure which inflates the average taxi fare from Heathrow by as much as £3.

To be frank, all the evidence is that Heathrow is highly profitable to the taxi trade. The levy that we are now debating will make a slight impact on its profits, but, so far as I can see, there will still be plenty. I told my hon. Friend when he visited me, together with representatives of one of the London taxi associations, that if this levy gives rise in the longer term to an undersupply of taxis at Heathrow, I shall be willing to reconsider the case for a surcharge on the fare, and I stand by that undertaking.

But tonight I go further. If, in spite of the 50p surcharge, there is still an apparent oversupply of taxis at Heathrow, there would be a strong case for a review of the tariff structure with a view to reducing the excess profitability of providing these services in the circumstances I have described. It does not benefit Heathrow or the passengers who pass through the airport for there to be hundreds of cabs stacked in a feeder park in the central area. It certainly does not improve the availability of taxis in the centre of London.

This matter demonstrates vividly the anomalies that can arise when market forces are suspended in favour of central determination. It is certainly not the wish of this Administration to be in a position of controlling London taxi fares—but while we have this responsibility it is our duty to exercise it in the best interests of the passengers. I therefore thank my hon. Friend for drawing my attention to an anomaly which has previously gone unnoticed in the detailed and complex exercise of determining taxi fares.

I know that my hon. Friend, besides supporting the London taxi trade, is concerned for the welfare of taxi passengers. He will therefore be relieved to know that the dispute is not causing too much inconvenience to those who would normally have chosen to travel by taxi. While I am sure he shares my regret that there should be any inconvenience at all, the majority of such passengers have transferred to other forms of public transport.

Heathrow has particularly good public transport links which include the underground, the airbus, run by LRT, and a minibus service called Airliner, which provides a covenient door-to-door service to and from the airport. In addition, those with heavy luggage or going to destinations that are difficult to reach may telephone for a hire car or taxi to pick them up at the airport.

One often finds when considering a particular case that it is grounded in more general and fundamental issues. As I said in my opening remarks, this apparently detailed matter has caused us to consider two such issues—first, whether costs should be borne as a general tax or should fall on those who benefit, and secondly whether the fare tariff for London taxis should be reviewed in relation to Heathrow.

For the reasons that I have given, our view on the first of those is that such identifiable costs should be borne by those who benefit, not by all airport users. On the second, we are not persuaded of the immediate need to pass this levy on to the passengers, but we shall review the situation with a view to securing an appropriate level of supply of taxis at Heathrow up or down depending upon how the matter develops.

My hon. Friend expressed his anxiety and that of the trade, which he has expressed to me before, about what would happen in the event of the privatisation of Heathrow. The fair trading and competition laws would come into operation. That applies not just in the future but at present. My hon. Friend might like to consider that that might be a more effective way of taking the matter forward than the boycott which is currently losing members of the taxi trade a useful income during the pre-Christmas period.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty five minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 18 December 1985

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

PETERHEAD HARBOURS (SOUTH BAY DEVELOPMENT) ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL *(By Order)*

Order for consideration read.

To be considered upon Thursday 16 January.

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nicaragua

1. **Mr. John Fraser** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to pay an official visit to Nicaragua.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): My right hon. and learned Friend has at present no plans to do so.

Mr. Fraser: In the absence of a visit, what steps are being taken by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to support stability in Nicaragua so that democracy can flourish? In what strong terms has the Foreign and Commonwealth Office protested to President Reagan about the trade, terrorist and psychological vendetta which is being waged by the United States against that country and which can only bring about the reverse of what the President hopes for?

Mr. Eggar: We want Nicaragua to make progress towards genuine democracy and to end its arms build-up and support for the subversion of its neighbours. We very much regret the recent suspension of civil liberties, which we regard as a step in the wrong direction. United States' policy is a matter for the United States.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Has my hon. Friend made any representations to the Government of Nicaragua about their outrageous anti-humanitarian action in blocking British helicopters from Nicaraguan air space when they were on their way to give urgently needed relief to the victims of the Colombian earthquake?

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend shares widespread concern about this matter. I think that the press reports were based on misunderstanding. There was some difficulty in telephone communications between London and Managua regarding the transit of the helicopters.

Mr. Beith: Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that, in answers to me and to others, he said that the forces were well satisfied with the co-operation that they had received from Nicaraguan authorities with respect to helicopter overflights? How does he envisage the continued American action against Nicaragua helping the essential process of restoring the plural democracy and stability which many people in Nicaragua still believe can be achieved and which were originally part of the objectives of the Nicaraguan revolution?

Mr. Eggar: I confirm the replies that I gave about the helicopters. The Americans continue to support the Contadora process.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Is my hon. Friend aware of the daft suggestion of the so-called moderate leader of Haringey council, Councillor Bernie Grant, who said that only Nicaraguan coffee beans could be sold and distributed in the council chamber and around Haringey? Is that not just as daft and offensive as poor old Leicester city council trying to twin with Nicaragua?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is a bit wide of a visit.

Mr. Eggar: I understand that Haringey council's leader has directed that only Nicaraguan coffee should be drunk in the Haringey civic centre. I understand also that the coffee has a distinctive taste, which may not please the majority of people unless they are used to it. The same could be said about Mr. Bernie Grant.

Mr. Heffer: Does the Minister agree that it is time that the Government, as a friend of the Government of the United States, informed them that Britain believes genuinely in democracy and that they should stop their nonsense in relation to Nicaragua because it is driving that country into the Soviet sphere of influence, which is what happened to Cuba in the past? Will the Americans never learn from their mistakes?

Mr. Eggar: We have our policy with regard to Nicaragua. As I have said, we support the comprehensive and verifiable Contadora agreement, which is based on the 21 Contadora principles. The American Government also support the agreement.

Mr. Foulkes: Does the Minister not see the contradiction in making comments about Nicaragua but refusing to say anything about American policy towards it? Has he noted that President Betancur, who is the architect of Contadora, has said that the greatest single obstacle to achieving peace in central America is continued American support of the Contras? That goes for military as well as financial support. Will the British Government break away from the coat-tails of America for once and condemn financial and military aid to the Contras?

Mr. Eggar: I would listen with a great deal more respect to the hon. Gentleman if he, for once, condemned the recent suspension of civil liberties by the Nicaraguan Government.

South Africa

2. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to pay an official visit to South Africa.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): I have at present no plans to visit South Africa.

Mr. Adley: That is a pity, Mr. Speaker. Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept from me that words such as "Parliament", "Government" and "democracy" are an abuse of the English language when applied to a system which excludes the majority of the people from participation therein? May I invite my right hon. and learned Friend to find a form of words to describe accurately a regime which deprives the majority of civil rights, herds them into townships and controls them with armoured vehicles?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have no doubt that my hon. Friend expresses feelings that are shared by many—indeed, by most—British people about the system of apartheid. The task is not to condemn it—which I do unreservedly—but to try to promote constructive steps to bring about its early disappearance.

Mr. Nellist: If the Secretary of State were to make a trip to South Africa, would he be congratulating those responsible for the formation three weeks ago of COSATU—the Congress of South African Trade Unions—and on bringing together 34 non-racial independent trade unions representing about 500,000 black workers and workers of other races in South Africa, or, instead of identifying himself with those who create wealth in South Africa, would he be congratulating firms, such as Consolidated Gold Fields which made a profit of £105 million last year by paying the black miners of South Africa £21 to £25 a week? Which of those two institutions would he be most likely to congratulate?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I should avoid the simplicity of choice which always commends itself to the hon. Gentleman. I would commend those firms which seek to maintain investment and economic activity in South Africa to pay special attention to the European Community's extended code, which encourages them to do more than they have done so far in promoting the rights of black trade unions in South Africa.

Mr. John Carlisle: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the course of action proposed by Labour Members, and, unfortunately, by some of my misinformed hon. Friends, to engage in dialogue with the African National Council is especially dangerous and foolhardy in the light of recent terrorist killings which have taken place within South Africa's borders? Will he condemn those killings by that terrorist organisation and commend the South Arican Government for their restrained response to these incidents?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have already made it clear that we deplore the loss of life arising from the recent land mine incidents. We have always condemned violence as a means of achieving political objectives. A suspension of violence would do much to facilitate the dialogue that we all agree is needed urgently in South Africa. We have made clear to the South African Government our condemnation of all forms of cross-border violence.

Mr. Carter-Jones: Does the Secretary of State agree with the view expressed by the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley)? As a young aircrew cadet in 1941, many years ago, I served in South Africa. I assure the right hon. and learned Gentleman that, despite what some of his hon. Friends say, the situation in South Africa now, with pass laws, is more vicious than it was 45 years ago.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have no doubt that the position compared with 45 years ago has deteriorated in a number of respects, because there has been significant political change in South Africa. While making that point, it is also fair to acknowledge that in recent times the South African Government have embarked upon a policy of limited but specific reform, moving in some respects in the right direction. We need to encourage them to proceed at a much faster pace. Our task must be to promote the dialogue that is essential to a peaceful dismantlement of the system of apartheid.

Mr. Bowen Wells: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that once more taking up our position as one of the five countries of the Contact Group that was charged with trying to negotiate a settlement in Namibia would rejuvenate our interest, lead us not to rely solely on American initiatives and put added pressure on the South African Government to enter into a dialogue with the majority populations in both those countries?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree with my hon. Friend that, when looking at the larger South African problem, we should not forget the importance of implementing resolution 435 in relation to Namibia. The Contact Group is one organisation that can contribute to that, and so is the American-led negotiating process. It is certainly an objective that I keep firmly in mind.

Mr. Anderson: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not recognise the danger to our foreign position of being so isolated and closely identified with the oppressor, the racists and the fat cats in South Africa? Is not the essential hypocrisy of the Government's position shown by the fact that while in international forums they regularly call for the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela, should that happen tomorrow they would refuse to meet him because he is a member of the ANC?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman has a capacity for over-simplifying the most complex questions. There is no doubt that the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela would be a major act of national reconciliation within South Africa, which in turn would be an important step towards a more wide-ranging and peaceful dialogue.

The hon. Gentleman must try to bear in mind that his grotesque misrepresentation of the position of the United Kingdom does nothing but harm, not only to this country's position, but to the possibility of change in South Africa.

Middle East

3. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to assess the degree to which the Arab populations of the West Bank and Gaza regard the Palestine Liberation Organisation as their legitimate representatives in any discussions on the future of the middle east; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Tim Renton): During my recent middle east tour I met leading Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. They made it clear that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is widely regarded by the local Arab population as its representative.

Mr. Ross: Why then will the Government not take a crucial step and recognise the PLO as the sole, legitimate

representative of the aspirations of the Palestinian people by meeting its representatives officially and including them in any further talks on the middle east?

Mr. Renton: As the hon. Gentleman knows, we agreed to the inclusion of two Palestinians in the recent Jordanian-Palestinian delegation that came to London. Unfortunately, in the end, they were not willing to sign the resolution that had been agreed in advance. The question of the recognition of the PLO does not arise, because we recognise states only.

Mr. Sumberg: Will my hon. Friend confirm that unless and until that organisation as a whole—regardless of the views of individual members — renounces terrorism and violence and accepts the right of Israel to exist, there can be no question of any contact or recognition of the PLO by this Government?

Mr. Renton: As I have already said, the question of the recognition of the PLO does not arise. We have urged its leaders to renounce violence and to accept Israel's right to exist within secure and recognised frontiers. It was on that basis that we said we were prepared to meet individual Palestinians who had followed that course.

Mr. Mikardo: Leaving aside the PLO or any other specific organisation, in general is it not nonsense to demand that an organisation, which firmly says that it believes that its problems cannot be solved by negotiation but only by military means, should be brought into negotiations?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman is simplifying a complex situation in the middle east. The fact is that all those who wish to move the peace process forward recognise that at some stage it will have to involve the Palestinians. A great many Palestinians still regard the PLO as their sole legitimate organisation. It is within that framework that at the moment some middle east leaders are trying to see how the PLO can be associated with discussions.

Mr. Marlow: If the Palestinians are to be criticised for violence and terrorism, should we not likewise criticise the Government of Israel for locking up 12 and 13-year-old children for throwing stones and then not allowing their parents to visit them?

Mr. Renton: We condemn violence and terrorism in the middle east, from whatever side or source it comes.

General Belgrano

4. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning the Government's reply to the Foreign Affairs Committee's third report of Session 1984-85 on the events surrounding the weekend of 1 and 2 May 1982.

Mr. Eggar: None, Sir.

Mr. Dalyell: Before putting their signature to their response to the Select Committee's report, did Ministers know of the first and more truthful draft of Sir John Nott's speech on 4 May 1982, talking about "attacking" rather than "detecting"? If they did not know, are we to believe that the efficient civil servants of the Foreign Office did not show it to them, and, if they did know, are they not misleading the Select Committee?

Mr. Latham: Who cares?

Mr. Eggar: As one of the hon. Gentleman's hon. Friends says, "Who cares?". Ministers knew, and the officials did not mislead Ministers.

Sir Anthony Kershaw: Is my hon. Friend aware that if, as a result of the events of 1 and 2 May that year, a big British ship had gone down, which the Argentines were doing their best to effect, he would find it much more difficult to answer this question? Secondly, will he bear in mind that the allegations that the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has been making are totally disproved by the evidence? Finally, will he do what he can to see that the hon. Gentleman stops making such a thumping ass of himself?

Mr. Eggar: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments. I regret that I and others will probably go on trying to help the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) without success.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Who said "Who cares"?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister referred——

Mr. Speaker: No.

Jordan

5. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to meet the Jordanian Foreign Minister; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We remain in close touch with the Jordanian Government, but I have no plans at present for a further meeting with the Jordanian Foreign Minister.

Mr. Townsend: Bearing in mind the real risk that King Hussein has taken in trying to get his peace initiative off the ground in the middle east, what action will the British Government take in the new year to get Israel and the United States fully to support that initiative and the concept of exchanging territory for proper peace?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend rightly identifies the principles upon which progress must be built in the Arab-Israel conflict. He is also right to identify the immense value of the constructive efforts of King Hussein over a long time to achieve progress in that direction. We shall continue to give our fullest support to his efforts, with the United States and other countries.

Mr. Anderson: The Foreign Secretary will know that last week President Mubarak said that the past six months of the peace process have been wasted, and that trying to solve the problem and at the same time trying to ignore the PLO would never lead to a comprehensive peace? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that view?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Sadly, the past six months have not seen as much progress as I personally would have hoped towards a possible solution of the problem. That is why we gave as much support as we could to the efforts of King Hussein during that period. We extended our invitation to the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to come here because we have always recognised that the PLO should be associated with negotiations, provided that it renounces violence and is committed to a peaceful settlement along familiar lines.

Mr. Walters: Is any progress being made towards an international conference, as proposed by King Hussein? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that such a conference, involving the Soviet Union, the United States and the parties directly involved, such as the Palestinians, is the best hope of making some progress?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree that support for initiatives towards a peaceful settlement, from whichever side they come, should be as broadly based as possible. An international conference might well help in that direction. That is why I am glad that Mr. Peres, the Prime Minister of Israel, made clear to the United Nations his understanding of the need for such an international framework. He has that in common with my hon. Friend and King Hussein.

Israel

6. **Mr. Mikardo** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Israel.

Mr. Renton: I visited Israel from 12 to 16 December. In my talks there I had a useful exchange of views on bilateral matters and regional and international issues. I also met Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Mikardo: I am grateful to the Minister for that statement. During his discussions, did he get any information that he can share with the House about private or public talks between Israelis and Jordanians, and did he draw any conclusions from that information favourable to the furtherance in the near future of the peace process?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman will accept that if I had private information on that subject during the talks I would not be able to share it with him, much as I would like to do so. It is well known that a great many discussions are going on between capitals in the middle east. It is generally accepted that impetus must be given to the peace process if there is to be progress towards a just and comprehensive settlement.

Mr. Nelson: Will my hon. Friend lend his support, as others have done, to the current rapprochement between Syria and Jordan? Will he lend his weight to ensuring that any direct negotiations between the states of Israel and Jordan, or indirectly through the medium of an international peace process, are enhanced rather than detracted from by any such new axis?

Mr. Renton: When in Damascus, where I met President Assad, I had an opportunity to talk about the new rapprochement between Jordan and Syria with him and with Vice President Haddam. This is a new development in the middle east scene and I strongly hope that it will have a successful influence in advancing the peace process. It is too early to say whether it will go in precisely the manner in which my hon. Friend suggests, but it is noticeable that Syria is now showing considerable interest in playing a part in the peace process.

Mr. Faulds: Would it not be advantageous to the peace process in the middle east, which Chairman Arafat is assiduously trying to pursue, if the Foreign Secretary were to convince the United States Government to abandon their commitment to the Kissinger promise, given at the insistence of Israel, that the US would not accept the PLO? Would it not help the whole peace process if the Foreign Secretary could urge the US Government to overcome, by whatever means are feasible, the intellectual limitations of the President's comprehension of anything and everything?

Mr. Renton: I find that comprehensive endorsement of Mr. Arafat's stance rather surprising. President Mubarak and King Hussein, especially the latter, have asked Mr. Arafat to make specific declarations on United Nations resolutions about Israel's right to exist within secure frontiers, but Mr. Arafat has not yet made any. Until he adopts a far clearer position in that context, he cannot expect to receive any wider international recognition.

Middle East

7. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a further statement on the peace process in the middle east.

15. **Mr. Temple-Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress being made towards peace in the middle east.

Mr. Renton: We shall continue to support all realistic efforts towards a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute leading to a just and comprehensive peace. It is encouraging that both King Hussein and Mr. Peres have spoken of the possibility of an international framework for peace negotiations.

Mr. Latham: Will not the welcome visit to this country next month of Mr. Peres greatly strengthen British-Israeli relations, and thereby improve our standing in the peace process negotiations? Will my hon. Friend take the opportunity to improve the atmosphere in advance of the meeting by announcing that the practice by which the Foreign Office countersigns Arab trade boycott documents will be dropped immediately?

Mr. Renton: I agree with my hon. Friend in welcoming Mr. Peres' visit to this country next month. It should be an important step in the development of bilateral relations between this country and Israel. On the practice of authentication, which is a standard legal procedure, it does not imply in any way approval of the contents of the documents, because our opposition to the Arab boycott is well known. Furthermore, the vast majority of British firms use the Arab-British chamber of commerce for that purpose.

Mr. Temple-Morris: Does my hon. Friend agree that following the recent Geneva summit, where we hope greater understanding was reached on the question of regional conflicts—I repeat the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury (Mr. Walters)—the only realistic way towards peace in the middle east is through an international conference, the results of which must be guaranteed by both the United States of America and the Soviet Union?

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary has already commented on an international conference in answer to an earlier question. We have never opposed the principle of an international conference, but we want to see that its framework is properly set up and its agenda well drawn so that it has a chance to succeed and to reach positive conclusions. The

framework of the conference at present, which includes who should be represented at it, and how it should reach its decisions, or whether it should be merely for discussions, is one of the main subjects under discussion in the middle east at present.

Mr. Cartwright: Will the Minister confirm that there cannot be any lasting settlement in the middle east which does not recognise the simple fact that the Palestinians are just as entitled to a national homeland as any other people on the face of the earth? Will he take every opportunity of making that simple fact clear in his contacts with the Governments of the United States of America and Israel?

Mr. Renton: We have always maintained the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, and we are concerned about their present conditions in some of the occupied territories. I noted some of them myself when I went to the Gaza Strip at the end of last week. I expressed my deep concern to many leading Israelis about the economic conditions and the difficulties of Palestinians in moving towards self-sufficiency.

Mr. Deakins: What is the Government's attitude to the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip?

Mr. Renton: As I have just said in reply to the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright), we have always recognised the right of Palestinians to self-determination. We accept the principles that have been suggested, for example by King Hussein, to the effect that a form of association with Jordan may be one possibility. However, at the end of the day it must be for the people who live in those lands with their Arab neighbours to work out the right association and framework for themselves.

Mr. Soames: When Mr. Peres comes here next month, will my hon. Friend ensure that he leaves in no doubt the grave anxiety that many of us have about the continuing colonisation of the West Bank?

Mr. Renton: I understand what my hon. Friend says. It fits in with the reply that I have just given to Opposition Members. On my visit to Jerusalem a few days ago I took the opportunity to make clear the anxiety that was expressed to me by leading Palestinians in Jerusalem about the extremely difficult economic conditions, which I saw in Gaza, that many Palestinians suffer at present.

Mr. Janner: Reverting to the Government's authentication of Arab boycott documents, does the Minister not understand that what he calls a standard legal procedure, which is used to justify or in any way to place a seal of approval on an unacceptable practice—in this case, a restriction on the freedom of trade—is unacceptable, if not illegal? Was that not made plain to him when he recently visited Israel?

Mr. Renton: On the hon. and learned Gentleman's second point, the matter was not once raised with me while I was in Israel. On his first point, I should tell him that all that happens is the authentication of signatures. It does not imply approval of the documents' contents or of the boycott. Our opposition to the boycott is well known.

Mr. Baldry: Does my hon. Friend agree that the best chance for an international conference to succeed would be if it was held under the auspices of the United Nations? Will the Government use their position as a member of the Security Council to seek opportunities to initiate moves in the United Nations towards long-term peace in the middle east?

Mr. Renton: Much as I share my hon. Friend's desire for moves towards long-term peace in the middle east, I am not certain that it is for Britain at this stage to take the initiative in the United Nations for bringing about such a conference. That must rest, above all, with the parties to the dispute in the middle east. Furthermore, I am not wholly convinced that a conference at the United Nations, with many nations attending, would be successful. It is not always the case that the more people who are at a conference, the greater is its chance of success. Often, it is the other way round.

Stockholm Conference

8. **Mr. James Lamond** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is satisfied with progress at the Stockholm conference on security in Europe.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There has been welcome progress on procedural matters, with agreement on an informal working structure, which has narrowed the focus of the conference considerably. Progress on substance has proved harder to achieve.

Mr. Lamond: In view of the Soviet acceptance of the United States' idea of annual advance notice of military manoeuvres by the Warsaw pact and NATO and its suggestion that it should be extended to air and sea manoeuvres, is there not an opportunity, before the better atmosphere created by the Geneva summit disappears entirely, for us to take an initiative at Stockholm and try to press home the view that a good document should be presented to the world at the end of the conference?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We shall try to achieve a document that contains specific commitments to adopt confidence-building measures, including those relating to land manoeuvres. If one goes beyond that into sea manoeuvres, one is in danger of going outside the terms of reference of the conference. But we all agree on the need to achieve practical progress on confidence-building measures.

Mr. Forman: Will my right hon. and learned Friend give some other examples of areas of substantial progress to which the Government attach importance? What are the realistic chances of their being achieved at Stockholm?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Our proposals include provision for an exchange of information about the structure and deployment of military forces, the mandatory observation of regular military activities, site inspection and improved communications between states. They are examples of specific measures which can be agreed within the terms of reference. Progress on such matters would represent a worthwhile achievement after the great deal of work put into the Stockholm conference.

Mr. Healey: Although I welcome what the Foreign Secretary said about progress, at least on the procedural aspect of the discussions, does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that, as both sides have agreed that there should be contact between the military staffs of the two alliances in limited areas, and since Secretary Weinberger has already proposed a regular exchange of views between

the American and Soviet military authorities on problems of European security, the Government should now press NATO to invite the Warsaw pact to a general exchange of views on achieving security for both parts of Europe through co-operation rather than confrontation?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We all share the aim of achieving improved prospects for peace through co-operation and consultation. However, I hesitate to follow the right hon. Gentleman in calling for yet another framework within which such consultation should be conducted. There is no shortage of forums or frameworks, but there has been a shortage of progress. I am glad that Britain has put forward a significant and worthwhile proposal for progress in the MBFR negotiations, which is another example of where we are trying to make headway.

South Africa

9. **Mr. Bowen Wells** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its foreign policy generally of Her Majesty's Government's refusal to impose full economic sanctions on South Africa.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): The South African issue has wide implications for foreign policy as a whole and we have, therefore, maintained close consultation with other Governments. We are party to common statements of policy, both with our European Community and our Commonwealth partners, which stop short of the imposition of full economic sanctions.

Mr. Wells: Will my hon. and learned Friend confirm that if we are not able to make progress in South Africa over the next six months, and if we do not go along with further sanctions being demanded by our Commonwealth friends, we shall be subject to discrimination by those Commonwealth countries against our own trade?

Mr. Rifkind: There have been differences of view on this subject for many years, and I emphasise that the opposition of Her Majesty's Government to mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa is a view shared not only by the United States but by almost the entire European Community and most of the other countries of western Europe. We are not alone in our view of the matter.

Mr. Caborn: What actions have been taken on the sanctions to which the British Government agreed through the EEC and Commonwealth conferences? We are led to believe that there have been no restrictions on imports of Krugerrands, and that the withdrawing of military attachés, which is part of the EEC agreement, has not been done. How effective have any sanctions to date been, because many people are saying that the Government are bringing us into disrepute in the international community by not even implementing, in the Prime Minister's words, the "teeny weeny" sanctions agreed at the Commonwealth conference?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is incorrect in part of his question. The withdrawal of military attachés from European countries is not part of the Luxembourg package, although it is under consideration. The South African Government have stopped minting Krugerrands, and there has been no market in Krugerrands for a considerable time.

Mr. Forth: Has my hon. and learned Friend's Department made any estimate of the potential effect on employment in both this country and South Africa if full mandatory economic sanctions were ever applied?

Mr. Rifkind: It is difficult to make a precise estimate, but it is known that there are at least 150,000 black South Africans employed by British companies in South Africa, and there have been estimates of up to 50,000 British jobs that could be directly or indirectly affected by a policy of sanctions.

Mr. Spearing: Is it not a fact that Her Majesty's Government are still not in conversation with the African National Congress? Is the Minister aware that a week ago, in front of the Select Committee, the Foreign Secretary said that he did not know whether the United States was in direct conversation with the ANC? Does he know, and if so, will he tell us?

Mr. Rifkind: I have no reason to believe that the United States Government have been in contact with the ANC.

Mr. Hill: Is my hon. and learned Friend aware that many Conservative Members realise that economic sanctions against South Africa would have enormous reverberations throughout British industry? I make this point in particular in relation to the port of Southampton, where the dockers are still working the South African marine trade because that represents one third of their container traffic. If the Government change their course on economic sanctions, many will be unemployed.

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to that aspect of the debate about economic sanctions. The Government's opposition to economic sanctions is partly for the reason set out by my hon. Friend and also because we do not believe that such a policy would succeed in achieving the fundamental and peaceful change that we all wish to see in South Africa.

Mr. Healey: Is the Minister aware that members of the State Department have been in continual contact with members of the ANC, and that such contacts took place in the recent visit of Mr. Chester Crocker to Lusaka? Why has the Foreign Secretary refused to allow the British Foreign Office the same freedom to investigate the situation as is allowed by the American Secretary of State to the American State Department?

Mr. Rifkind: We have always emphasised that we look forward to the day when the African National Congress will renounce a policy of violence. We believe that the Commonwealth initiative, agreed at Nassau, which called for dialogue between black and white South Africans in the context of a suspension of violence on both sides, ought to be an incentive to the African National Congress as well as to the South African Government to desist from any acts of violence, in the interests of reconciliation.

Mr. Beith: What incentives are the British Government giving to the South African Government to respond at all to the Commonwealth initiative, since they know that even if the initiative is a failure there will be no escalation whatsoever of sanctions by the British Government? Is it not a relief that at least the banks, on commercial grounds, are prepared to impose economic sanctions on South Africa?

Mr. Rifkind: I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that the South African Government have already said that they are prepared to consider contacts with the Commonwealth group that was set up at the Nassau summit. That is an encouraging sign. We believe that the Commonwealth group, which includes representatives from all sections of the Commonwealth, could make an important impact in persuading all parties, including the South African Government, of the need for very early dialogue and reconciliation in that country.

10. **Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest representations by Her Majesty's Government to the South African authorities on developments in that country.

Mr. Rifkind: On 11 November we participated in a demarche on behalf of the 12 European Community countries expressing to the South African Government our deep concern about restrictions imposed on the press, violent police methods of riot control and the continuing arrests of political and trade union leaders. On 3 December we issued a statement about the killings at Mamelodi, in which we called for a full inquiry.

Mr. Winnick: Is the Minister of State aware that we welcome the fact that at least one or two Tory Members of Parliament are speaking out on this issue, unlike the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) and one or two others, who seem to act in the House of Commons as representatives of the South African Government? When will the Minister realise that only when sanctions are applied by this country and by our partners in the European Community will the South African authorities understand that we are serious in opposing their vile system of government in that country?

Mr. Rifkind: I am not sure why the hon. Gentleman always insists upon attributing bad faith to everybody except himself. He ought to realise that people can honestly hold different opinions from his own without justifying the rather nasty comments that he insists upon making on every occasion. As for sanctions, the hon. Gentleman must appreciate that there is a common desire to see peaceful, fundamental change in South Africa, but there is a genuine difference of view as to whether mandatory sanctions would bring it about.

Sir Peter Blaker: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that if there is to be any chance of achieving a solution to the problems of South Africa which is fair to all races in that country and which does not involve immense bloodshed, it will be by encouraging a dialogue between the people of South Africa? Does he further agree that it is at least not self-evident that economic sanctions are likely to achieve that process?

Mr. Rifkind: Not only is it not self-evident, but we know from experience that whenever a policy of mandatory economic sanctions has been applied it has conspicuously failed to achieve even a limited degree of success.

Mr. Pike: Bearing in mind that all methods, over many years, to try to persuade the South African Government to end their abhorrent policy of apartheid have failed, should not the Government be saying that now is the time to introduce economic sanctions? Should we not take an example from the history of this country and remember the deprivation that was suffered in the cotton textile industry when efforts were made to end slavery in America?

Mr. Rifkind: I must emphasise to the hon. Gentleman that a slow but definite process of reform has begun in South Africa. For example, a recommendation has been made by the President's Council that the pass laws should be repealed. If, as is widely expected, the South African Government endorse that recommendation it will represent a fundamental move in the right direction. It is exactly reforms of that kind that we should be encouraging.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that while it is helpful to make strong and constructive representations to the South African Government, experience shows that mandatory economic sanctions are completely counter-productive and only do damage to this country?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to that fact. Many of those who call for economic sanctions emphasise their view that it would be worth making a short sacrifice of a few months, or even a year or so, to achieve the end of apartheid. The sad fact, as we saw in Rhodesia, is that even after 15 years it was not economic sanctions that brought about change in that country.

Iran-Iraq War

11. **Dr. McDonald** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assurances of the prospect of a peaceful settlement of the Iran-Iraq war were given to him by the Iraqi Foreign Minister during his visit.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister gave clear assurances during his discussions in London with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and myself that Iraq was seeking a peaceful settlement of the conflict and remained ready to negotiate with Iran.

Dr. McDonald: Did the right hon. and learned Gentleman take the opportunity of those discussions to raise two issues with the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister: first, the fact that Iraq will no longer be a safe haven for terrorists such as Abu Nidal; and, secondly, the question of the continued oppression and torture by Iraq of its citizens?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In the course of the meetings that the Iraqi Foreign Minister had in this country, the first issue was certainly raised, both specifically and generally. In addition, I assure the hon. Lady that the Government are always concerned about violations of human rights and that the Iraqi Government are fully aware of our close concern with that matter. That was reaffirmed during the visit of Mr. Tariq Aziz to this country.

Mr. Temple-Morris: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that an end to this detestable war depends far more on Iran than it does on Iraq? Will he explain how he can justify his sanction of the export of Chieftain tank engines for use by the armed services of Iran in this war?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I assure my hon. Friend that the Government are conscious of the need to maintain our policy of supplying to neither side any defence equipment that would significantly enhance the capability of either

side to prolong or exacerbate the conflict. Very little equipment of any sort—except some vehicle spares that were supplied under an old pre-revolutionary contract—has been sold recently to Iran.

British Council

13. **Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received concerning the budget of the British Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We have received representations from the council itself.

Mr. Freud: Will the Minister explain why the British Council, of all overseas organisations, has been singled out for punitive cuts of 20 per cent.? Has he presented to the Treasury the British Council's claim for an extension of activities to Indonesia and China? Why is his Department so publicly supportive of the British Council but will not fight for it in private?

Mr. Eggar: We cannot anticipate the publication of the public expenditure White Paper for next year. We have taken on board the representations that the council has made to us about Indonesia and China. We are extremely conscious of the good work that the British Council does, but it cannot be exempt from public expenditure restrictions.

Sir Anthony Kershaw: Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be a good idea to have a thorough going review of the value of cultural diplomacy to British policy abroad?

Mr. Eggar: We have that matter under consideration.

Mr. George Robertson: May we be assured that the Government will not hide behind the transfer of funds from UNESCO membership to aspects of the British Council's work and will face the real obligation to increase the amount of mixed money in the British Council's budget? Is the hon. Gentleman aware that only by expanding that budget will the British Council be able to do the highly important job of promoting Britain abroad, a task which he and the House know the council does extremely well?

Mr. Eggar: The whole House recognises the extremely valuable work that the British Council does. UNESCO money will be independent of any other settlement made with the British Council for the next year.

United Kingdom High Commissions and Embassies

14. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is satisfied with the commercial performance of high commissions, and embassies of the United Kingdom abroad.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Yes, Sir. The promotion and protection of British commercial interests, employing about a third of our front line manpower overseas, is highly valued by the business community. About 90,000 British business men are in touch each year with embassies, high commissions and subordinate posts during overseas visits. Market information inquiries have risen nearly 40 per cent. since 1979.

Mr. Baker: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for that answer. Will he accept that some business men tell me that the performance of our embassies and high commissions abroad is variable? Will he do what he can to get more business men to come into the diplomatic service to work in our embassies and high commissions and will he try to improve the industrial experience that our diplomats receive?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Every organisation is capable of improvement. We operate an interchange of staff with the private industrial and commercial sector, necessarily on a modest scale. All officers who take up such commercial appointments for the first time attend a course to qualify them, to which contributions are made by private firms and trade. We recognise the need to do all that we can in that direction.

The tributes paid to the service far outweigh the complaints. All complaints are investigated and we welcome contructive criticism. In the 12 months to the end of October this year six complaints were received, but there were over 300 tributes. That is a fair balance.

Mr. Pavitt: Will the Foreign Secretary publish in the *Official Report* the excellent results obtained by the high commission in Jamaica? Will he commend the high commissioner for his efforts in all trading aspects between the United Kingdom and Kingston?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall certainly record the hon. Gentleman's view. It is right that such a tribute should be passed to those concerned.

Viscount Cranborne: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that part of the answer is in the hands of the business men themselves? Does he further agree that when contrasted with the efforts of many of our competitors, particularly the Japanese, British business marketing efforts abroad tend to be rather pathetic?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is not my function to endorse such a general condemnation, but I agree that the job of selling has to be done by business men. The diplomatic and commercial services can play only a supportive role. The private sector has a crucial part to play for itself.

Mr. Foulkes: Will the Foreign Secretary confirm that our embassy in Santiago is doing nothing to promote the sale of Centaur armed vehicles to that repressive regime and that no export licences will be granted for any further vehicles?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Our embassy in Santiago is following the policy clearly laid down to offer no arms sales in support of the repressive measures in that country.

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

16. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultations he has had with experts in the field of seismology on the verification of a nuclear test ban treaty.

Mr. Renton: The United Kingdom's contribution to the work of the conference on disarmament on the verification of a nuclear test ban treaty draws upon advice from seismologists employed by the Ministry of Defence. In addition, officials are regularly in touch with seismologists outside the Government services; for example, United Kingdom experts have participated in the ad hoc group of scientific experts under the auspices of the

conference on disarmament, which includes representatives from a variety of countries, including the USA and the USSR.

Mr. Strang: Will the Minister have the honesty to admit that the technology is now available to detect nuclear explosions down to the militarily significant level of one kiloton? Is it not a fact that before the breakdown of the last comprehensive test ban treaty negotiations the Soviet Union agreed to the placement of seismic stations on its territory?

Mr. Renton: It is a question not of honesty, but of a great number of scientologists—*[Interruption.]*—sorry, seismologists. As the House will know, the headquarters of scientology is in my constituency. The opinion of many seismologists—some employed by the Government but many not, some British and many international—is that the question of verification is not yet solved. Furthermore, it is inaccurate to claim that the 1977 to 1980 trilateral negotiations, to which the hon. Gentleman referred, were near completion. There were many practical aspects, including verification, on which agreement had not been achieved at the time the negotiations ceased.

Mr. Forman: Is my hon. Friend aware that many laymen who support the objective of a comprehensive test ban treaty are beginning to feel that the scientific community in more than one country is merely putting up obstacles to the reasonable proposals made recently. Will he seek to give the idea a greater political push?

Mr. Renton: I listened to what my hon. Friend says with great care, but the fact of the matter is that this is an area where it is essential that there should be not only verification measures that work but confidence on both sides that the verification is working. If there were to be non-compliance and that was not verified, it could lead to a breach in our national security, which would have serious consequences.

Mr. Healey: Is the Minister aware that the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph,* who has always proved a most reliable conduit for Foreign Office news, recently stated that there was now no scientific obstacle to verification and that the only obstacle was political, by which he meant the toadying of the Prime Minister to President Reagan? Therefore, will the Government support the early recalling of the conference on a comprehensive test ban agreement, since the Prime Minister herself said that she greatly regretted its being broken off last time?

Mr. Renton: I well realise from previous exchanges that the right hon. Gentleman is setting himself up as an amateur seismologist, but he is not much better as a seismologist than he was as an economist. The fact of the matter remains, as I have said before, that there is a genuine and serious division of scientific opinion. We have suggested that a committee should be formed at the conference on disarmament at which detailed questions about verification could be studied, and it is a matter of regret to us that the Soviet Union has not accepted that suggestion and has not moved forward with it.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order arising directly out of questions, Mr. Speaker. The Under-Secretary clearly said earlier that it was one of my hon. Friends who said, "Who cares?". In fact, it was none of my hon. Friends; it was his hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham). I wonder whether that could be put right. In answer to the substantive question, the people who care are those who care that the House of Commons should be told the truth.

Mr. Latham: I readily confirm that that is correct, Mr. Speaker. Had you permitted an interruption earlier I would have said so then. It was I who made that comment.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure that *Hansard* will have noted that exchange.

Mr. Dalyell: Further to my point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is not for the hon. Gentleman to apologise; it is for the Minister who used——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot be responsible for that. It will be noted.

Mr. Marlow: On a point of order arising out of questions, Mr. Speaker. It is only a small point of order, but I am asking you for your help and assistance. You may remember that in distant days gone by we used to have European questions for 20 minutes. There are some 20 questions on European issues on the Order Paper today. Europe is responsible for our agriculture policy, for our trade policy and for a growing basket of other policies. It is only right and proper that we should have the ability, not just to question the Foreign Secretary after Council meetings, but to ask substantive questions on the subject. I wonder whether anything can be done about that.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I seem to remember that in the not too distant past there were exchanges about this and it was agreed through the usual channels that EC questions should go in with foreign affairs questions. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to have that changed, his right course would be to talk to the Leader of the House.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Caborn: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I should like your guidance and perhaps some information on a question on the Order Paper. Has there been a request from the Secretary of State for Transport to make a statement on——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have not had that, but it does not arise directly out of questions today.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Very honourably and truthfully the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) admitted that he was responsible. I would not pursue the matter further, but it would be gracious of the Minister to at least admit that he made a mistake; no doubt a genuine mistake, but, nevertheless, a mistake. Would it not be nice if Ministers were a little gracious?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is very nearly Christmas.

Mr. Eggar: If it helps the hon. Gentleman, I apologise. I did mishear; the comment came from another direction. I apologise.

Foreign Affairs Council

3.34 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the meetings of Community Foreign Ministers that took place in Brussels on 16 and 17 December. I took part in the meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference which finished at midday yesterday. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade and the United Kingdom Permanent Representative represented the United Kingdom at the subsequent meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council.

The Foreign Affairs Council discussed Commission proposals for a negotiating mandate on the renewal of the multi-fibre arrangement. Further discussions will take place at the Foreign Affairs Council in January.

Ministers also reviewed progress in negotiations to adapt the EC-EFTA agreements to take account of enlargement.

The Ministers of the Ten as well as Spain and Portugal issued a statement on East-West relations following the meeting between President Reagan and Secretary-General Gorbachev in Geneva. A copy of the statement is being placed in the Library of the House.

The Council considered a draft regulation adapting the regional fund to take account of the enlargement of the Community. The new regulation should be ready for adoption in the near future.

Following discussion at the European Council it was agreed to set up a committee of scientific experts to recommend co-ordinated action to combat cancer.

The Intergovernmental Conference completed its work. Discussion centred on those points which, following the decisions taken at the European Council, required clarification or further work.

We agreed the political co-operation treaty, with a small secretariat, on the lines that the United Kingdom proposed before Milan. We reached agreement upon the framework in which to set the political co-operation treaty and the amendments to the EC treaty in a way which preserves the juridical separation between the European Community treaties and the political co-operation Treaty. We achieved the necessary clarifications on the internal market and the European Parliament to complete the agreement reached without affecting the substance of what was agreed by the Heads of Government in Luxembourg.

The Italian and Danish Governments continue to have overall reserves on all the texts. The United Kingdom maintained its reserve on the text on the working environment. The Presidency will now collate the texts that have been under discussion for examination by the official group of legal and linguistic experts. I will, of course, make the texts available to the House as soon as we have them in final form.

The changes agreed represent worthwhile improvements in the operation of the Community. The agreements to complete the common market by 1992, to speed up decision-taking, to strengthen our co-operation in foreign policy and to ensure that our efforts in research and development are geared to the exploitation of a growing market will help to achieve objectives that we have consistently pursued. We welcome this as a useful step forward for the Community. The agreements now reached are, of course, subject to the approval of national Parliaments.

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): It is clear from that statement how little the whole treaty amendment exercise has achieved in reality. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that, compared with the fanfares and rhetoric which began the discussions, what has emerged is a pretty feeble pile of paper? If this is history, it is historic only in the sheer time taken to do so little for so many of Europe's people. With more than 15 million jobless in Europe, the Community budget facing disaster yet again and the regional and social funds locked up, is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware how sad it is that the treaty amendments are so profoundly irrelevant to Europe's real problems?

Why are the British Government, alone among the 10 nations in the Community, still holding out against encouraging improved standards of health and safe working conditions for workers? Why does this country always take the worst of the Community and reject the best?

Now that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has agreed to the new treaty on foreign policy co-operation, what have his colleagues in Brussels had to say about Britain's disgraceful decision to leave UNESCO against the unanimous advice of our European partners?

Article 1 of the Luxembourg summit communiqué on the obscure subject of "cohesion" says that the Community will

"reduce disparities between various regions".

How is that to be done with the freezing of the social and regional funds and the losses that this country will suffer as a result? On radio yesterday the Prime Minister spoke about her view of the European Community being pragmatic and based on what it can do for Britain. How can we benefit if the present financial shambles in Europe continues?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: When he asks questions on a topic of this kind the hon. Gentleman portrays a wide and superficial knowledge but with very little insight.

On political co-operation, the hon. Gentleman may be surprised to learn that UNESCO was not mentioned once in the last two days. Our position in relation to the proposal for the adoption of regulations affecting health and safety in the working environment consists simply in our belief that that should be subject to a provision for unanimity, at least in respect of firms of small and medium size. It is necessary to proceed with the utmost care when imposing obligations, even of the most benign kind, on small and medium sized firms if one is not to damage employment —the very thing about which we are all concerned.

As to the treaty amendments, I find it very difficult to judge whether the hon. Gentleman's position is to regret the fact that the conference achieved such a small range of treaty amendments or that it took place at all. We recognised the case for progress in the Community and believe that that could have been done without the Intergovernmental Conference. We are glad that it has now been done with that conference. It would be nice to hear something welcomed by the Opposition.

Sir Frederic Bennett (Torbay): On political collaboration, can one assume that the conference greeted the decision by the five countries—including the Socialist

Governments of France and Sweden — to cease their prosecution of Turkey for breaches of human rights in view of progress towards democracy in that country? Does that open the door to further economic and political collaboration between the EEC countries and Turkey?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend will appreciate that Sweden was not represented at the proceedings yesterday, but he is right to draw attention to the importance of the decision reached by the five complainant Governments to bring to a conclusion the civil rights proceedings against Turkey. That is a recognition of the progress that has been made in that direction in Turkey, and I hope that it will open the way to similar moves within the European Community.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): As the Foreign Secretary has declared himself in favour of Euro-activity and against Euro-pessimism, does he recognise that some majority voting, a stronger Parliament and enlarged regional and social funds are all essential if we are to tackle problems in the Community such as the CAP that cause its unpopularity among some sections in Britain?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have certainly been in favour of extending the opportunity for the Parliament to play a constructive role in the Community while reserving the last word to the Council, and that has been achieved. We are certainly in favour of the extended use of majority voting, particularly when that can promote the more effective application of a single internal market, while proper attention is paid to important national interests. There is something to be said for looking favourably at the scope and scale of activity in the regional and social funds, but that can be sensibly achieved only within a framework of effective budget discipline and, above all, effective control of the previously burgeoning expenditure on the CAP. That decision does not require treaty changes but a sustained application of political will—*[Interruption.]*— and in support of that determination by the Government I am always delighted to have the enthusiastic commitment of my hon. Friends on the Back Benches.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Despite the welcome lack of progress on the undermining of the veto, is it true that the Secretary of State has agreed the European Act, whose preamble describes the ultimate aim of member states as being European union and commits Britain to the formal objective of realising that goal in a new treaty article? Why on earth did the Secretary of State agree to those silly words when the Prime Minister has made it abundantly clear that Britain does not support all this nonsense?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am dismayed that my hon. Friend, with his sophisticated insight into these matters, should be so preoccupied with that misconception. The title of the European Act, which brings together the two treaties agreed yesterday, explicitly avoids reference to European union. The references in the text are to "complete progress towards our agreed goal"——

Mr. Teddy Taylor: That is the preamble.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The agreed text includes the preamble to which I am referring. The goal that has been agreed is ever closer agreement between the peoples of Europe. As we signed the treaty in 1957, my hon. Friend must catch up with that. I made it clear yesterday, as British Governments have done on many occasions, that union in the sense envisaged in the treaty is a continuing process. It was agreed that we should not speak of the establishment of a European union. Even my hon. Friend cannot ask for a better outcome.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Did the right hon. and learned Gentleman have the opportunity to have a few words with the negotiators on the multi-fibre arrangement, whose mandate was renewed, to tell them that employers and unions alike in the textile and clothing industry are worried because of the story that the civil servants who are negotiating are pressing hardest for a liberal regime in the coming MFA? That is contrary to the impression given in debate in the House a few months ago. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that he was concerned about jobs and small businesses being destroyed. Is he aware that the jobs of many tens of thousands of workers in this industry will be in jeopardy unless there is proper control of clothing and textile imports?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade adhered firmly throughout yesterday's discussion and the discussion on the MFA to the line that he outlined in the Hou[illegible] on 9 May this year. He made it plain then that a renewed MFA is bound to be more liberal in some respects if it is to afford improvements in access to the European markets of the poorest developing countries. That wish is expressed and supported by both sides of the House, not least by the Labour party. The Community has to balance liberal opportunities for textile industries in the Third world with sensible safeguards for Britain's textile industry. That is the objective set by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade. It is a difficult objective to achieve, but he will stick at it.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): Is it not clear that the only hope for advance in British industry, especially British aerospace, lies in closer co-operation with a completed Common Market? Should not my right hon. and learned Friend sweep aside considerations of ideological purity and throw his weight firmly in favour of a European solution to the Westland problem?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree that it is important in every context to take account of the advantages that can be secured by effective co-operation on a European scale. It is not for me to sweep aside any considerations of ideological purity in the decision that must be taken by Westland.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has stated that he expects any treaty to amend the treaty of Rome to be ratified by an Act of Parliament. Does he have any thoughts on the method of ratification for a possible treaty on political co-operation?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: A distinction must be drawn— as the hon. Gentleman well appreciates with his expert knowledge on this matter — between the provisions amending the European Community treaty and the political co-operation treaty. The political co-operation treaty is not, of course, part of Community law. It does not require legislation in the United Kingdom, but the House will have a full opportunity to consider it.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): What improvements does my right hon. and learned Friend expect in the speed and quality of Community decision taking if there is a greater involvement of the European Parliament?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: To improve the consultation procedure, we want to make it more possible for the European Parliament to make an effective contribution without extending the process. A clear time limit is provided for in the proposed treaty change. If a procedure fails to come to a conclusion, the proposal will lapse. This is similar to the way in which we handle matters in the House. The Presidency is committed to reviewing speedily at the beginning of next year the Council's internal procedures to deal with First reading provisions in the same way.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman be kind enough to tell us whether his attitude would change if the Italian Government were to veto the existing arrangement? Would he then be prepared to see a faster move towards closer union, or are Her Majesty's Government to stay with the existing position, where they appear to have tried to give away the veto unsuccessfully?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: If we had been trying to give away the veto, which we were not, and we were unsuccessful, as the hon. Lady implies, she would have nothing to worry about. We were seeking to achieve a conclusion of advance British and European interests in the working of the Community. We arrived at a conclusion which commended itself broadly, in respect of which the Italian Government have so far maintained their reserve. We hope that reserves will be withdrawn so that it is possible for the entire Community to agree on the substance of the matters agreed last week.

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): My right hon. and learned Friend has mentioned that my right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade was at the meeting. Can he confirm my impression that my right hon. Friend raised the question of the serious crisis in the tin industry? If so, what was the outcome of his intervention?

Will my right hon. and learned Friend take it from me that our decision to withdraw from UNESCO—at the time that it was announced in the House I was in New York seeing the Secretary-General—caused not a ripple in the United Nations headquarters?

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Rubbish. I made a phone call.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall leave the hon. Gentleman to resolve his financial problems with my hon. Friend outside the House. My hon. Friend's contribution makes the point that I had made to me about the feelings in the United Nations on our UNESCO decision.

My hon. Friend is right to be concerned about the tin crisis. We are in regular touch with our Community partners and with the Commission about it. The issue was raised yesterday. There are differing views on how to proceed to a resolution of the crisis. We are continuing to make strenuous efforts in the Community and elsewhere to achieve a settlement that would permit an orderly resumption of tin trading on the London metal exchange.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): It has cost the British people £1·5 million a day to maintain our membership of this big business club over our period of membership. When will British unemployed workers move off the bottom of the league of social payments as a proportion of their former earnings compared with every other country in the Common Market?

In his discussions on international trade, did the Secretary of State explain to the other Ministers why the British Government did refuse to impose economic sanctions against South Africa? Did he tell them that it has nothing to do with the 150,000 jobs that they claim would be affected by the imposition of sanctions? He has not made that claim about the five million who the Government have put on the dole. Did he explain that the Government have refused to impose sanctions because Britain controls 45 per cent. of foreign investment in South Africa, and that it is the profits of his mates that are up for grabs in South Africa? That is why the Government will not intervene.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: One can only express one's sympathy with the hon. Gentleman if his insight into these matters is founded on such narrow restrictions as those which he has sought to outline.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Will my right hon. and learned Friend make an immediate statement to the House about the important and new information, which he plainly has, which enabled him to describe expenditure on the CAP as recently or previously burgeoning?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The important information which I have is to the effect that the share of agriculture in the 1986 budget is substantially below its share for the current year and that the provision for 2·5 per cent. growth that is contained in the guidelines has been respected. I understand that nothing that we are able to do in respect of the CAP will be enough for my hon. Friend, but I beg him to accept that we are applying dramatic energy to try to achieve improved operation of the agriculture policy. I value his support in that respect, and I would value his insight as well.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): In view of the continuing financial crisis in the Common Market and the £252 million that the British taxpayer had to find to bail it out this year, will the Foreign Secretary seriously consider the question of the financing of those political parties in the Community that pass money to bankrupt parties in this country? For example, does he know that during the last financial year a group known as European Liberals, many of whom are to the right of Ghengis Khan, provided the British Liberal party with £340,000—and that is mentioned in its accounts—even though there is not a single Liberal party member in the Assembly? Is it any wonder that only recently the Liberal party allocated its premises to the National Front?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman has identified a very tangled web indeed. I should have thought that he would not be so ready to condemn international co-operation on political matters when his party, from the days of the Socialist International onwards, has proclaimed a belief in international political co-operation.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): As I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend would be as concerned as I would be if the reference to European union in the preamble were to be used by the Commission as a

moral lever for opening the throats of the British public so that it could throw down them more distasteful Euro medicine, will he reinforce his already robust remarks by saying, "Yes, we agree to a common market, but we do not agree to a united Europe"?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I think that some of my hon. Friends should become less preoccupied with textural matters of that sort. If we go back a long way, we will remember that in 1976 the Hague European Council, at which this country was represented by the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), proclaimed that our objectives were the consolidation of Community solidarity and the establishment of European union. The treaty of Rome proclaimed as an objective the achievement of an ever closer union of the peoples of Europe.

If hon. Members concentrated on the realities and the practicalities, they would realise that we stop far short of the imaginary nightmare that they conjure up from these sort of words.

Mr. Eric Deakins (Walthamstow): Does the draft treaty on political co-operation contain any procedures to enable other European states to join in the treaty, and, if not, why not?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It contains provisions that make it plain that the treaty is not meant to be exclusive or to preclude consultation and co-operation with other European democratic countries. For example, we all belong to organisations such as the Council of Europe.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): If the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) was right in what he said—and I have no information on the subject—does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that he has raised a very serious point? We cannot have British political parties financed by foreign political parties.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Now that my hon. Friend has added his formidable weight to the point made by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), I shall be very happy to give it more earnest consideration.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that there is a Council decision on tariff quotas which I understand is not to be published in its final form, even though it has already been considered by the Council? As far as we know, it will never be made available to anybody either in this House or elsewhere, even though it has been considered and made as a Council decision.

Will my right hon. and learned Friend look into that matter during the Intergovernmental Conference and tell us whether it is a new procedure and whether it will continue in the future?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In so far as I heard my hon. Friend, I believe that to be a matter that I should draw to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade, who is in the House but had similar difficulty in hearing what he said. We shall read it in *Hansard* tomorrow.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the Foreign Secretary expand on his interesting and probably welcome statement about scientific experts from Europe combating cancer? Does it mean that European money will be available? Will it be given to centres of excellence such as the Max Planck institute, Lewen university or the universities of Edinburgh or Cambridge?

If we want to fight cancer, is it not important to reinforce centres of excellence? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman ask his officials to give him Sir James Gowan's foreword to the Medical Research Council's committee report which shows how funds are lacking for alpha projects? I welcome the initiative, but let us ensure that it is done in the most efficient way.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall see that the experts who advise the Government on these matters have their attention drawn to the points raised by the hon. Gentleman. Their actions, which I described in the statement, to achieve greater co-operation on a Community basis consist of the appointment of experts to work together, and I trust that they will take account of the hon. Gentleman's point.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): My right hon. and learned Friend said in his statement that the Government have put a

"reserve on the text on the working environment."

Will he tell the House why that was done and what, in fact, it is?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have tried to answer that question in reply to the Opposition Front Bench. The Opposition Front Bench has had the advantage of studying the text, which I accept my hon. Friend may not have had. The proposal will give the Council powers to make legislative provision in a Community sense, affecting matters connected with health, safety and other areas in the working environment. It is our belief that, although that is a perfectly respectable objective to consider on a Community basis, it must be considered carefully with proper voting provisions. The proposal may achieve benevolent objectives, but it could, if too burdensome, detailed and restricted, threaten the creation of jobs, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Foreign Secretary tell the House what discussions took place about American policy in Central America and the American invasion of Nicaragua, which has a democratically elected Government? Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman also say what discussions took place about the British Government's slavish support for United States policy in that matter, despite claiming to support the Contadora process, which other European Governments support? Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman give any guarantee that the EEC aid that is being sent to some Central American countries will not be used to support Central American Governments who deny human rights to their citizens, in particular El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras? Will he give an assurance that no money will go to support such Governments?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There was no discussion of that topic. When that was discussed recently, it was on the basis of the common policy adopted by the Community countries at the meeting that took place with the Contadora countries in Luxembourg approximately a month ago. There is a great deal more common ground in Community policy on this matter than the observations of the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) suggest.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Does not the constructive and practical progress that has been made

[Mr. Tony Baldry]

towards the creation of an internal market demonstrate the capacity and determination of the Community to promote trade in a better way and to secure real and lasting jobs for the benefit of many unemployed people in this country?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): In the course of his important discussions, did my right hon. and learned Friend seek to secure agreement from his colleagues that the British consumer should be able to derive the same advantages at Christmas as the Russian consumer and be able to purchase top quality EEC beef for 15p a pound?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I did not discuss that topic, although the Agriculture Council will be meeting tomorrow. No doubt the topic will be generally dealt with there.

Rate Support Grant (England)

4.3 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Kenneth Baker): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement about the 1986-87 rate support grant settlement and selective rate limitation for local authorities in England.

I have laid before the House today the rate support grant report for 1986-87, together with supplementary reports adjusting grant for 1984-85 and 1985-86. Copies of the reports, the rate limits and other explanatory material being sent to local authorities today are available in the Library and the Vote Office.

The main feature of the settlement is the abolition of expenditure targets and the associated grant penalties. That decision has been warmly welcomed by the great majority of local authorities. It is a major simplification of the grant system.

Our aim is still to bring local authority current spending down to a level that the economy can afford. Though we have a system that gives low spenders a fairer share of grant, we are maintaining strong pressure, even on them, not to take advantage of the abolition of targets to increase spending in real terms.

The aggregate of Exchequer grant will be the same cash sum — £11,764 million — as the figure originally provided for this year. But it is about £400 million more than the amount of grant now being paid for this year, because local authorities are forfeiting £400 million through holdback. The grant which central Government will pay to local government next year will be about 46·5 per cent., which is about the same as the figure for this year after allowing for holdback.

Provision for local authority current expenditure has been set at £22·25 billion. That figure takes no account of the additional provision of £1,250 million over four years, which has been offered if satisfactory agreement can be reached on school teachers' duties and salary structure. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has already said that, subject to the passage of the Education (Amendment) Bill, he is ready to bring forward £37 million from that sum in 1986-87 in order to secure the supervision of schools at midday.

I announced provisional grant-related expenditure assessments — GREAs — on 28 October. They incorporated various technical adjustments. The cities will benefit from changes in the concessionary fares and social work GREAs. The remote shires will gain from changes in the education GREA.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): It is a fiddle.

Mr. Baker: I have considered carefully the many representations made to me since that announcement, but have decided that my original proposals should stand. Individual authorities' GREAs will, however, differ somewhat from the figures issued in October as a result of more up-to-date information.

I am also changing the grant system so that the impact on the rates of every extra pound an authority spends or saves will be much sharper than before. As in past years, the pressure will become more severe if the authority's expenditure exceeds a threshold set at an average of 10 per cent. above GREA.

The important message is that——

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: It is a fiddle.

Mr. Baker: —for all but a handful of authorities, more spending will result in less grant and less spending will result in more grant.

As usual, there are arrangements to limit the impact of distributional changes on individual authorities' grant entitlements. I have also ensured that the changes to the grant system required by the abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils are broadly neutral in their overall effects. If successor authorities carry out their inherited tasks more efficiently, their ratepayers will benefit.

I refer to the rate limitation. In July my predecessor announced the list of 12 authorities selected for rate limitation in 1986-87, together with expenditure levels. In most cases they represented a cash freeze on 1985-86 budgets. Seven of the 12 authorities have now applied to me for a redetermination of their expenditure levels—Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Lewisham, Lambeth, Liverpool and Newcastle. I have considered their applications carefully and in each case increased the expenditure level somewhat, though overall by substantially less than they themselves had sought.

I am today proposing rate limits for those authorities. They have until January to make representations to me about a higher limit if they think it appropriate. Again, I shall of course consider carefully any representations they make.

In five of the authorities, ratepayers should see a cut in their rate bills next year. In all 12, the rates will be lower than they would have been without capping. In 1985-86, rate capping has saved ratepayers in those areas subject to rate limitations hundreds of millions of pounds. They will have good cause to thank us again in 1986-87.

My right hon. Friends the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, and the Secretary of State for Transport are to make separate announcements about precept limitation for the new joint authorities in the metropolitan areas and London.

If local authorities budget sensibly and economically, the average rate increase next year should be no higher than this year, and it could be lower. Higher spending will mean sharply higher rates. That is why local government must stand firm in its wage negotiations, and must implement the many savings identified by the Audit Commission.

My proposals for 1986-87 represent a major advance. I have abolished targets which many of my hon. Friends pressed me to do. I have improved GREs. I have established a clearer relationship between what councils get and what they spend. I have built on the success of rate limitation in 1985-86. I commend them to the House.

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): Is the Secretary of State aware that we welcome the fact that he, not the chairman of the Conservative party, is making this statement? However, does he accept that we cannot welcome what we understand to be the case — that additional information about some cities and towns in Britain has been provided to the press outside the House, and is not in the statement.

Is the Secretary of State confirming that the difference between the settlement announced today and what local authorities need to maintain the present level of their community service provision is a shortfall of £1·25 billion? That is the gap between what local authorities say they require just to maintain existing services and what the Secretary of State is offering. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that we cannot accept that the total grant should be reduced to less than 47 per cent. of local authorities' expenditure from almost 62 per cent., inherited by the Government in 1979? Is he further aware that that reduction, now for the seventh successive year, has meant a loss, in accumulated terms to local authorities, of over £16 billion?

Has not the Secretary of State just announced that once again local authorities are to be penalised for spending in excess of their grant-related expenditure assessments, which are being used for a purpose for which they were never intended? Is not the right hon. Gentleman overriding the proper, considered judgment of all locally elected councils in doing so? If, to quote his statement,

"more spending will result in less grant"

how can he claim to have abolished targets and penalties?

Is the Secretary of State aware that authorities in the metropolitan areas and the GLC still do not know the cost to them of the Government's abolition proposals? How long must they wait before they are told the size of the bill that they will have to pick up, especially given the fact that the Government are now putting through the House legislation to enforce fixing of a rate by 1 April, which we do not oppose. That is a serious problem for many authorities of all political persuasions.

We note the increased expenditure levels given to the seven councils applying for redetermination under the Rates Act. We welcome those concessions, as far as they go, but even they fall short of what those seven authorities believe they need.

Is it not the case that the settlement takes no account of the eventual and urgent need to settle the dispute about teachers' pay? What allowance are the Government making to resolve that problem, as the right hon. Gentleman has produced a settlement that falls so far short —£1·25 billion short—of what local authorities believe is necessary? May I draw his attention and that of the House to the fact that in the 1970s, the Labour Government, to take account of the Houghton settlement on teachers' salaries, increased the rate support grant from 61 per cent. to 66 per cent. of expenditure to give teachers their long overdue salary award? Why do not the Government take the same approach?

In his statement the Secretary of State referred to his announcement on 28 October, when he increased the share of GRE to the inner cities by half of 1 per cent. of the total. Does he not recognise that that is a pathetic increase when set beside the consistent withdrawal of support from the partnership and programme authorities, which totals more than £427 million since 1981-82? Is not the implication of that a continuation of the massive problems of our inner cities and urban areas?

I return to what the Secretary of State said about the application of the Rates Act. Will he tell the House and the local authorities before what date he believes they should apply to him for discussions about maximum rate levels? Does he accept that we cannot agree with the continued fragmentation of the announcement, splitting up announcements by the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Transport and the Home Office, to obscure the full implications of what is

[Dr. John Cunningham]

intended? Will he deny that those arrangements will lead to further cuts and higher rates and fares in many local authority areas?

Will the Secretary of State justify what he said about local authority wage levels in the very week when the low pay unit has said that as many as 30 per cent. of local authority manual workers receive wages that are only at the poverty level? We in the Labour party cannot accept that.

Will the Secretary of State confirm, as the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) seemed to be saying, that what he has announced today is that he intends to maintain pressure on authorities spending below GRE, that is, below what is required to maintain even average services in education, highways and social services and thereby denying people, particularly in those shire counties, the benefit of a decent service, even under Conservative administrations? [HON. MEMBERS: "Too long."]

Will not the statement lead inevitably to higher rates, even if the provision of services can be maintained? Are not the right hon. Gentleman's words about rate levels meaningless when set beside what his predecessor said this time last year, when in the past year rates have risen by more than twice the level of inflation, on average? Is it now not also the case that there is nothing in the statement at all that addresses the real and deepening problems of our inner city communities? For that reason, above all, it should be condemned.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman has asked me many questions, and I shall try to answer as many as I noted.

I refer first to teachers' pay. This point is of importance to local authorities. Exceptionally, if, as a result of the teachers' negotiations for next year, it is agreed that extra provision is made, the education GREA will be increased and there will be a proportionate increase in Exchequer grant. That is to say, there will be more money on the table, if a proper package for teachers is agreed, covering structure and conditions as well as pay.

The hon. Gentleman chided me about the proportion of grant provided by the Government. I remind the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) of the basic figures. The proportion which central Government will be making available to local government next year is about 46·5 per cent. and that roughly corresponds to this year's figure. The hon. Gentleman will understand that in cash terms that will be roughly the same as this year.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the inner cities. A week ago the House debated the inner cities and we were pressed to increase support for the inner cities. The rate support grant settlement that I have announced will increase the grants for towns and cities by about £227 million. That takes into account the extra costs of providing social services in the inner cities, and concessionary fares. I would have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that change.

The hon. Gentleman's first question concerned the overall level of provision. The hon. Gentleman said that, next year, local authorities wanted to spend £1·25 billion more than I had allowed for. That is quite true and I have agreed only £0·5 billion. Once again the Opposition Front Bench has become the spokesman for high levels of municipal spending. The Labour party would give in to every demand for spending made by town halls. If I had given in to town hall proposals it would have meant either higher rates or higher taxes. When the hon. Gentleman presses me to agree to that level of expenditure, he is pressing me to agree to substantially higher rates and higher taxes. The settlement that I have announced today has set out how much authorities can get.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the date on which the rate-limited authorities should make their representations. I would hope that they would be able to make representations to me by 22 January. The whole thrust of this settlement is that if authorities can make economies and savings rates will go down. It is for the councils to find the savings. The hon. Gentleman knows that the Audit Commission has pointed the way. The commission has shown that councils could save over £130 million a year through better vehicle fleet maintenance, £50 million through the cleaning of secondary schools, £200 million through more efficient purchasing and £30 million through more economical refuse collection. When such savings are possible, ratepayers are right to be fed up with weak councils who will not make them.

Mr. Francis Pym (Cambridgeshire, South-East): As someone who has been highly critical of the target system, I welcome the demise of that unfair methodology. Will my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State make sure that the allocations to local authorities bear a closer resemblance to the needs that have been established by these local authorities? My right hon. Friend has a message this afternoon for local authorities, "Spend more and the grant is less, spend less and the grant is more." Can my right hon. Friend say how he has taken that into account in the 1986-87 allocations in rewarding the thrifty, economical, low-spending shire counties, which have demonstrated the good management that they are able to give? How has my right hon. Friend fulfilled the undertakings previously given to these counties?

Mr. Baker: I am grateful for my right hon. Friend's support. We have abolished penalties, targets and holdback. I appreciate the interest he has taken in these matters, especially with regard to Cambridge. Low spenders, under the system announced today, will get their rewards. We have capped the gains of the low spenders, which they will get as a result of this change, just as we have safety-netted the grant losses falling to the higher spenders. The cap on gains will disappear over a period of possibly two or three years. This will allow low spenders to get the full benefits of the change.

Cambridgeshire will get a £74 million grant this year. If we had retained the existing system, it would have fallen to £65 million. The grant that is available to Cambridgeshire next year depends on its level of spending and will be either £75 million, £71 million or £70 million. I remind my right hon. Friend and the House that the level of grant depends entirely on the authorities' levels of expenditure.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Can the Secretary of State confirm that, although he said there has been an increase in cash terms or at least a standstill in cash terms, the reality is that there is a reduction in real terms? This will not alleviate the needs of local authorities. Can the Secretary of State confirm that, although targets have been abolished, there is still

equal complexity and uncertainty? Those who administer local authority finance fear that under this system there will be less opportunity for prediction than in the past.

How can the Secretary of State explain the phrase that has governed his allocations—less spending means more grant—in terms of the inner cities and urban areas? Such places have more need and should have more grant. The two views seem to be incompatible. Does the Secretary of State agree that the figures confirm what everybody has been asserting for months? The gross aggregate allocation to inner cities, the rate support grant and all other funding has been declining gradually and will continue to decline with this settlement and for each year since this Government came into office in 1979.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Member says that the position is less predictable now than in other years. If one has targets and penalties one can say quite specifically what the grant will be. In future the grant will depend on the level of expenditure of the individual authorities. I have set out in the papers available to Members three estimates of different levels of expenditure and grant that local authorities can get. I cannot agree with the hon. Gentleman's last statement that money has been taken away from the cities. In regard to his own local authority of Southwark, it received a grant of about £45 million. In the figures available in the Vote Office the hon. Gentleman will find that next year Southwark, assuming that it will take on responsibilities from the GLC, could get either £66 million or £60 million. This year, as a result of the changes in grades, there is a flow of about £227 million to the towns and cities.

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): Does my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State agree that, as far as I can understand his moderately illuminating statement, it has serious implications both for the rates and services of the shire counties, especially Buckinghamshire? Although I appreciate that the financial difficulties of Buckinghamshire county council are not the fault of my right hon. Friend, they are not the fault of the county council. Can my right hon. Friend say what steps he will take to alleviate its problems?

Mr. Baker: My right hon. Friend will have heard what I said about teachers' pay in reply to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham). It is of considerable importance to shire counties. Buckinghamshire's grant this year is £54 million. If the present system had continued, it would have got only £46 million. It has the chance of getting as much as £59 million, £52 million or £50 million. That cannot be represented as a major withdrawal of grant.

It is in the hands of local authorities to determine how much grant they get. If they can make savings—possible savings have been mentioned by the Audit Commission—their grant will increase. If low spenders continue as such, they will get higher grants, and if high spenders overspend, the money that they sacrifice as a result of overspending will not go to the Treasury, as is the arrangement this year, but will remain in the pool available for local authorities. It is therefore possible that low spenders will get even higher grants than have been estimated in the figures that I have announced.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): Will the right hon. Gentleman explain the following contradictions? He represents a party which believes in public expenditure cuts, but is claiming today that he is not really cutting public expenditure. He says that he is giving more money to inner cities, but he is cutting the total grant while promising his right hon. and hon. Friends that he is giving more money to shire counties. Where will the money come from? He and the Government claim to be on the side of ratepayers, yet he has launched an attack on ratepayers. Without cuts in Government grants, rates would today be 25 per cent. lower. The settlement represents a major attack on ratepayers, especially owner-occupiers, and comes on top of a moratorium on improvement grants for owner-occupiers. Moreover, there has been a fourfold increase in the number of owner-occupiers who, because of the Government's economic policies, are defaulting on mortgage payments.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman says that rates could be much lower as a result of higher grants. Where would the money for higher grants come from? It would have to come from taxpayers. It cannot come from anyone else. I have allowed for an increase of about 4·5 per cent. in the overall level of local government expenditure and provided roughly £500 million. The Opposition Front Bench want an additional £1·25 billion, which is possible only as a result of a massive increase in taxation or a massive increase in rates. There is no other way in which to finance it. The hon. Gentleman mentioned cities. His local authority—Sefton—gets £43 million in grant this year. It could get £56 million, £55 million or £54 million next year.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): That is because of abolition.

Mr. Baker: It includes an increase for abolition expenditure. GREAs for all towns and cities have been increased in recognition of the higher cost of social services and concessionary fares.

Mr. Charles Irving (Cheltenham): I am sure that both sides of the House are extremely grateful to my right hon. Friend for the simple clarity of his statement and the marvellous way in which, 10 minutes before we are to discuss the settlement, we receive 200 pages of simple explanation. As I am an ordinary hon. Member who is not equipped to deal with already complicated circumstances that are unnecessarily complicated still further, can I ask a simple question? I have gone through the technical data used in the calculations for 1986-87. I have dealt with the GREA and multiplied it by the rateable value plus the population and the expenditure estimate. I have looked at the local government finance rate support grant document—the third paper. I shall not go through the others because they are just as simple. I have taken column 1 with the grant-related expenditure and coupled it with the abatement multiplier and the published multiplier. All I am suggesting is that it would be simpler to be told in simple language what the hell the rate will be in Gloucestershire next year.

Mr. Baker: I have great sympathy with what my hon. Friend says. Mr. Edward Pearce, the political writer, said that on these occasions every occupant of my office has to indulge in the verbal sludge of municipalspeak. My hon. Friend indulged in it as well. Cheltenham's grant this year is £1·8 million. Next year, it could qualify for £2·6

[Mr. Baker]

million, £2·4 million or £2·4 million. My hon. Friend's local authority will receive more grant next year than this year.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): As the Secretary of State says that he wants the effect of the abolition of metropolitan county councils to be neutral, will he now answer the question that I put to him on behalf of a delegation of Birmingham Members of Parliament a week ago? Will he confirm that Birmingham city council will take on some additional responsibilities next year as a result of abolition of the West Midlands metropolitan council? Will he also confirm that, as a result of taking on those additional responsibilities, Birmingham city council will receive less money than it would otherwise have received? If the Secretary of State does not agree with that allegation, will he explain why his civil servants have failed to contact the city treasurer to clarify the point, as he promised that they would?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman came to see me with certain other Birmingham Members of Parliament last week. They were discussing estimates. The figures that I have announced today show that the benefit to Birmingham city council due to abolition is 3·7p, which means that its grant is £165 million. Allowing for the allocation of new responsibilities following abolition, it could qualify for grant of £201 million, £185 million or £180 million.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: How does the Secretary of State acquit himself of the charge of sheer political cowardice by reducing the percentage of Government grant instead of reforming the base of local government taxation, to which this party—to which he is meant to belong—has been committed for many years?

Can he deny that he is deliberately fiddling the GREA formula to transfer funds from rural areas to the towns? To be fair, the same happened when the leader of the Social Democratic party was a Cabinet Minister in the Labour Government, which the Liberal party supported, which robbed the Devon rural areas of £49 million. How can the Secretary of State deny that his fiddling of the GREA formula this year is to transfer money in support of the aboliton of the metropolitan councils? Does he not realise that, in so doing, he has destroyed credibility in the GREA system just as he has destroyed credibility in himself as Secretary of State?

Mr. Baker: As for the first question which my hon. Friend asked, I intend to introduce a Green Paper after Christmas——

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: A Green Paper?

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend must be patient. We would like to hear the views of the country and people other than my hon. Friend. It will be a Green Paper on the reform of rates. Regarding my hon. Friend's point about the transfer from shires, this year Devon——

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: What about district councils?

Mr. Baker: I shall come to district councils because the message is even better for them.

This year the county of Devon will receive a grant of £148 million. Under the existing system it would have received a grant of £142 million. Next year it stands to receive a grant of £155 million, £151 million or £150 million. Therefore, Devon is likely to end up with a larger grant.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): That is enough.

Mr. Baker: That is pretty good, but just wait.

My hon. Friend's district council is Mid-Devon. This year its grant is £1·1 million. It would have decreased by £50,000 under the old system. Under the new system it is likely to end up with a higher grant next year than this year.

Mr. Robert Parry (Liverpool, Riverside): Will the Secretary of State now accept that since 1979 the Government have stolen more than £350 million in rate support grant from the city of Liverpool? What will next year's allocation be? Will it not be peanuts compared with this year's allocation? Will the Secretary of State say when he intends to meet leaders of Liverpool city council to discuss those serious problems?

Mr. Baker: In response to a request from the chief executive of Liverpool city council I have already said that I am willing to meet the leader of the council or a delegation from it. The council has set a budget target for 1985-86, so next year it will not forgo grant because of holdback this year. Liverpool city council was one of the city councils that asked for a redetermination of its expenditure level because it is to be rate-capped next year. If I had agreed with its request, there would have been a 27 per cent. rate increase next year. I did not agree with it, and as a result there will be a 15 per cent. rate increase next year.

Mr. John Cartwright (Woolwich): As the Secretary of State commends the Audit Commission, does he recall the harsh comments that it levelled against the waste inherent in a centralised bureaucratic system of control of local authority expenditure? Does he accept that the welcome abolition of the target system would have been even more welcome if he had not retained a tough penalty system based on GREAs, about which local authorities of all political persuasions are worried? Finally, is not the conclusion of the settlement further confirmation of the Government's policy of shifting the burden of paying for local services from taxes, which are basically fair, to rates, which are inherently unfair?

Mr. Baker: Next year the contribution of central Government to local government will be 46·5 per cent., the same as for this year. I thank the hon. Gentleman for his comments on simplification. Next year the system will be much simpler than that this year because grants, penalties and holdback will not exist. Many hon. Members may feel that GREAs are imperfect, but in one way or another the Government must assess the relative needs of individual authorities. As a result, the inner cities can get GREAs per head as high as £800, whereas the shires get GREAs of about £400. That is an attempt to recognise that the social needs of some of our towns and cities must be met through this system.

The hon. Gentleman will know from the figures that Greenwich will, in effect, have a rate standstill because of rate capping next year. However, if the borough of Greenwich had been allowed to proceed as it planned, there would have been a rate increase of 22 per cent.

Mr. Charles Morrison (Devizes): The extra help for our inner cities is welcome. However, at a time when the Chancellor of the Exchequer is talking about scope for tax cuts, not increases, it is a matter of great regret that Treasury parsimony has not allowed my right hon. Friend to treat the shire counties as well as he should have done. On what does he base his belief that rate increases next year will be similar to those for this year, taking account of the fact that the Association of County Councils believes that rate increases in the shire counties could be as high as 20 per cent. in some cases, and will average about 15 per cent?

Mr. Baker: Those were estimates well before the event. During the past 18 months I have learnt that estimates made before the rate support grant settlement are usually much higher than the rate settlements themselves. This year my hon. Friend's county of Wiltshire will receive a grant of £84 million. Under the old system it would have received £79 million. Under the new system it will receive £86 million, £84 million or £83 million. The figures for Wiltshire which my hon. Friend submitted to me show that the county appears to be planning significant growth in expenditure. I was not surprised at that because it is not unusual when a council has the misfortune to be hung and falls prey to Liberal indecision.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): Will the Secretary of State tell the House whether the people of the borough of Islington, exercising their unfettered power through the ballot box, or the Secretary of State and his civil servants doing the Treasury's bidding in Whitehall, know better what the needs of my constituents are and what expenditure should be used to provide services for them?

Mr. Baker: As the hon. Gentleman follows these matters, he will know that successive Governments—any change in the rating system will involve future Governments doing the same—make some assessment of the relative needs of different areas. That must be done impartially. Opposition Members say that I have moved the GREA system, but the consultative process before I changed GREA lasts between six and nine months, and I take representations from the towns, cities and shire districts.

As the hon. Gentleman knows, Islington council did not seek redetermination. Next year the rate decrease for his constituents will be 18 per cent.

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): My right hon. Friend's statement will be greatly welcomed by the people of London, especially responsible borough leaders. How will his settlement and proposals affect London, recognising its special needs, and, particularly, the largest rate-paying authorities—the cities of Westminster and of London?

Mr. Baker: As I have made clear, we have not used what is called the London lever, which can be pulled to divert grant into London. Instead, we have reassessed the GREAs across the country, and taken particular account of those for social services and concessionary fares. As a result, all towns and cities will benefit, not merely London or only towns in metropolitan areas. I, like all my predecessors who have held this office, have had to make decisions about the proportion of grant going to different areas. That is done only after the most lengthy process of consultation. The arrangements that we have made for London will allow all the different London authorities to take over the responsibilities of the Greater London council. The level of rates in London will depend essentially on the economies that can be made by the successor authorities to the GLC.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Does the Secretary of State think that it is right that he or his Department should leak comprehensively the details of the rate support grant settlement and give newspapers far more information than he has provided at the Dispatch Box today? In view of the question from the hon. Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler), will the Secretary of State tell the House whether the report in today's *Financial Times* that at least £100 million of Government grant is to be switched from England's rural areas to London for the 1986-87 settlement, in advance of the 1986 borough council elections, is correct? Is that not a Government bribe to stop the disastrous consequences that — *[Interruption.]* No, we are grateful for every penny that we can get. Is it not a bribe to try to stop the Conservative party suffering badly at the ballot box in 1987? Will the right hon. Gentleman admit that he has not the faintest idea about how much money boroughs will have to pay out to compensate for the shortfall in GLC funding?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman is insensitive and has the brass neck to talk about allocation of money on political grounds. As chairman of the GLC he knows that during the past few months the GLC has been dishing out money to its political friends in inner London on an unprecedented scale. I repeat that I have purposely not used the London lever. The needs of all towns and cities have been assessed through GREAs. London will benefit by about £220 million, the metropolitan areas by about £80 million and other towns and cities——

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Who gets less?

Mr. Baker: The money comes from the holdback operating this year. That is why the allocation has been made.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Cutting through the arcane arithmetical dexterity so splendidly exposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Irving), will my right hon. Friend, as a reasonable man, lay his hand on his heart and confirm that his proposals regarding Cambridgeshire cannot be used in future as an excuse for mismanagement by the Liberal-controlled Cambridgeshire county council?

Mr. Baker: Yes. In the recognition of towns and cities, the grant for the city of Cambridge will increase. This year, South Cambridgeshire, which covers most of my hon. Friend's constituency, will receive a grant of £324,000. Under the existing system, next year his council would have dropped out of grant and received nothing, but now it is likely to receive more than £200,000.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): Will the Secretary of State confirm that he is maintaining the Government's share of local authority expenditure at about 30 per cent. less than it was when Labour was in office? Does he accept that that means that business and industry bear an extra £2,000 million burden? Will he quantify the number of jobs that that has cost? How does he reconcile that with

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

the fact that the Secretary of State for Social Services is to impose on the poorest of the poor a burden of £70 in contributions to the rates?

Mr. Baker: The progressive reduction in the amount of grant from the Exchequer to local authorities was mentioned in the debate a week ago and has been mentioned many times in the past. The biggest cut was made by the former Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1966 to 1969. There was nothing sacred about 1969. We have reduced the grant progressively because we believe that that enhances local accountability.

The hon. Gentleman's implication is that the towns and cities have been starved of expenditure. I remind the hon. Gentleman of the point that I made yesterday and last week. In the seven most deprived inner cities of Britain, local government current expenditure was £700 million when we came to office, and this year it is £1·4 billion. That is double the amount and an increase in real terms.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): My right hon. Friend will recall that at the beginning of the pantomime season last year, so graphically illustrated by my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Irving), there was a dispute between us about the size of Cleveland. An hour and a half ago I checked on that. Twelve months later his Department has still not resolved that dispute, so I have no idea how it could resolve the rate support grant. Will he repeat his promise of last year that when he discovers that his Department has got it wrong, the shortfall, which was denied last year and will be denied next year, will be made up to Cleveland?

Will he also examine the Rate Support Grant (Reduction in Rateable Values) (Specified Percentages) Regulations 1985? In Langbaurgh, which has lost the ICI and Shell plants, the rateable value has fallen, but it will be swept up in the 2·5 per cent. safety net. Cleveland as a whole will not be. My constituency will receive a grant of 1·7p because of the 2·5 per cent. safety net, but it will lose 2·8p because Cleveland does not fall into the net.

Mr. Baker: The answer to my hon. Friend's first and second questions is yes; to the third that I will re-examine the matter; and to the fourth, that I shall check his figures.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Is the Minister aware that his announcement is a recipe for disaster in local government? It will mean a vast increase in the rates, a vast reduction in services, or both. How does the Minister propose to overcome the fact that, by abolishing the counties, the services granted under section 137 will be passed to local authorities, but not the money to deal with them? The recalculation of section 137 will mean that Barnsley will receive only a third of the present grant. What will happen to the fire service? The Minister's predecessor gave a categorical assurance that the fire service would not be reduced. What can the Minister say about the hundreds of men who will be forced to leave the fire service because it cannot be paid for? What about the fire cover that is essential for those areas?

Mr. Baker: Later today my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will be announcing the expenditure level and rate limits for successor authorities with regard to fire services. Undertakings given during the debate will be fulfilled.

The Widdicombe inquiry is examining section 137, and I do not wish to anticipate its recommendations. I appreciate that some areas are in difficulties because of the recalculation. I am considering the matter.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Does my right hon. Friend accept that gobbledegook and incomprehensibility are rarely the hallmarks of good government? This makes the Schleswig-Holstein problem appear positively kindergarten. Will my right hon. Friend tell the House that the needs and prudence of South Staffordshire have been recognised in the assessment?

Mr. Baker: I have said before that the whole system of rate support grant is Byzantine in its complexity.

Dr. Cunningham: I said it.

Mr. Baker: We have both said it. Although the House cherishes this statement once a year, it might be better to issue the figures so that hon. Members and the authorities can absorb and analyse them.

South Staffordshire's grant this year is £686,000. If the system had not been changed, it would have dropped by about £200,000 to £437,000. South Staffordshire is eligible for a grant ranging from £600,000 to £650,000, which could be more if the economies recommended by the Audit Commission were made.

Mr. Robert Kilroy-Silk (Knowsley, North): However complex or Byzantine, one fact stands out. During the years, the Government have massively reduced the proportion of authority expenditure that is provided by central Government. That reduction has been directed disproportionately at the poorest local authorities representing the most deprived areas. Do not those proposals, coupled with those announced yesterday by the Secretary of State for Social Services, represent a massive, sustained and vicious attack on the poorest people for the benefit of the rich and privileged?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman is indulging in pre-selection rhetoric. The increase in grant in his constituency will be significant, after allowing for the transfer of responsibilities from Merseyside county council. In current expenditure in 1979 and current expenditure this year in all the metropolitan areas, the towns and cities and the partnership areas, there has been an increase in real terms of 7·5 per cent.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I shall ask no question about Byzantium or Schleswig-Holstein, but I wish to know about somewhere nearer home. It is like walking through a sea of treacle to get to the figures on Birmingham. Am I right in assuming that Birmingham will get a little more, at least for the grave problems that it faces, or have the targets been drawn so hard that the noose will be so tight on an authority which, although regrettably Labour-controlled, has been pretty responsible—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] Not very, but pretty. Will we get more money to deal with those problems, or shall we unleash militancy upon all cities because justice is not done to those with the greatest problems? Can my hon. Friend tell us how much we shall get? But please do not tell me yet.

Mr. Baker: I shall try to thread my way through the maze of figures for Birmingham. This year, its grant is £165 million. Had we not changed the system, it would have received £158 million. If it were to spend at cash

standstill—that is probably ambitious in terms of a city—it would receive £201 million. Should it spend at 3·5 per cent. above the rate of inflation, it would receive £185 million, and should it spend at 4·5 per cent. above the rate of inflation, it would receive £180 million. Birmingham spends about 6 per cent. below GREA, and we have increased its GREA by 7·5 per cent. If it wishes to spend right up to its GREA, there will be substantial rate increases in Birmingham. But that would mean an increase of about 14 per cent. in expenditure, and I do not believe that the sort of council to which my hon. Friend referred would take such an irresponsible decision.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): The Secretary of State seems to have achieved the biggest miracle since the loaves and the fishes, inasmuch as he has reduced the total money available, but every place mentioned so far has received more.

Does the right hon. Gentleman remember a brief visit to Bradford at the end of November? Does he recollect being told that there is a belief in the city that, since we took legal action against his Department, it has undertaken a vendetta against Bradford? How can he reconcile the amount of grant paid to Bradford — a city whose population will increase by 10 per cent. during the next 20 years, and which faces a massive unemployment crisis and serious problems in the housing and education services?

Mr. Baker: I remember my visit to Bradford, and I refute completely the allegation that my Department is undertaking a vendetta. That is extravagant and absurd language, as the hon. Gentleman well knows. This year, Bradford will receive £107 million. Next year, it is likely to receive a grant of about £125 million. I admit that a large proportion of the increase is due to abolition. The hon. Gentleman will know that the urban programme for Bradford is worth between £4 million and £5 million. I have shown my readiness to approve further sums for Bradford if it introduces schemes for redeveloping the city centre.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the increase in grant for Havering—a law-abiding authority — is almost the lowest in London, despite the fact that it will also have to take on many new responsibilities after the GLC is abolished? Will my right hon. Friend comment on the operation of the concessionary fares calculation, under which the cost of a statutory scheme in London from next April, which will be about £2·7 million to Havering, is met by a GREA of no more than £1 million?

Mr. Baker: I shall have to check the calculation for a specific borough, but I can confirm that the grant to Havering will be higher next year. I accept at once that that is a reflection of the services that it will have to take over form the GLC. But after discussing the matter with authorities in London, I am convinced that they will make substantial savings, because the grants that I have announced for London assume a continuation of expenditure at broadly the level of this year. If savings can be made, the position of the successor authorities will be much better.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. A statement on Wales will follow this one. I shall allow questions on this statement to continue for 15 minutes, and, if questions are brief, I hope that everyone can be called during that time.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Will the Minister admit that his bland and smiling effrontery in the face of misery and poverty is nauseating? The industrial city of Sheffield has more old people than any city in Britain and is doing its utmost to supply services to ordinary folk. How can the Minister and Conservative Members — the Conservative Benches are full of consultancies, wealth and directorships—have the nerve to say that the Government will cut our services while pouring wealth into their pockets? How does he expect us to explain to our people, in the face of that, that this place is hardly worth inhabiting?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman has come to the House on the wrong day for the wrong debate. He should have been here for the debate yesterday——

Mr. Flannery: I was here yesterday. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Baker: My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House says, "We did not want him there."

There will be an increase in grant to Sheffield. I accept that it will have to take over some of the responsibilities of South Yorkshire county council. The latter was rate-capped last year. If the hon. Gentleman wishes me to extend rate capping to Sheffield, perhaps he will let me know.

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): Unlike members of the press, I was not privy to this information in advance, so I had to make some quick calculations. Will my right hon. Friend explain why Hillingdon—a good Conservative authority—will lose about £9 million in grant, which will mean an 8 per cent. increase in rates if it is to stand still? That does not take into account costs after the abolition of the GLC. Is that not disgusting, and is it not a great shame for the ratepayers of Hillingdon? Should not the Secretary of State and his civil servants be ashamed of themselves for treating us in this way?

Mr. Baker: I recognise the anxiety of my hon. Friend and the other two Members who represent Hillingdon about this matter, but I regret to say that Hillingdon is likely to get less grant next year. That reflects its relatively high expenditure——

Mr. Dicks: Because of Labour councils before us.

Mr. Baker: That is absolutely right. However, a further reduction in spending—I can put this to my hon. Friend, who is a member of that council—will increase its grant significantly on top of its lump sum receipt of more than £4 million from the London rate equalisation scheme.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): Which authorities will receive a smaller percentage of the global sum available as a result of those changes?

Mr. Baker: That is a broad question. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will study the figures. This year, Cornwall will receive £77 million. Under the present system, that sum would have fallen next year to £74.9 million. Instead, it could be eligible for £79 million, £78 million or just below £78 million.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the abolition of targets will

[Mr. J. F. Pawsey]

be warmly welcomed by all those involved in local government? What effect will the settlement have on low-spending shire counties such as Warwickshire and on low-spending, careful authorities such as Rugby?

Mr. Baker: I reiterate that the premiums in the new system means that the rewards will go to those councils that can make savings and are low spenders. That is the effect of the abolition of targets, penalties and holdback. There will be a considerable premium for all those authorities that can make savings, because their grant will go up in relation to the savings that they can make.

Mr. Norman Atkinson (Tottenham): On the more general message that the Minister gave earlier to local authorities, will he explain why it is bad for the economy for a person to receive a dustbin through the rates, but a good thing for the economy if he buys a dustbin over the counter of a shop?

Mr. Baker: I can only say, in respect of the question to the extent that I understand it, that those authorities that have privatised refuse collection have always made savings, and the Audit Commission has identified in refuge collection savings of at least £30 million to £50 million a year. Those are the sort of savings available if proper management and controls are introduced into local government expenditure.

Mr. Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): How will the system of caps and safety nets produce the phasing to which my right hon. Friend referred in answer to a parliamentary question from me on 4 December? What is the precise percentage by which Hillingdon's block grant entitlement will fall this year?

Mr. Baker: I shall write to my hon. Friend with the answer to his second question.

On the first question about caps and safety nets, needless to say anything in rate support grant is complicated, but this is one of the more complicated aspects. My hon. Friend has written to me about a different system of capping and nets. The caps and nets that we have introduced will phase out over the years, and that is important because I am anxious to ensure that the gains to the low spenders should come through as quickly as possible.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): Am I right in thinking that Lambeth will lose £7 million-worth of grant if it maintains services next year at the same level as this year? What justification can there be for that differential of £7 million, which is almost as great as the net contribution that the Government make to the inner city partnership funding for that borough?

Mr. Baker: I ask the hon. Gentleman to look at the figures on Lambeth. Matters are always complicated regarding a successor council authority in an abolition area. There is a significant increase in grant for Lambeth, and I have no doubt that there are significant savings to be made in Lambeth. The classic comparison is always between Lambeth and Wandsworth. The savings are there to be made in Lambeth and I believe that, in his heart of hearts, the hon. Gentleman knows it.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that there wil be a widespread feeling of betrayal in the shire counties at today's announcement? Is he aware that many of the figures that he has given consistently show in real terms a reduction in the support for the next financial year? Will he confirm that the shire counties, as a proportion of expenditure, will now receive less than at any time since the new system was introduced? What is the basic, fundamental political judgment that my right hon. Friend has made that has shifted him away from the policy of his predecessors who were gradually shifting resources to the shire counties and away from the inner cities?

Mr. Baker: The fundamental judgment that I have made is that it is right and appropriate to recognise the higher costs arising in our towns and cities for the administration and provision of social services and concessionary fares.

My hon. Friend knows well, because like me he represents a rich and prosperous area—

Mr. Nelson: It is not. Pensioners make up 23 per cent. of the population.

Mr. Baker: The county has a grant of £52 million and will suffer a significant drop down to £41 million under the old system and can then qualify for grants of between £53 million and £46 million. As regards the town of Chichester, my hon. Friend will find from the figures that it has a grant this year of £1·6 million. It would have dropped £200,000 uder the old system and it will qualify for a grant of broadly what it gets this year.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): When will the Secretary of State understand that the so-called overspending authorities such as Burnley are virtually unable to provide adequate service levels to the people in their town? When will he also understand that, if he wants a system based solely on the factor of GREAs, unless he can prove that that system is fair, the foundation on which it is based is false? If he is confident that he is right, why should the Under-Secretary in his Department, who agreed to meet a delegation from the majority group and the Conservative group and officers from Burnley borough council who were appointed to discuss this subject in January, arrange a meeting with the leader of the Conservative group for the week before?

Mr. Baker: That was prudent of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary. Savings can be made in levels of expenditure in towns such as Burnley. We are not asking for draconian savings. When the rate support grant statement was made last year, my predecessor was told that huge staff cuts would be made and tremendous cuts in services. This has not proved to be true. We are asking authorities, particularly the high-spending ones in the northern towns and cities, to run their affairs more efficiently and economically and still provide a service to the public.

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I am sure that many people in Yorkshire, and the city of York in particular, will welcome my right hon. Friend's statement. Would he like in particular to commend those in the Conservative group on York city council who have held back the excessive spending that the Labour leadership wanted? As it is, I imagine that he will confirm that York will do better out of the statement, substantially because the Conservative group held back against the Labour councillors.

Mr. Baker: I confirm what my hon. Friend has said and will also say that that success has been achieved as a result of the efforts by the Conservatives in the city of York. I applaud them for what they have done.

Mr. Eric Cockeram (Ludlow): Has my right hon. Friend noted the widespread concern in the shire counties at the state of rural roads — the cost of which falls disproportionately heavily on a scattered population? The shire counties have not received sufficient support in recent years for adequate maintenance of roads following severe winters. Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that the component part of the announcement today calculated for this specific purpose, allows that maintenance to be made good?

Mr. Baker: Yes, one of the elements in GREA is the maintenance of roads, including their maintenance in severe weather. It also takes into account those parts of the country that are geographically widespread. However, if hon. Members wish to influence the consideration of GREAS, this is done in the spring and summer, when they are being examined by the local authority associations and the council. That is the time to lobby for a particular preference for a particular element of GREA taking greater priority over another. That has been done. I note what my hon. Friend said about the maintenance of roads, and I shall bear it in mind.

Mr. Derek Spencer (Leicester, South): Does my right hon Friend agree that this setting gives Leicester city council the opportunity to learn a permanent lesson from the rate capping of last year, and that, provided that they do not act like town hall Bourbons, this settlement will be in the interests of the people of Leicester?

Mr. Baker: I can confirm that. The towns and cities benefit from this grant settlement, and this could not have been arrived at without taking the action that we took in respect of Leicester last year. I thank both my hon. Friends who represent Leicester for the warm support that they have given me and my Government during that process.

Mr. John Powley (Norwich, South): My right hon. Friend and his predecessors will be aware that, in past years, Norfolk county council has worked its budgets in an economical fashion. It has practised economies and management technique which have kept the rate down to a prudent level. Will my right hon. Friend give me an assurance that past performances in rate support grant, which have not recognised those economies, will be put right this year, after all the sufferings that we have borne because of the rate support grant system deficiencies in previous years?

Mr. Baker: The leader of Norfolk county council has consistently lobbied us about the position of Norfolk county council. I recognise that it is an economical council. If we had maintained the present system of targets and penalties for next year, Norfolk county council would have lost a substantial amount of grant. However, the persuasive arguments of the leader of Norfolk county council—one among many, but a significant voice—led me to believe that we had to abolish targets, penalties and holdback. I have had to stage the gains that will flow to a county such as Norfolk over two or three years; otherwise the losses that would be sustained by many authorities would be too great. However, the gains will come through. I would say to the shire counties, and to Norfolk in particular, that the rewards are there to be taken if they can run economical services.

Mr. Timothy Wood (Stevenage): My right hon. Friend need not, I am afraid, tell me what is Stevenage's grant. It is nothing this year and it is nothing next year. However, Hertfordshire's grant has been reduced by £20 million — by over one third — for the coming year. Hertfordshire can surely not be called an extravagant county. Can my right hon. Friend justify this reduction?

Mr. Baker: It is true that Hertfordshire has not benefited from the GREA changes. However, as with all low spenders, it stands to gain from the abolition of targets and penalties and the consequential alteration to the grant arrangements. We have had to cap the gains that low spenders will get next year from our changes. However, the cap on gains will disappear over a period of years. That will allow low spenders to get the full benefit of the changes that we are making.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that this decrease in the grant will result in a rate increase in Hertfordshire of between 20 per cent. and 25 per cent.? During the last seven years, Hertfordshire has done exactly what my right hon. Friend advised us to do: to see Ministers about the calculation of GREA in May and June. We were given assurances by his hon. Friend the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Local Government that he would make certain that the GREA contained a weighting to protect Hertfordshire. My right hon. Friend has gone back on that arrangement. May I ask him to look again at the GREA calculation? It discriminates seriously against Hertfordshire, which cannot make reductions without very seriously damaging education.

Mr. Baker: I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern about the calculation of GREAs, but he is mistaken if he believes that I alone decide these matters. It is a most elaborate process of discussion, negotiation and calculation in which the officials of the county councils and district councils are involved.

Mr. Wells: But my right hon. Friend ignores them.

Mr. Baker: With great respect to my hon. Friend, we do not ignore their representations.

Mr. Wells: Hertfordshire's representations have been ignored.

Mr. Baker: The point about Hertfordshire is the point that I made a few moments ago: that, if the caps and gains affect Hertfordshire, the effect will be reduced in the course of the next two or three years. The rewards will be there for low spenders.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the home counties are being asked to pay for the abolition of the Greater London council, as follows: Bedfordshire, £10 million; Berkshire, £8 million; Buckinghamshire, £4 million; Essex, £16 million; Hertfordshire, £20 million; Kent, £10 million; and Surrey £14 million? What is the justification for this, and why were we not told before?

Mr. Baker: I reject completely the implication behind my hon. Friend's question. I have already said that I have deliberately not used the London lever—the diversion of

[Mr. Baker]

grant specifically to London. We examined the basis of the GREA calculation. I should not have thought that my hon. Friend would object to the recognition of the higher social and personal needs of our towns and cities, or to concessionary fares. That is why there has been an increase in the grants to the towns and cities.

Mr. Michael Knowles (Nottingham, East): I can help my right hon. Friend on this occasion. I shall say something nice to him, which is more than my hon. Friends have done. Can he confirm that in Nottingham's case the combination of the switch of resources to the inner cities and concessionary fares means that Nottingham city council will be eligible for more grant in the coming year, provided that it holds its spending?

Mr. Baker: Yes, I can confirm that precisely. Nottingham city council will be eligible for more grant. The size of the extra grant that it receives will depend entirely upon the economies and the savings that it can make. If it can make more savings, the grant will be greater.

Mr. Piers Merchant (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Will my right hon. Friend ensure that the greatest vigilance is exercised in determining the level of limitation upon rate precepts in the metropolitan counties so that cities such as Newcastle upon Tyne, with an already very high rate, do not show an increase, bearing in mind that, under today's rate limitation announcement, which is welcome, a suspiciously large rate figure is still allowed for?

Mr. Baker: Newcastle upon Tyne is one of the authorities that is subject to rate capping. If we had not rate-capped Newcastle upon Tyne, the rate increase would have been about 29 per cent. The result of rate capping is that the rate increase in Newcastle upon Tyne will be about 7 per cent.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): I recognise my right hon. Friend's commitment to the inner cities. I recognise also that Leicester will receive at least an extra £2 million in grant. But what financial checks will be made available to ensure that Leicester, as a transport undertaking, continues to provide concessionary bus fares instead of spending excessive further sums on political propaganda?

Mr. Baker: Leicester has spent a very large amount of money upon political propaganda, and, as my hon. Friend pointed out, that money has largely been wasted. This is essentially a matter for the Leicester city council. If it continues to waste money in that way, the result will be that it loses grant.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): Since rate increases this year have risen, on average, by just under 10 per cent. —that is, by 9·5 per cent.—and since the Secretary of State says that the average rate increases next year should be no higher than the rate increases this year, will he confirm that this statement means that he is predicting rate increases of about 10 per cent.?

Mr. Baker: During the exchanges this afternoon, several hon. Members have estimated the rate increases. I would counsel everybody to be very careful about giving credence to estimates that are made today. The level of rate increases depends not just upon the statement that I have made today but upon the reserves and the balances.

Given the grants that I have announced today, and the possible projected expenditure patterns, I have said that the rate increases next year are likely to be of the nature of the rate increases in the current year. I think hon. Members will find that they are rather lower than that. The increase will probably be 7·5 to 8 per cent. However, my point is that the level of rate increases depends essentially upon the budgets that local councils draw up during the next two or three months and upon their ability to make savings.

Rate Support Grant (Wales)

5.28 pm

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Nicholas Edwards): Mr. Speaker, with permission, I wish to make a statement about the Welsh rate support grant settlement for 1986-87.

I am today announcing to the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance the details of the 1986-87 rate support grant settlement. Copies of the text of my statement to the consultative council, together with a number of key statistical tables, have been placed in the Vote Office and in the Library of the House. The rate support grant report has been laid before the House today and will be debated in the usual way. A copy of the report has also been placed in the Library.

This settlement marks an important stage in the process of bringing Welsh local authority expenditure into line with the Government's plans. My strategy for 1986-87 reflects the commendable performance of Welsh local authorities in reducing the overspend against the Government's targets from around £50 million in 1981-82 to £4·5 million in 1985-86. The total increase in rates since 1979 has been kept to seven percentage points below the change in the retail prices index. This success in reining back current expenditure has enabled me to release additional resources for much needed capital investment.

Against that background, the 1986-87 settlement presents a challenge to local authorities in Wales. I acknowledge that in meeting it they will face difficult decisions. They will need to press for moderate pay settlements for their employees and find a way of absorbing any additional costs if they are to avoid taking the easy option of adding to the burden on ratepayers. Pay awards should not lead automatically to higher spending in either the public or private sectors, nor should they be passed straight on to customers. The aim should be to seek to absorb any additional costs through the better use of resources and by achieving better value for money. Good examples have already been set by many authorities in Wales in this respect.

I turn now to the details of the settlement. The main features confirm the intentions that I announced in July, subject only to modifications to reflect the reduced level of interest rates and revised estimates for specific and supplementary grants. The total of relevant expenditure provision accepted for grants is £1,597·1 million. This marginal reduction of £900,000 on the provisional figure announced in July allows for a reduction reflecting the fall in interest rates which has broadly been balanced by an increase in provision for financing additional capital expenditure. The total comprises £1,368·1 million for current expenditure and £229 million for non-current items.

Current expenditure provision — after taking into account the higher level of direct funding in the further education sector by the Manpower Services Commission — is £51 million, or 3·8 per cent. more than the expenditure underlying local authorities' budgets in 1985-86, while the total of relevant expenditure is about £75 million, or 4 9 per cent. more than the comparable budgeted total for the present year.

Aggregate Exchequer grant, as announced in July, will be £1,067 million, comprising £169·4 million for specific grants, £19·6 million for transport supplementary grant, £2·2 million for national parks supplementary grant and £875·8 million for the rate support grants. Domestic rate relief remains unchanged at 18½p in the pound, which costs £25·8 million, leaving £850 million as block grant. After deducting £600,000 for payments to specified bodies, the amount available for distribution to local authorities is £849·4 million.

The aggregate Exchequer grant of £1,067 million is £52·8 million or 5·2 per cent. more than the aggregate Exchequer grant provision in the main report for the current year, and represents 66·8 per cent. of relevant expenditure, as against an effective rate in the current financial year of 66·6 per cent. Broadly speaking, therefore, the level of grant support has been maintained.

The settlement marks the end of individual local authority expenditure targets, which have been abolished for 1986-87. They will be replaced by a tougher block grant system which provides a fairer method of containing expenditure. The precise mechanisms have been developed in close consultation with the local authority associations and in particular take account of proposals put forward by the Welsh Counties Committee. The associations accept this as a reasonable price to pay for moving away from selective controls and for restoring a greater measure of local accountability.

Under these arrangements, for any given increase in expenditure there will be a reduction in grant. This means that a significantly higher proportion of costs will be borne by the ratepayer as spending is increased. Conversely, the new system also offers positive financial rewards to ratepayers in authorities where spending is held down. There will be significant rating benefits for authorities which budget to reduce spending or which increase spending by less than the anticipated rise in inflation.

If local authorities spend in line with this settlement, the amount of grant claimed will equal the amount of grant available. If aggregate spending exceeds the level of expenditure provision, and there is an underclaim of grant, the margin of resources will remain available for local government spending in Wales. I shall await local authorities' 1986-87 budget returns before deciding how any such surplus grant might be distributed. In setting their budgets councils should not assume that they will benefit from the redistribution of any resources released by overspending.

This settlement is a good one for Wales. The increases in relevant expenditure and in aggregate Exchequer grant are higher than the forecast rate for inflation and provide a realistic basis for next year's budgets. Rate increases, on average, need be no more than 3 or 4 per cent. Spending at the settlement level would be the same in real terms as spending in 1979-80. Local authorities can plan ahead secure in the knowledge that this provides the degree of stability in expenditure that they have been seeking.

Both domestic and business ratepayers have the right to expect their local authorities to manage services, on their behalf, in an efficient and cost-effective way. This settlement recognises that right and provides a solid framework for progress. I sincerely hope that local authorities will meet the challenge and the opportunities that it offers for the benefit of the communities which they seek to serve. I ask hon. Members on all sides to support them in that task.

I commend my proposals for the Welsh rate support grant settlement to the House.

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): The Secretary of State, not unnaturally, put a self-congratulatory gloss on his complex statement. Has he forgotten that the overall cut in grant in real terms between 1978-79 and 1985-86 has been 13·4 per cent.? That is a statistical way of saying that local councils have taken a severe financial beating from the Welsh Office.

At the same time, have not the Government permitted a blizzard of unemployment in Wales and permitted the consequential and unprecedented demands upon council services which were grossly underfunded? Is there not now another cut, albeit small?

Have not the Welsh district authorities warned the Secretary of State that the average Welsh domestic rate bill might increase by 8 per cent. or more, and that Welsh county rates increases will be significantly above the inflation rate — so I am informed? The right hon. Gentleman has failed to protect the budget. The local authorities say that we are short of about £27 million to stay level with this year.

Are not district councils in Wales astonished that the right hon. Gentleman has presented a settlement based on grant mechanisms which are so complex that even council treasurers are perplexed? Depending upon the order in which the figures are fed into the Welsh Office computer, does the Secretary of State agree that there will be a change in the grant-related poundages of 1p for 15 councils? Will that system not create problems for certain counties, not least for West Glamorgan? Will the right hon. Gentleman concede that he has espoused an unsatisfactory system? Will he promise next year to adopt a simpler and more equitable approach? Will he call a joint conference to tackle the issues by 1987-88?

The right hon. Gentleman purred with satisfaction at the increase in capital investment. I acknowledge sincerely the increases to which he pointed. They are a most welcome development, but they merely edge towards the levels of previous years. Has the right hon. Gentleman forgotten that, notwithstanding his boast of a £31 million housing increase, the allocation is £60 million down on the allocation for 1983-84—general election year.

Are not local authorities deeply apprehensive about the settlement and their ability to meet pay and price increases? The right hon. Gentleman has presented the settlement in the most favourable light, but has he not masked the fact that authorities might make cuts of 3 to 4 per cent., since the increase in current expenditure is insufficient to keep pace with the movement in costs? Has the right hon. Gentleman forgotten local authorities' difficulties in meeting the pay claims of their white collar staff, the police, the firemen and the teachers, with their end-loading complications and settlements above 5 per cent.? Here is the flaw in the settlement. What extra cash does the right hon. Gentleman have to fund the teachers' increase? Does he have the extra money in the way in which the Secretary of State for the Environment said that he had the money? The House would like a comment from the right hon. Gentleman on the question of teachers' pay.

Will not joint financing schemes with health authorities now come under extremely severe pressure? This settlement will not help authorities to meet the needs of the elderly in the community, remembering that the legitimate demands of the elderly and disabled are increasing hugely year by year. In other words, are the compassionate plans at risk at county level?

Is it not a fact that the sums advanced are insufficient? We find this a depressing statement. Where does it make amends for the savage cuts that have occurred in previous years? Money is not being given back. There is still a trend, for all its dressing up by the right hon. Gentleman, of cuts, and it is backed by a harsh regime. The right hon. Gentleman is not acknowledging sufficiently the crisis of unemployment and bad housing in the south eastern valleys of Wales and in the steel townships. All councils in Wales will be deeply disappointed by his statement.

Mr. Edwards: The hon. Gentleman referred to an overall cut in real grant since the Conservatives came to office. I repeat what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment said in connection with the English statement, that it was a deliberate decision to transfer some of the responsibility for financing local government from the central taxpayer to the ratepayer. I remind the hon. Gentleman that in Wales this year there has been no further switch in that direction. We have maintained the percentage grant. Indeed, we have marginally increased it this year.

The hon. Gentleman talked about a severe financial beating, but in fact both provision and aggregate grant are being increased by more than the expected rate of inflation. He made the usual gloomy and pessimistic rating forecasts. In the period for which I have been responsible, the Welsh Office has had a good record in forecasting the likely rate pattern. There is no reason why, if expenditure is in line with provision and the use of balances is at about the same level as last year, average rate increases in Wales should be more than the going rate of inflation. Indeed, there are a number of counties in which we expect to see rate reducions. Dyfed is one such county.

The hon. Gentleman talked about the complexities of the grant mechanism, and we can agree that the systems are complex. The mechanisms that we are using this year, particularly the system that is replacing the target mechanism that we previously employed, has been designed in close consultation with the local authorities in Wales, and they believe that this is a considerable improvement.

The hon. Gentleman talked about increases in capital expenditure. I am glad that he acknowledges the substantial additional capital provision that we have made, and have made for a number of years, thanks to the way in which Welsh local authorities have been able to hold down current expenditure.

I told the House in the summer that we were now within 1 per cent. of the target that we originally set, which was designed simply to stop the headlong annual increase in spending and to get expenditure back to the level of 1978-79, when the Conservatives came to office, and this settlement should enable Welsh local authorities to do that.

I was asked about pay and price provision. The House must understand that if there are large pay settlements, someone must pay, either through the rates or through a loss of services. From the education point of view I confirm what my right hon. Friend said, in that we have not included in this provision the money that the Government have said will be on the table if there is a settlement that takes proper account of the conditions of services and the other requirements that the Government have made clear are necessary for a settlement of the education dispute. We have made provision for a 7·5 per cent. increase in police pay.

The hon. Gentleman said that cuts of 3 or 4 per cent. might be required. I was not clear what he meant, because cuts in the level of expenditure by local authorities will lead to increases in grant, and I emphasise that if authorities overspend on the basis of this provision they will get less grant. Authorities which reduce their expenditure will get additional grant, and their ratepayers will benefit directly.

I remind the hon. Gentleman that West Glamorgan does well out of the settlement. We expect that if it settles expenditure in line with the assumptions that I have set out, there should be increases in West Glamorgan on the rates bill of about 2·5 per cent. That is below the general level of inflation.

I was asked by the hon. Gentleman about specific services. The way in which local authorities decide to spend their money is for them. They must decide their priorities, but they should remember that they also have a responsibility to the ratepayers who fund them.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): Is not the helpless floundering of the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) the clearest possible acknowledgement of the success of my right hon. Friend in achieving a settlement that is regarded as satisfactory more or less throughout Wales?

Will my right hon. Friend comment on the fact that possibly the greatest threat to ratepayers in Wales comes not so much from Labour councillors, who know that they carry some responsibility in these matters, as from the existence in many counties, and particularly in the county of Clwyd, of a large block of so-called independents, who hold the casting vote and who refuse to make the necessary economies that would enable efficient administration to be carried out at reasonable cost?

Mr. Edwards: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. If the council in Clwyd can limit the year-to-year growth in its spending to 5 per cent., I expect that it will have a similar increase in rates. Indeed, in Colwyn and other districts—for example, in Glyndŵr—I expect that the rates could be held at their present level, or even reduced.

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): How does the Secretary of State equate his statement to the consultative body that local authorities should be expected to maintain services at their present levels with the massive cuts in the nursery school programme approved this morning by Clwyd county council? Will the right hon. Gentleman look again at his statement about the work of the Audit Commission? Is he satisfied that the commission has taken sufficient account of the particular problems of local authorities in Wales in its overall studies of England and Wales?

As for grant-related expenditure, the right hon. Gentleman's Department admits that this is a rough and ready calculation of the relative needs of various authorities. Is it not time that there was a more clearly agreed indicator related to the social needs of areas? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the rent increase of 65p a week will itself be an added burden on many low income families in Wales? Is he also aware that the transport supplementary grant capital spending is totally inadequate to meet the kind of road programme that local authorities in Wales really need?

In relation to the national park supplementary grant, I fully endorse the right hon. Gentleman's statement criticising those county councils and local authorities which are not funding their part of that programme. Will he ensure in future that it is withheld from their overall block grant if they are not prepared to spend that money on their national park functions?

Mr. Edwards: The national parks supplementary grant has been increased by not more than 9 per cent. and that takes account of the requirements being placed on the national parks authority.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the transport supplementary grant, where the system has been changed and the scale of the projects for which grant is provided has been altered. I believe that grant is in line with the assessed needs for grant on the basis of our negotiations with the local authorities.

The hon. Gentleman says that we are dealing with a rough and ready system. Yes, but it is a system that we discuss at great length with the local authority associations and we seek to build into it all the points that they make. We made various alterations this year. It is a basis not for making absolute judgments about the level of services required in a particular area, but for obtaining a fair distribution between the Welsh local authorities. It follows from that that if one authority gets more, it will inevitably have to come from one of the other authorities.

The Audit Commission has spelt out particularly clearly the enormous scope for savings that exist to the benefit of ratepayers from local government in Wales, as in England. The hon. Gentleman referred to expenditure in Clwyd and I have already pointed out that Clwyd has been set a reasonable objective. If he did not refer to Gwynedd, as might have been expected, it is because if Gwynedd county council can limit its spending growth I anticipate that there should be a rate reduction of over 3 per cent. for the ratepayers there.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a Back-Benchers' day so I shall endeavour to call all those who are rising but I ask them to be brief in their questions, please.

Mr. Ian Grist (Cardiff, Central): I warmly congratulate my right hon. Friend on his statement this afternoon. What will its effect be on south Glamorgan, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan? Can he name any authority in Wales which has privatised any of its services and with what result?

Mr. Edwards: Yes, some local authorities have privatised and have begun to show savings. There are significant savings to be made. I know that the Welsh local authorities have been listening seriously to the suggestions put to them by the Audit Commission and I hope that that will lead to further substantial savings.

The south Glamorgan authority made heavy use of reserves in the present year and as a result it is likely to increase its precept above the general rate of inflation. If it spends at a 5 per cent. increase this year we could see an increase in rates of more than 6 per cent. On the other hand, the Cardiff city authority could have a small increase in rates if it holds expenditure levels to that kind of figure. There is a similar possibility of a substantial reduction in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Mr. Donald Coleman (Neath): As has already been said of the English rate support grant settlement, the

[Mr. Donald Coleman]

Secretary of State for Wales' announcement is complex — the most complex yet. There is no doubt that treasurers in Wales will be perplexed.

Is the Secretary of State aware that, for west Glamorgan, there are signs that, despite this announcement today, there will still be considerable increases in rates next year? Will he undertake not to be disposed to penalise the county for taking action that arises directly from the rate support grant settlement?

What provision has been made to help the district councils deal with the considerable problems of local authority housing in Wales?

Mr. Edwards: I have already announced substantial increases in capital allocations, which will make a considerable contribution to the problem of local authority housing in Wales.

I must make it clear that, because of the relative success of Welsh local authorities in holding down their current expenditure and their rate increases in recent years, this is a much easier settlement for Welsh local authorities to achieve than will generally be the position in England. They have been meeting the objectives that we set over a period and they now find themselves in a position where there is a substantial increase above the anticipated level of inflation in aggregate Exchequer grant and in current and relevant expenditure and that position compares favourably with England.

The hon. Gentleman's pessimism about west Glamorgan is misplaced. It may go back to some of the figures that we looked at when we were considering the original proposals for the settlement in the summer. As a result of representations made by the Welsh counties and certain changes in the technical system since then, the position of west Glamorgan has substantially improved and I do not anticipate the necessity for more than low rate increases for districts in west Glamorgan.

Mr. Stefan Terlezki (Cardiff, West): I commend and congratulate my right hon. Friend on presenting us with a good package. It is good housekeeping on behalf of the Principality. Will there be any cuts in services in Cardiff, whether in transport, health or housing, or is he satisfied that we shall continue to go from strength to strength under this package?

Mr. Edwards: There is no doubt that Cardiff is in a position to provide a satisfactory level of services without increasing rates. There is no doubt that it should be able to hold its rate increases to a relatively low level and increase expenditure in line with the increase in costs. However, as I have explained, the impact on the ratepayers of south Glamorgan's decision to use a lot of money from its balances last year will be felt in the rate bills of ratepayers in the area.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): Does the Secretary of State at least recognise that if there is less criticism this year from Labour Members and local authorities it is because the annual reduction, year on year, in the proportion of local government expenditure covered by the Government at last appears to have stabilised, although the cumulative damage over the years since 1978-79 remains?

Does the Secretary of State assume that the sale of council houses has now peaked? Why are Welsh local authorities allowed to retain a smaller proportion of those receipts than their English counterparts?

Mr. Edwards: They are also allowed to retain a larger proportion of receipts of sales of other capital assets. We have taken a decision on the overall balance, taking the allocations into account as well, which we believe is to the greatest possible advantage of Welsh local authorities.

The accumulated damage is that rate increases in Wales have been 7 per cent. below the increase in inflation and we have been able to get expenditure back to the level of 1978-79 at which we can offer stability to the local authorities in Wales. I have told them that if they could meet the Government's targets and objectives they not only had the prospect of being able to give a satisfactory settlement to their ratepayers but they had the prospect of stability, in the knowledge that they would continue to receive the same overall level of provision. We have honoured that undertaking. We have now got to the point where they can look to the future and plan for it with a great deal of confidence.

Mr. Keith Best (Ynys Môn): Is not the Opposition's allegation of complexity designed to camouflage the fact that this is a good settlement and they do not know how to attack it? Is not the message to Welsh authorities that, if they can contain current expenditure, greater autonomy and greater capital expenditure will follow?

Mr. Edwards: Yes. If expenditure is held below our assumptions, there will be additional grant and an even greater opportunity to reduce the rate burden. That is certainly true in my hon. Friend's part of Wales, where there is a real opportunity to reduce rates. I hope that that opportunity will be taken and that there will be a real reduction in rates in Gwynedd.

Dr. Roger Thomas (Carmarthen): How will today's statement alleviate the problems faced by the highways department in the right hon. Gentleman's and my county? Is he aware that Dyfed has one third of the total road mileage in Wales, but that roads are crumbling and bridges are collapsing?

Mr. Edwards: The GREA system takes full account of total road mileage. That is one of the factors on which the assessments are made and the grant distributed after discussion and negotiation with all the counties in Wales. The settlement for Dyfed is extremely favourable and should allow the maintenance of services and a significant reduction in rates.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on obtaining yet again such a favourable settlement for Wales, which is clearly shown by the way in which it has thrown the Opposition. Does he agree that in moving from a system with targets to one without it is extremely important that local authorities do not exceed their targets if they want to secure a better launching position in a tougher grant regime? Does he agree that Clwyd county council especially should heed that point by concentrating on its statutory obligations?

Mr. Edwards: The effect of the new regime for ratepayers will be very severe if there is any excess spending, but the rewards will be substantial if spending is kept down. The system that we have introduced will give real choice to local authorities.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): Why have Powys and Clwyd county councils been singled out for a block grant increase of only 1·8 per cent. when Powys is considering closing 13 schools and decimating the education system? How will the settlement ease that situation?

Mr. Edwards: When the hon. Gentleman last made accusations about decimating the education system, which was during an election campaign, he falsely invented the threatened closure of a school. The allegation is equally false today. Powys comes out relatively badly because it is a relatively high spender in relation to GREA, but its ratepayers have relatively low rate bills. The hon. Gentleman should consider the rate bills being paid and the level of expenditure in relation to GREA.

Mr. Gwilym Jones (Cardiff, North): I am sure that my right hon. Friend's abolition of individual targets and the provision for expenditure increases above the likely rate of inflation will be warmly welcomed, but my constituents are apprehensive about excessive rate increases by South Glamorgan county council. My right hon. Friend has twice mentioned reductions in balances by that council this year, which had been called for on many occasions by my right hon. Friend and others, but this was a county council election year. Now that an election is no longer in prospect, what action does my right hon. Friend contemplate to encourage the council not to go in for excessive spending which will result in excessive rate increases for my constituents?

Mr. Edwards: My hon. Friend has given the answer himself. There is no doubt that excessive spending will result in high rate increases. Electors in the area must understand that that will be the result of decisions taken by the local authority.

In an earlier answer, I referred to getting spending back to the year in which we took office. I should have referred to 1979-80, not 1978-79.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): The Secretary of State talks approvingly about reining in current expenditure, but should he not make it clear that that means cutting nursery education, provision of school books and other educational materials? Does his statement not also assume that the teachers' dispute will drag on and on?

Mr. Edwards: No, it means none of those things. It means that local authorities have choices to make. It means that when there are substantial reductions in the number of pupils, as there have been, local education authorities must adjust provision. It also means that we have been able to provide substantial additional capital resources for local government in Wales as a result of holding current expenditure. The hon. Gentleman does no service to anyone by making suggestions of that kind.

Mr. Robert Harvey (Clwyd, South-West): I warmly congratulate my right hon. Friend on his statement. Will he confirm, however, that it does not allow for any increase in teachers' pay beyond the current guidelines put forward by the Government?

Mr. Edwards: The position was clearly spelt out earlier by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. Any settlement which does not meet the Government's condition that it must be related to terms of service and assessment is not provided for in the arrangements that we have made. If an acceptable settlement were reached, however, there is scope for additional money to be placed on the table by the Government. That has always been our position. Those resources are not built into the settlement that I have put to the House today. My right hon. Friend spelt this out precisely and in some detail. I refer my hon. Friend to that statement.

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): Does the Secretary of State agree that the best that can be said of the statement is that it does not impose any immediate further burden on Welsh authorities? Does he also agree, however, that when the current round of pay negotiations is completed and the teachers' dispute is ultimately settled there will undoubtedly be further pressure on Welsh education authorities and district councils which will inevitably mean more cuts and further reductions in services as the year unfolds?

Mr. Edwards: I do not think that it means more cuts at all. Far from being the best that can be said, it is clear from the questions asked today that the hon. Gentleman's initial comment is about the worst that could be said about the settlement. The Opposition have worked themselves up as much as they can, but they cannot make out that it is other than a good settlement.

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that, having used jackboot methods to control local authority expenditure in Wales for six years, in his statement today he anticipates wholly unrealistic percentage rises in wages and salaries?

Mr. Edwards: If the hon. Gentleman believes that local and central Government should automatically endorse and pay every claim and settlement that is made, he believes that we should return to a period of uncontrolled inflation which might indeed be the precursor of the jackboot, as it has been in the past. The most disastrous thing for a free society is uncontrolled inflation.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): What will be the impact of the settlement on the 18,000 people in the Rhondda valley who are wating for improvement grants?

Mr. Edwards: I made a separate announcement about increased capital allocation for Welsh authorities. The hon. Gentleman already knows what that settlement is.

Westland Helicopter Company

6.9 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 10, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the future of the Westland helicopter company and the importance of that company to our national defence interests."

Since the statement by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on Monday, new facts have emerged and new developments have taken place. I submit that the matter is clearly specific as it relates directly to a company which for many years has supplied military helicopters to the Ministry of Defence and the armed services of the Crown. The matter is important as the success of Westland is crucial, not only to the company's thousands of employees and its shareholders but also for the defence of this country. Its future is now at a substantial risk.

The matter is also urgent, because decisions that could be irreversible and damaging to the national interests are now imminent. I submit that this matter should now take precedence over other business. We have had competing and conflicting statements from two Cabinet Ministers, we are about to go into recess, and it is vital that before doing so the collective voice of this House — even if the Government do not have a collective voice—on such an important matter should now be heard.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the future of the Westland helicopter company and the importance of that company to our national defence interests."

I have listened with great care to what the right hon. Gentleman has said, and he knows that my sole duty in considering an application under Standing Order No. 10 is to decide whether it should be given priority over the business already set down for this evening or for tomorrow. I regret that I cannot find that the matter he has raised meets all the criteria laid down under the Standing Order; therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

Points of Order

6.11 pm

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would welcome your advice on how we can protect the reputation of this House from what I feel is a serious distortion and misrepresentation of what happened yesterday. You were in the Chair during last night's important debate on Members' interests. I seek your advice on a press release — which may be in contempt of the House—that was issued by the leader of the Liberal party. It is entitled "Double standards anger Steel", but I should point out that the release seems to be devoid of any standards whatsoever. In it the right hon. Gentleman states:

"MPs voted . . . against a call by Mr. Steel and SDP leader Dr. David Owen for the amounts"

earned

"to be declared"

in the register.

Will you confirm, Mr. Speaker, that in making this important clarion call, neither the leader of the Liberal party not the leader of the SDP voted, spoke or even appeared in the Chamber? Will you also confirm — because this is important for the standing of this House —that the only member of the alliance who did speak had not even signed the amendment that he regarded as being of such importance? Will you further confirm that, when it came to a vote on sanctions to implement the register, a mere handful of alliance Members were among the 128 who voted in favour of it?

The right hon. Gentleman also says in the press release that we apply different standards and that "they"—the House but not he or his party—

"did vote for a register for journalists"

and

"broadcasters".

Will you confirm that not one alliance voice was raised against that motion and that not one alliance vote was registered against that motion? Is not the right hon. Gentleman deliberately overlooking the fact that the House unanimously agreed to ask the Select Committee to investigate as a matter of urgency the declaration of amounts?

The press statement ends by accusing the rest of us of "damaging the standing of parliamentary democracy". Would not you agree, Mr. Speaker, that the leader of the Liberal party has done a grave disservice to this House and that his distortion has damaged the standing of the House of Commons and parliamentary democracy? Out of respect for you, Mr. Speaker, I shall not call the leader of the Liberal party a pathetic hypocrite, but I am entitled to my thoughts.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let me deal with one thing at a time. It was my impression that last night's debate—I am sure that anyone who was present and heard it would agree—was in the best traditions of our parliamentary debates——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. As to what was said and who voted or did not vote, that is all recorded in *Hansard* and in the Votes and Proceedings of the House. It is not a matter for me.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. A right hon. Member of this House has issued a press release complaining about action that is damaging to this House, even though he was not present and did not vote. I understand that he and his right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) were appearing on television and earning fees. Such behaviour is bad for this House. We are used to being misrepresented by the Liberals within our constituencies, but surely you can do something to protect the reputation of this House.

Several Hon. Members *rose—[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members should not wave order papers at me. I am not responsible as Speaker of this House for press releases that are issued. That is not a matter for me.

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): I shall happily supply you, Mr. Speaker, with a copy of the press release, and I am sure that you will find nothing in it that is out of order. However, there is another tradition in the House——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): What about the British School of Motoring? Declare your interest.

Mr. Steel: —that if one hon. Member raises an attack against another, he gives notice. I received no such notice, but nevertheless word reached me.

I do not raise with you a point of order as to why the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), in whose name last night's motion stood, did not vote; neither do I ask where the leader of the Labour party or the leader of the Conservative party were. The hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) has given the game away. They are consumed with jealousy because my right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and I were at 10 o'clock last night appearing live on ITN—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. A point is being made to me, but I cannot hear it.

Mr. Steel: In response to sedentary interjections, I should add that we did so without fee, which would have been declared had their been one. As for only one member of the alliance speaking, I am not aware that it is normal for more than one member of our party to be called. As for those who voted on the amendment last night, 64 per cent. of members of the alliance parties were present but only 22 per cent. of members of the Labour party.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. This is a Back-Bench day and many Back Benchers wish to speak in the debate. It would be perfectly legitimate to raise these matters during the next debate when hon. Members may put it to the Leader of the House that the House should not adjourn until we have debated Members' interests all over again. We cannot have a re-run of last night's debate during points of order. I am not prepared to allow that.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: If it is a point of order.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Will the House not hear points of order?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member can raise a point of order, but we must not have a re-run of last night's debate.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I do not want a re-run.

Mr. Speaker: I shall hear the point of order.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I would never challenge your judgment, Mr. Speaker, as you know. I wish only to ask for your humble guidance. *[Interruption.]* It is a small humbleness, then.

I want to ask what you meant, Mr. Speaker, by the "best traditions" of parliamentary debates, in which most hon. Members fully believe. I thought that, on a private Member's day, if hon. Members put their name to a motion and that motion is then called in this honourable House, as two of the so-called leaders of the so-called alliance were, it would be more proper if they were here attending to their duties and your call, Mr. Speaker, instead of earning seventy-five quid plus a taxi fare.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) has given me notice that he wishes to raise a point of order.

Mr. Davies: I wish to raise a different matter relating to events yesterday before the cause of the points of order which have been brought to your attention, Mr. Speaker. I draw your attention to the remarks recorded in column 161 of *Hansard* during the exchange between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). In replying to a question by my hon. Friend, the Chancellor stated:

"He poses"—

referring to my hon. Friend—

"as the man who got things moving . . . Listen to this. He did not even start — *Hansard* will show that this is so — his seemingly unending series of allegations until after my statement of 17 July informing the House that the fraud squad had already been called in."—*[Official Report,* 17 December 1985; Vol. 89, c. 161.]

There is a clear implication in the Chancellor's statement that when he made his statement on 17 July he had not been pressed, encouraged or questioned by any other hon. Member. That is not true.

On 23 October 1984, my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) raised questions with the Chancellor. On 11 November 1984, my hon. Friend raised a question with the Attorney-General and called on him to request an inquiry by the fraud squad. Other hon. Members, including the Opposition spokesperson, my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald), and my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch raised questions with the Chancellor. My hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock wrote to the Prime Minister asking her to set up a special committee of inquiry. The reply to that letter was made five days before the Chancellor's statement. The Prime Minister declined that request for a special inquiry.

I submit that yesterday's events, as recorded in *Hansard,* are inaccurate. They clearly show the Chancellor's intention to imply that he had not been

[Mr. Davies]

pressed by other hon. Members into taking action on the banking allegations. Will you use your good offices, Mr. Speaker, to encourage the Chancellor to make a statement in the House so that the record can be put straight?

Mr. Speaker: What I can confirm is that *Hansard* faithfully recorded what was said in the House. I accept that the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who raised a point of order on this subject, reminded the House that he had tabled a question on 23 October. I am sorry that I did not manage to fit the hon. Member for Bolsover——

Mr. Skinner: It was 1984—that is the important point.

Mr. Speaker: —into questions yesterday.

Mr. Skinner: I know that.

Mr. Speaker: I said to him that, by good fortune, this subject had come up in the ballot for the Consolidation Fund debate. I gave him an undertaking that he would be called in the debate.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry that I have to make this point. Yesterday, I was the first Member—I do not wish to discuss Members' interests; I am raising a point of order—to raise with you, immediately after the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) had sat down, the question of the absence of the six right hon. and hon. Members. You said to me——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have dealt with that matter. We cannot discuss it further. Is the hon. Member referring to the debate on Members' interests?

Mr. Adley: I am referring to what you said to me yesterday afternoon during the points of order.

Mr. Speaker: We dealt with that yesterday afternoon.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You referred to the fact that *Hansard* faithfully records the truth. Will you confirm that *Hansard* records that the Liberals did not call an amendment yesterday for compulsory registration of Members' interests? *Hansard* records only an expression of belief in recommendations and makes no reference to compulsory registration. The amendment on compulsory registration was mine and it was not backed by the leader of the Liberal party or the leader of the Social Democratic party. Will you confirm that point for those outside?

Mr. Speaker: I can confirm that the Liberal party, as the House well knows, tabled three amendments yesterday. I was able to select only one for debate. I can confirm also what the hon. Member says about his amendment.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Skinner, as a compensation for yesterday.

Mr. Skinner: If I or any other hon. Member wanted to raise the issue of double standards with respect to the leader of the Liberal party or the leader of the Social Democratic party, there is a way of doing so, as you have said, Mr. Speaker. An hon. Member can write to the Privileges Committee. I should like to know as briefly as possible whether, in writing that letter, any Member who is making an application can refer—if these declarations must be made—to a Member's interests? For example, would the hon. Member for Stockton South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) have to declare all his directorships? Would the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) have to declare that he is a representative for Encyclopaedia Britannica? Could we refer to the Japanese car that was loaned for several months to the leader of the Liberal party? Could we find out the amount of the golden handshake that went to the last leader of the Social Democratic party? Could we write in that letter that, although the alliance calls for the elimination of interests, between them the SDP and the Liberal party have 23 moonlighting jobs?

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can clear up this matter for the benefit of the whole House. If there are such allegations, the proper course is for the hon. Member concerned to write to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Members' Interests.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you confirm the idea that *Hansard* is accurate and records what happens in the House? Will you confirm that, in the 31 Divisions this parliamentary year, the leader of the Liberal party has voted 18 times and the leader of the Labour party 13 times? Do you agree that Parliament can only work if hon. Members come to the Chamber?

Mr. Speaker: I shall take *Hansard* and study it during the Christmas Recess.

BILLS PRESENTED

Financial Services

Mr. Secretary Brittan, supported by Mr. Secretary Younger, Mr. Secretary Edwards, Mr. Secretary King, Mr. Ian Stewart, Mr. Michael Howard and Mr. John Butcher, presented a Bill to regulate the carrying on of investment business; to make related provision with respect to insurance business and business carried on by friendly societies; to make new provision with respect to the official listing of securities, offers of unlisted securities, takeover offers and insider dealing; to make provision for securing reciprocity with other countries in respect of facilities for the provision of financial services; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 51.]

Tobacco Smoking (Public Places)

Mr. George Foulkes, supported by Mr. John Maxton, Mr. Roger Sims, Mr. John Home Robertson, Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours, Mr. Clement Freud, Mr. Laurie Pavitt, Mr. A. J. Beith, Mr. George Robertson, Dr. Norman A. Godman and Mr. Alfred Dubs, presented a Bill to limit smoking in public places; and for purposes connected therewith: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 7 February and to be printed. [Bill 52.]

Pensioners' Right to Heat, Light and Communications

6.29 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, South): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to ensure the supply of gas and electricity for pensioner households; to abolish standing charges for pensioner consumers for gas, electricity and water; and to abolish telephone rentals for pensioners.

I thought that we would never reach my Bill. This is the third time that I have introduced it and I notice that many Members are already leaving the Chamber. Presumably they do not wish to discuss the way that the elderly are treated in our society.

The purpose of the Bill is to ensure that the supply of gas and electricity to pensioner households is maintained, that standing charges for gas and electricity and water for pensioners are abolished, and that telephone rentals are no longer charged for pensioner households.

The way in which the electricity and gas undertakings impose standing charges on consumers means that consumers of the lowest amounts pay, in effect, a higher unit cost for the supply of the services than the rest of the community. Yesterday, the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security said:

"The charges reflect the necessary cost of keeping a supply available to the consumer in his own home for 24 hours a day. They cover the maintenance of the connection, meter-reading, accounting, billing and emergency services. The costs arise no matter how much or how little gas or electricity is consumed by the individual householder."—[*Official Report*, 17 December 1985; Vol. 89, c. *135*.]

That may be true, but the effect is that the unit cost of supply for consumers of small amounts of electricity or gas is high. They still have to pay the standing charge irrespective of how large or small the bill is. Members of this place are paying the same standing charge on their salary of £16,000 a year as a pensioner household on a basic pension income of rather less than £40 a week. There is an obvious disparity.

The Government have recognised this in the past and they introduced a rebate scheme for the consumers of small amounts of electricity and gas. So that the standing charge would be no more than half of the bill for gas or electricity. This year, all the electricity boards and gas boards have phased out that scheme on the grounds that it benefited only slightly some pensioner households and operated mainly to support those who own second homes who wish to keep on security lighting or basic heating during the unoccupied winter months. I think that second homes are a scandal anyway, and it is certainly a scandal that the scheme should have been used to assist their owners.

I am suggesting that in future we should abolish standing charges for pensioner households. Society must recognise that pensioners need warmer homes. Secondly, we must recognise that the poverty in which pensioners live arises from the disgracefully low level of the basic pension. The abolition of standing charges is one way of assisting pensioners to alleviate that poverty.

On Government estimates, the cost of the abolition of standing charges for pensioners would be £300 million. That could be well paid for by Government income, which from British Gas was £731 million, £500 million of which was the levy. The other £231 million was paid in corporation tax. The income from standing charges was £600 million for gas and £550 million for electricity. The cost of abolishing standing charges could well be paid for out of reductions in levy payments to central Government. That would mean no overall unit increase in the cost of supplying gas or electricity. Any increase would clearly be disadvantageous to the rest of consumers as well as pensioner households.

We know that water charges have increased considerably over the past year. It is fairly obvious to many of us that the Government are increasing water charges continually, as they are increasing gas and electricity charges, as a prelude to the privatisation of those industries. There is an equally strong case for the abolition of standing charges for water supply.

The Bill proposes that the charge of telephone rentals for pensioners should be abolished. The unit cost of calls for pensioners tends to be high because they make few calls but rely on the telephone as a basic means of communication. They have to pay the same rental as anyone else and, therefore, the unit cost is higher.

British Telecom could well afford to make the concession available to pensioner households. Its profits this year are approaching £1·5 billion, and those moneys have been taken from all our purses.

The proposals which I have outlined would help pensioner households. The House should recognise the poverty in which many pensioner households are forced to live. Secondly, it should recognise that death through hypothermia is a serious problem for many elderly people. Thousands are dying each winter through hypothermia. That happens either because they cannot afford to put money in the slot meter to keep the gas fire alight or because they are too frightened of the size of the bill at the end of the winter quarter. The result is that they do not heat their homes properly.

It has gone six o'clock now and many pensioners throughout the country have already gone to bed because they cannot afford to heat their homes for the rest of the evening. That is the plight of many pensioners. If we wish to do something about the scandal of hypothermia, we should increase the level of the basic pension and recognise that the supply of gas and electricity is essential to pensioner households. The fuel boards should not be allowed to cut off the supply of either. Codes of practice are issued, but they are often weak and vague and need to be tightened and strengthened.

The House must recognise that, as pensioners become older, the need to heat their homes properly increases, even though it is estimated that well over two thirds of pensioners cannot afford to heat their homes to the required level. Their ability to campaign to make people in such places as this listen to them diminishes because of their advancing age and frailty.

We must recognise also how many of our pensioners have suffered. I remind the House that at least two thirds of pensioner households are occupied by women, who are often single. Many of them are suffering badly from the lack of a reasonable pension, which many men enjoy because they had a longer working life. Poverty in old age is partly the result of discrimination during the individual's working life.

During election campaigns, many candidates are approached on the issues of fuel debt and the cost of electricity and gas for pensioner households. I am sure that many who are successful in being elected to this place make promises to do something about these problems. I

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

have been contacted by many increasingly active pensioner action groups throughout the country. They have been writing to their Members of Parliament because they are no longer prepared to be treated as objects of charity and patronised. Instead, they are organising themselves and taking action to improve their circumstances. They have collated an interesting collection of replies from individual Members who support the measure which I am introducing.

I hope that the House will grant leave for the Bill to be read a Second time and will enact it. I hope also that it will do something to change the structure of gas and electricity payments. We are living in a self-satisfied age in which many of us ignore the plight of many pensioners and allow the elderly to die through hypothermia. At the same time, society ensures that they pay through the nose for gas and electricity. The Bill will not solve the problem of poverty among the elderly, but it will go some way toward recognising the plight in which they live. I hope that the House will support it.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Mr. Chris Smith, Mr. Tony Benn, Mr. Dave Nellist, Mr. Tom Clarke, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Harry Cohen, Miss Joan Maynard, Mr. Robert Wareing, Mr. Tony Banks, Ms. Jo Richardson, and Ms. Clare Short.

Pensioners' Right to Heat, Light and Communications

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn accordingly presented a Bill to ensure the supply of gas and electricity for pensioner households; to abolish standing charges for pensioner consumers for gas, electricity and water; and to abolish telephone rentals fo pensioners: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 14 February and to be printed. [Bill 53.]

Adjournment (Christmas)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House at its rising on Friday 20th December do adjourn until Monday 13th January, and that the House shall not adjourn on Friday 20th December until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.—*[Mr. Biffen.]*

6.38 pm

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): I must put it very strongly to the Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons at the very outset of tonight's debate that this House should not adjourn until such time as the Secretary of State for Transport has made a definitive oral statement on the future control and operation of Manchester international airport. It is an extremely urgent matter which has been under consideration by the Department of Transport for many months.

Manchester airport, which is in my constituency, is of paramount importance to my constituents. It is by far the largest employer. The airport's future is, as the House knows, also profoundly important to the north-west region as a whole. It is the major British airport outside London and one of the fastest growing in Europe. Its achievements as a public enterprise for more than 40 years are, by any standards and by common consent, an outstanding success story. That success is now jeopardised by what is widely regarded in Manchester as a most scandalous abuse of political power. It is essential that the House should be put in the picture before we rise for the Christmas recess on Friday.

Earlier this year, Manchester city council, which owns and controls the airport in partnership with Greater Manchester county council, had to face the prospect of losing its partner because of the Local Government Act 1985. The city was not convinced that the airport's best interests would be served by either of the options covered in section 40 of the Act. A joint committee involving 10 local authorities would be unwieldy and unsatisfactory and the transfer of the county's interest in the airport to the passenger transport authority posed even greater problems. The objectives of the airport and the PTA were seen by people of all persuasions to be incompatible.

A concern common to both options was finance. Manchester airport, if it is to consolidate and develop the significant gains that it has made over recent years, must spend many millions of pounds further to develop and enhance its facilities. Neither a local authority nor a PTA-funded structure offered any scope for that crucial commitment to be met.

At the time that the city was considering those options, the Secretary of State for Transport introduced his White Paper on airports policy. It confirmed that the Government's intention was to introduce legislation to enforce the restructuring of local authority airports into Companies Act companies. Paragraph 9.15 of the White Paper confirmed that shares in such companies could be held, initially at least, by their local authority owners. Manchester recognised the undesirability of seeking to restructure the airport twice in little more than 12 months, and so produced proposals to create a public limited company with effect from 1 April 1986.

The proposals had overwhelming advantages: the ability to secure funding on the open market, the involvement of all the district councils in the company's

affairs, the opportunity both further to underline the commercial orientation of the airport and to place the day-to-day management of the company firmly in the hands of the airport's senior management, and leaving the responsibility for strategy and policy development where it would rightly belong—with the shareholders. All the shares were to be held by local authorities, with Manchester city council as the majority shareholder. If the case for that is fairly examined, it will be seen to be wholly reasonable in terms at once of equity, of current law and of the Government's proposals.

The PLC proposals were subsequently agreed by all the district councils in October and they were seconded by the Conservative-controlled Trafford borough council. Yet before the ink on that agreement was dry, a campaign began that is said to have involved the Under-Secretary of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer), to overturn the agreement. The aim was to deny the people of Manchester their undoubted rights in relation to the airport.

Recognising that they had little or no power to intervene, the Government embarked upon a campaign to undermine the proposals that were unanimously agreed by the district councils last October. I am reliably informed that the Under-Secretary of State spoke to Councillor Warbrick, the leader of Trafford borough council, to point out the error of his ways in having backed the October proposals. If the Under-Secretary did so, it was a most scandalous abuse of his office as a Minister, and one for which he must be made to account before the House goes into recess.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, as a Trafford ratepayer, I approached the district auditor and asked him to look into the behaviour of Trafford council in forgoing the asset values that it clearly wants to give to the private sector? Is he further aware that when charges are levelled about a conspiracy reaching ministerial level, that conspiracy actually goes much further—indeed, as high as the Prime Minister, who has been involved in the campaign. The hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Silvester) wrote a letter, a copy of which is in my possession, in which he said:

"The PLC cannot proceed without Ridley's report. Ridley must refuse to approve the present scheme and wait until he has powers under the proposed Bill."

There was never any intention of allowing Manchester city council and the district councils to go ahead with the scheme. It was always planned to sabotage it—the question was: who would sabotage it?

Mr. Morris: My hon. Friend makes an important intervention. I hope that the Leader of the House will examine the document to which he referred. There is a smell of scandal. I have not myself seen all the documents. However, I know that in Greater Manchester there is strong feeling that there must now be an urgent inquiry into a matter which is of the first importance for ratepayers throughout the conurbation. My hon. Friend mentioned his approach to the district auditor, which emphasises the importance of the matter for Trafford ratepayers. I hope that the Leader of the House will not minimise the importance of this very serious matter for Greater Manchester ratepayers as a whole.

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): This is an important issue. I make the special plea that my right hon. Friend impresses upon the Leader of the House that when we speak about the high finances and the high investment of Manchester airport, the lion's share of the investment surely can be claimed to belong to the city of Manchester. It was only in 1974, during the reorganisation, that one tenth was apportioned to Trafford. Is it not important to recognise that, because of the very high investment of the city of Manchester, it would be a travesty of justice if the Government went against the wishes of the Greater Manchester area?

Mr. Morris: My hon. Friend speaks with considerable authority on this matter. For many years before coming to the House he was a distinguished member of Manchester city council. As he said, the airport was conceived and founded by the city council. We owned it and controlled it. We lost half of our property when the Greater Manchester council came into existence. As my hon. Friend said, it would be a travesty of justice if the people of Manchester were to be denied their rightful stake in the premier asset of the region.

Either the Under-Secretary spoke to Councillor Warbrick behind the backs of everyone involved in the matter, or he did not. After the Under-Secretary spoke, as I am informed, to the Trafford leader, the Department of Transport, which hitherto had adopted a constructive approach to the proposals, suddenly became hostile. There is no doubt that the Department's change of approach clearly reflected the Minister's opposition to what had been unanimously agreed by the district councils last October.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the original proposals were, in fact, seconded by the representative of the Trafford borough council, the authority which is now refusing to ratify them? The pressure to refuse to ratify undoubtedly came both from the Under-Secretary responsible for aviation matters and from Back-Bench Conservative Members, none of whom are present this evening. By behaving in such a way, they are directly prejudicing the future of Britain's premier regional airport. Their action is that habitual mixture of spivvery and ideology that typifies the Government's approach to aviation and other matters.

Mr. Morris: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend who is extremely well-informed on such matters. It is eminently true that the Tory leader of Trafford council seconded the proposal that was agreed unanimously by the district councils in October. After the Department of Transport's change of approach, it became clear that Trafford, which had seconded the proposals, wanted to appease the Minister. Trafford council then described the proposals as a sham and demanded that the airport be privatised.

That was the attitude of a council which had seconded the proposals, as my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) said, as recently as October. Its change of attitude shows the extent to which the authority's leadership was pressurised by senior Conservatives. That must have happened; otherwise why did Councillor Warbrick originally second the proposals in October?

I must point out to Councillor Warbrick and his colleagues on Trafford council, and to the House as a whole, that the only sham is the Government's White

[Mr. Morris]

Paper on airports policy. The Government are being grossly misleading when they say that there is no compulsion on local authorities to sell shares in airport companies. Local public representatives took that statement as being honourable and they genuinely tried to put together a package acceptable to all the parties. They now appear to have failed in that attempt, because the Government reneged on their commitment.

Manchester produced a reasoned response, backed wherever possible by expert independent advice, to each of the points raised by the Secretary of State for Transport about the October proposals. The response was intended to secure the best interests of the airport, and the reward has been political manoeuvring of the most odious kind.

There is now nothing but anger and frustration in Greater Manchester about the position in which the airport may find itself as a result of the Government's political intervention. The airport may be forced to work with an organisation which has motivations and concerns which differ fundamentally from its own. There is no certainty that the airport's growth will not be hindered, because the PTA will be severely cash limited. All the districts will also be prevented from participating in the airport. That will be the end result of all the manoeuvring that has taken place behind the scenes. Those who intervened to undermine the unanimous decision of the district councils last October may feel that it is a job well done. The people of Greater Manchester, however, will not forgive them for jeopardising the future of our region's most important asset.

I ask the Leader of the House for a clear undertaking that there will be an oral statement by the Secretary of State on the future control and operation of Manchester international airport, either later today or, having regard to the commitments of northern hon. Members, at the very least tomorrow.

6.54 pm

Sir Philip Holland (Gedling): You may, Mr. Deputy Speaker, find it difficult to believe that I have a very charming eight-year-old granddaughter named Claire. Last summer for her birthday she expressed a wish to see me at work, so my son brought her along one evening to the Strangers' Gallery and I dutifully took my seat in the Chamber.

The business of the House on that occasion was, as I recall, the Report stage of a non-controversial Scottish Bill. I must confess to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the strictest confidence, that I found the proceedings dull and almost entirely incomprehensible. That may have shown on my face because after five minutes in the Gallery my granddaughter said to her father, "Well, I can see him sitting there, but what is he doing?" Her father, accustomed to her penetrating questions, promptly replied, "He is listening to what they are saying so that he will know what to do." That is precisely what I hope my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is doing at the moment.

I hope that my right hon. Friend will consider not pressing his motion today and will bring back a slightly revised one tomorrow that would allow time for a full day's debate — in addition to the business already planned — on the subject of non-departmental public bodies or, to put it another way, quangos. The House would not be entirely hostile to curtailing the Christmas recess by one day so that we might have a full day's discussion on that important subject. We could then formulate a plan for a new initiatitve to provide fresh impetus to the quango cull which presently has all the appearance of running out of steam.

In an effort to persuade the Leader of the House to consider modifying the Christmas recess dates, I should like briefly to explain why the time is ripe for such a debate and why it is of sufficient urgency to justify delaying the rising of the House.

As my right hon. Friend and other hon. Members may have noticed, I have for 10 years enjoyed participating in the sport of hunting that wily, sleekit and sometimes timrous beastie the quango. For the first four years I made little headway, but I occupied my time usefully in studying its habitat, its nature and its psychology. That bore fruit during the next five years. Steady progress was made in reducing the total——

Mr. Robert Kilroy-Silk (Knowsley, North): There are more than when the hon. Gentleman began.

Sir Philip Holland: If the hon. Gentleman will have patience, he may learn the true figure.

Steady progress was made between 1979 and 1984 in reducing the total by more than 700, in spite of the birth of nearly 100 new quangos. The new willingness on the part of Government to open up to public and parliamentary scrutiny the numbers, nature and cost of those bodies was of great importance in that period.

First the Civil Service Department, and later the Management and Personnel Office, published an annual list of public bodies, giving details of revenue from the main sources, the number of appointed "Quangurus" and the emoluments paid to each. That has now become an established annual practice; the latest publication for 1985 was published yesterday and is an excellent report.

More quangos have become subject to the attention of the Comptroller and Auditor General and I welcome that. All quangos are now open to investigation by the departmental Select Committees—though I fear that by and large those Committees seem to have little time to consider such matters as they perhaps do not have sufficient publicity value.

A most important innovation was introduced on 20 October 1981 when the Civil Service Department issued a code of practice entitled "Non-Departmental Public Bodies: A Guide for Departments". That publication was concise and succinct and it gave clear, simple and unequivocal directions and guidelines to Departments and opened up the whole subject to more detailed probing in the House than had previously been possible.

In November 1984, the Cabinet Office, in collaboration with the Treasury financial management unit, published a report called "Financial Management Initiative: Non-Departmental Public Bodies". In announcing that publication, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said:

"Over the next two years, therefore, Departments will be looking, in collaboration with the management of their sponsored bodies, at the scope for improving management and control systems and practices, with the aim of producing progressive improvements in performance." — [*Official Report*, 19 November 1984; Vol. 68, c. *58*.]

My right hon. Friend also said that some bodies needed better systems for setting targets and assessing achievements.

The main programme is due for completion in April 1987. Last year I understood that that would be monitored by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Since then there has been a Government reshuffle and both the Chief Secretary and the Minister in the Cabinet Office have been transmogrified. I fear that such monitoring of the programme as may have been in progress in the spring and early summer may have become lost as a result of the change.

During the past year there has been a marked change of tempo in the quango cull. Apart from a welcome cull of the nationalised industry boards, some lassitude seems to be besetting the Departments in their attitude to and enthusiasm for slimming and trimming the quangos and their numbers. There is also, to put it mildly, an increasing danger of Ministers being beguiled into creating new ones.

After a crescendo of activity for five years from 1979 to 1984, there has ensued a mere trickle of 28 abolitions during the past year. That has been recognised to some extent by the Management and Personnel Office, which produced a much larger edition of the code of practice three months ago. However, with my suspicious nature, I believe that in that context a larger code of practice might just mean a more verbose one. My cynicism tells me that it could just possibly be a great Whitehall ploy to smother its objectives under such a cloak of verbiage as to dilute and diffuse the guidelines so that the discretion of those whose task it is to interpret them may become unlimited.

Therefore, the appearance of waning enthusiasm for the quango cull, suspicions about the long-term aspirations of Ministers and their Whitehall advisers and what seems to be a growing threat of a return to the old order—that is to say, a reversion to the 1978 status quo—create the need for early consideration of those matters by the House.

I ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to think carefully before he seeks the approval of the House for the motion. If he cannot find time for an early debate on quangos, I hope that he will seriously consider reducing our Christmas recess to make such time available.

7.1 pm

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): I should like to use this opportunity, which is made available by this semi-unique occasion, to draw to the attention of the House a tragedy that is developing in my county. I believe that I should be failing in my duty if I did not raise the matter on the Floor of the House before it goes into recess. The subject is the great difficulties faced by the Cornish tin industry.

Some 3,000 families in my county will have their Christmas ruined because of the doubt, anguish, fear, worry and speculation created by the current situation. I should like to put a simple question to the Government. In the final analysis, will they offer financial support to the Cornish tin industry? I am not pushing for specific details tonight of any particular scheme, but pleasure could be restored in many households if the Government said tonight, or at least before the recess, that assistance was forthcoming. Alternatively, will the Government take the risk of seeing the end of 2,000 years of extracting tin from my county? Will the only tin industry in the world to be shut down be the one in Cornwall? Are the Government willing to take that risk? That is the scale of the risk, and of the fear and despair in our county.

When one considers what has happened, one can understand the amazement of some people at how the situation has arisen. Just seven weeks ago, tin was being freely traded on the London metal exchange for £8,500 a tonne. At the turn of the year, it was being traded at prices that were sometimes over £10,000 a tonne. The industry announced its largest output this century in terms of quantity of minerals; not cash value. Various mines were developing their facilities or seeking planning consent to develop new mines. In my constituency, Concorde and Cligga are both in various stages—one is developing and the other is seeking consent to develop.

The prediction in my part of the country that the world demand for raw materials must lead to a redevelopment of hard rock mining in Cornwall seems to be coming true after a decade of steady and apparently never-ending progress. Tin, silver, zinc and lead are mined in large quantities, and the county is likely to produce tungsten in the not too distant future. The key to all those minerals is tin, because it is the most valuable mineral, and in every mine tin is a part of what is produced. If the tin goes, the rest of the industry goes as well.

To date, the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry has met two delegations, in which the hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) and myself took part. Neither of us would complain about his attitude. He listened with interest to our account of the peculiarities of the mining industry in the far south-west. I do not think that the Minister would complain if I paraphrased his reply to us. Basically, he said that the Government were actively trying to sort out the international tin agreement in the International Tin Council and trying to get people involved, so that they faced their debts and responsibilities. He said that when the Government had done that, they would try to look at the situation in Cornwall.

Trading ceased at the end of October. It might start again in early January, but it will not start before then. People to whom I talk in the industry believe that a much more likely date for tin trading to start is early in February, which represents three or four months' uncertainty. When the trading restarts, there will be another three or four months' uncertainty until the price settles down to a price that is likely to be sustained for a substantial period. If nothing more than that happens, substantial parts of the industry will be eradicated by that time. Not many in the industry would doubt that. Geevor mine in the constituency of the hon. Member for St. Ives has given four fifths of its employees provisional notification of redundancy. Other mines—Wheal Jane, Pendarves and South Crofty—are big and play a major part in the local economy. They are currently taking decisions and wondering what will happen.

Mining is not a lame duck industry in my county—far from it. Last week ECLP, a china clay company in my constituency, declared a profit of £75 million this year. I estimate that about £50 million of that profit was made by exploiting the clay deposits in my constituency. If other extractive industries in Britain had the record of mining that my county has, we would have fewer financial difficulties.

The tin industry is in an area of endemic unemployment. I do not want to bore the House with figures, but I shall reel out the male unemployment figures in the travel-to-work areas most affected, so that one gets the feel of the local situation. In Falmouth, the figure is 24·9 per cent. in St. Ives and Penzance 26·1 per cent., in Redruth 22·8 per cent. and in Helston 23·6 per cent.

[Mr. David Penhaligon]

Virtually one quarter of the male population is unemployed. If the mines go, the figure will be substantially more than that.

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): The hon. Gentleman mentioned Geevor in my constituency. Does he agree that the situation there is particularly desperate, in that the economy of the St. Just and Pendeen area is almost totally dependent on that mine? There is tourism and agriculture, but the livelihood of those villages and the one town is dependent on that mine.

Mr. Penhaligon: I confirm that that is correct.

I should like to make this rather urban House aware of the distances involved. St. Just is six or seven miles from the nearest town of any size, and real employment opportunities are 40 or 50 miles away. Three hundred jobs might not sound much to the House, but in a remote part of Britain they are the keystone of the local economy.

The industry is not a lame duck. It is in difficulties now, but it has been making profits over a sustained period, and most people believe that it can again, with assistance. The industry pushes some £27 million into the local economy, through pay and services. When trading ceased the value of the tin sold was £52 million a year, not including the other minerals, which are also valuable.

We want to know whether help will be forthcoming. We are not expecting details, but there is a great deal to be said in discussing the best ways to help. There could be some help towards capital investment to enable the industry to improve efficiency and to produce this valuable mineral at a competitive price. The Government could give some assistance in the development of new ore bodies. Hard rock mining is a two-stage process. One half of the mine takes the ore out to the mill to be crushed and processed, and the other half of the mine opens shafts, drives and stopes to mine the tin. The Government could offer some medium-term price support mechanism against the value of tin.

The real question tonight — for peace of mind at Christmas and in the new year — is: will the Government help? It seems inconceivable to those involved in the industry that Thailand, Malaysia, Bolivia or Brazil will allow their industries to be wrapped up and put into the history books. There is some risk that our Government will allow Europe's only supply of this mineral to close permanently. If a mine is closed and it floods, there is no future for that mine. The hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) will be glad to confirm that.

Recently, at Prime Minister's Question Time I asked two questions: will the Government assist, and will the Prime Minister receive a delegation? The answer was not unexpected. The Prime Minister, once again, said that the Government were trying to encourage the Tin Council to find a sensible settlement of the difficulty in which it finds itself. That is a strategy to save the London metal exchange, and is of no help to those who live in Cornwall. It may well help to keep the London metal exchange within London, but it will certainly not help the industry within my constituency. Surely the Government are not saying that traders in tin are more important than those who produce the mineral.

I wish to seek from the Minister a broad-based assurance that some assistance will be given to the Cornish tin mining industry in its present difficulties. If the Minister can give the assurance that the situation is not terminal, people in Cornwall will have a much happier Christmas.

7.12 pm

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): I followed the speech of the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) with interest. I know that his concern is shared throughout the House, but I hope that he will forgive me if I do not take up his points.

I urge that the House should not rise for the Christmas recess until we have had a further opportunity to consider the threat to the position of young people and the family. I wish to illustrate my point with a true story which I was told last Friday at my constituency surgery. I was consulted by considerate, caring, responsible parents who, a year ago, had a 16-year-old son whom we shall call David. Their son was an intelligent boy who had O-levels and was working in a multiple store as a trainee. His parents expressed concern that he was attracted by the fact that he could, if he wished, leave home and gain board and lodging allowance of £55 a week plus £9 pocket money. That caused some mild family disharmony — not at all unusual in a family with teenage children. The parents found this carrot, in the form of a Department of Health and Social Security allowance, to be the cause of great difficulties since their son was tempted to leave home.

A year ago the parents' worst fears were realised, and the boy left home. The parents were concerned that he should wish to do so but, as they were caring and responsible, they took him to the hostel where he was to stay. Arrangements were made by the boy to receive DHSS payments. When the 16-year-old lad left home the DHSS made no effort to establish whether he needed to leave home or whether he had a home in which he could stay. A 16-year-old is entitled to benefits and it is none of the parents' business.

A few weeks passed and the boy, now 17, went missing from the hostel where he had been staying. The parents, who had been maintaining a tenuous contact with him, were distraught. They attempted to find out from the lodging house the whereabouts of their son, but the lodging house did not care. The DHSS may well be paying the lad for staying in a hostel elsewhere, but it would not tell the parents anything. For three weeks the parents were faced with this distressing situation. They were then contacted by the police, who had found their son's bag which had their address inside it. The police attempted to reassure the parents, despite the fact that they did not know his whereabouts. Imagine the parents' feelings when their son's bag had been found, but he was still missing and the police did not know his whereabouts.

Later the parents discovered — I use the word "discovered" advisedly — that their son, aged 17, had been charged with a criminal offence. They were not told this by the police, by the probation service, the court or by any other authorities. They had to find out for themselves. In Britain someone aged 17 is deemed, in the criminal courts, to be an adult. If a person aged 17 is in trouble with the law and tells the police that he does not wish his parents to be consulted, the police will abide by that wish.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk: It is not just that the parents are not consulted; they do not have to be informed.

Mr. Viggers: As the hon. Gentleman says, they will not be informed. If parents make inquiries they will not be told when their son will appear in court or even the exact nature of the offence.

At present David's parents do not know where he is living. The DHSS may know where he is staying, but will not say; the police may know where he is, but they will not say. Thus, the parents, the two people in the world who care most about this boy, cannot discover where he is and cannot do anything to help him.

How did we get ourselves into this situation? The DHSS and the police—they serve us very well in south Hampshire—are obeying the restrictions and rules laid down by this House. How is it that Parliament can be responsible for this framework of regulations against which this tragedy has been played out?

The first problem is that a person aged 16 is regarded as independent for DHSS benefit purposes. In Germany, someone aged between 16 and 18 can go into lodgings and apply for benefit. However, the authorities make sure that the parents are informed of his whereabouts because the authorities will recover the cost of the benefit from the parents. In Britain, a 17-year-old is regarded as an adult under criminal law. A probation officer in my area said that, if a 17-year-old does not wish his parents to be informed of his whereabouts,

"We have to respect his wishes."

In the Gillick case, it was laid down that the rights of parents dwindle as offspring approach the age of maturity. I am not concerned with the rights of parents because the parents in question are not trying to assert any rights. They are trying to fulfil their duty. It is insane that we should prevent parents from exercising their duty. We have gone collectively mad.

I am horrified by the facts in this case and by the light they throw on Parliament's attitude to the family as the basic unit of society. Current social and legal practice seems designed not so much to undermine the family as to deny its very existence. As the family festival of Christmas approaches, we should resolve to give more support to the family so that the members of a family give more support to each other.

7.20 pm

Mr. Robert Kilroy-Silk (Knowsley, North): I should very much like to follow what the hon. Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers) has said as he dealt with an interesting and important subject, but instead I shall protest that the House should not adjourn for the Christmas recess until we have had an opportunity to debate the continuing and appalling unemployment on Merseyside, not least in my constituency.

The two subjects are not unrelated as many young people are unemployed and an increasing number of them have to leave home to get the financial benefits that are available from the state. The result is the break-up of families, which is manifest in Merseyside and my constituency. What the hon. Gentleman complained of is happening on an ever larger scale because of the economic policies of the Government that he supports.

I do not have to remind the House of the scale of unemployment on Merseyside. Nor do I have to catalogue the factories that have closed in the past six years or state the number of redundancies or job losses. The facts should be familiar. I hope that I do not have to remind hon. Members that 140,000 people are now unemployed on Merseyside. That represents 20 per cent. of the population. I remember when I and my right hon. and hon. Friends complained bitterly when unemployment on Merseyside was as low—as it now seems—as 70,000. No fewer than 20,000 people are unemployed in the small two-Member borough of Knowsley. There are 10,000 unemployed in my extremely small constituency and more than 1,600 of them have been unemployed for more than five years.

On Merseyside, and especially in my constituency, we have road after road, industrial estates, old industrial areas and factories which were once occupied and productive standing empty, vandalised, derelict and, in many cases, razed to the ground. Whole areas such as Kirkby have multi-storey blocks of flats in which no one has a full-time job. There are streets—indeed virtually whole areas—where not one person is earning a living. That is appalling. I know that all this has been said before, but there are still many hon. Members, not least Conservative Members, who, through no fault of their own, represent much more prosperous constituencies. They have no conception of the long-term, grinding poverty that is to be found in many parts of Merseyside, Liverpool and my constituency.

For example, 96 per cent. of people leaving school this year did not find a job. Only 4 per cent. went into a full-time job. That does not include the more than 5,000 in Knowsley who are in temporary employment schemes. Such levels of unemployment and such long-term unemployment leads to the winding down of whole areas. It manifests itself in shops closing. Even food shops that belong to major chains cannot sustain a profitable existence in my constituency. We have come to a sorry pass when people cannot buy enough food to sustain a food shop in a large town such as Kirkby.

This cannot go on. Why should my constituents be deprived of the opportunities that are available to others who, through accident, live in more fortunate parts of the country? Why should young people in my area suffer the injustice of their lives being destroyed or blighted? Why should they have to go straight on the dole having left school, get married on the dole, have children on the dole and face living permanently on the dole? That should not happen, and they know that it need not happen. It is not as though we are foisting inequities, inequalities and injustices only on certain parts of the community. If we continue like this, the social problems that we have witnessed will be as nothing to those that we are likely to experience in the future.

My constituents know that they do not have to be unemployed. They are not stupid. Indeed, some are very well educated. They know that the provision of jobs is a matter of Government will. They look around them and see inadequate housing. They see the paucity of social, welfare and health services. They see empty hospitals and unemployed doctors and nurses in dole queues, while in their neighbourhood people are dying in agony or distress on the waiting list. They see unemployed building workers, electricians and plumbers. They see old, inadequate and vandalised housing in need of repair. They know that it is possible to match the needs to the resources and that the result would be an improvement in the quality of life in the area and permanent jobs for them, their family and friends. That is possible, and they know it.

My constituents see evidence of a much more prosperous and materialistic southern part of the country. They see it every night on the television. They see it on

[Mr. Robert Kilroy-Silk]

television advertising. They see a Martini style of life which is available to the vast majority of the country but not to them. Nobody can be subjected to grinding poverty, humiliation, indignity, loss of self-respect and no prospect of employment, while the aspirations that others take for granted are held up to them, without feeling bitter and resentful. There is such a dichotomy and of course they are deeply bitter and deeply resentful.

The surprise is not that we have had riots or disturbances. They happen much more frequently than we know. They might not be a nightly occurrence in my constituency, but it is not far off. They might not be on the scale of Toxteth or Tottenham, but they are serious and people are constantly being injured. We cannot create the circumstances that I have described and imagine that people will not react. We are storing up enormous trouble by creating a large pool of unemployed young people who know that things do not have to be so bad, have no stake in the country's future, no hope of a job and the dignity and self-respect that comes with it, and no hope of being able to lead a life such as their compatriots take for granted. That is wrong and will lead us into a great deal of trouble.

On those grounds alone it is incumbent on the House to have an informed and sensible discussion of the scale of unemployment and the poverty which accompanies it on Merseyside and in my constituency. We must come forward with practical and positive proposals to deal with the problem now—it can be dealt with now—and to give my constituents some hope. If we do not give them hope and the feeling that they belong to our community and that it cares about them, they will take their revenge. When their revenge comes, it will be horrendous.

7.29 pm

Mr. Colin Moynihan (Lewisham, East): In many ways the subject that I raise for consideration this evening is the most important one on which I have ever addressed the House. It relates to the relationship between a Member of Parliament and his constituents.

That relationship has long been nurtured, protected and valued. It has grown substantially in the volume of work during the past 15 years, to the point where hon. Members are often effectively ombudsmen between powerful institutions, such as the boroughs, which in many cases have burgeoned in size and power on the one hand, and constituents on the other. Anything that threatens that relationship should receive the urgent consideration of the House and a full day's debate before the Adjournment.

To assist the House, I shall place on record the series of events that have led to the blacking of correspondence between Lewisham council and me, when I write to it on behalf of constituents. That action is carried out by NALGO members working for the council. Such trade union action is neither legitimate nor constitutionally acceptable.

During the past year I have had cause to bring to the attention of the council housing department its substantial delays in answering correspondence from my constituents who have written to me requesting information. If one assumes a week's turnround for answering a letter, the 10-strong member support group are 3,000 working days overdue to date with my inquiries alone if one adds together the number of days overdue for each letter. They are important inquiries.

On 16 July I sought

"a full reply as soon as possible"

about a case concerning a couple. On 21 October I sent a letter relating to

"obvious stress with four children in one bedroom."

On 16 October I requested a reply about eight people in a two-bedroomed house which I described as

"a serious and urgent case."

On 20 December 1984 I reported "major problems" of a constituent. In all cases I requested information, but received no reply.

It is wrong when a Member of Parliament, in confidential dealings with a constituent, cannot take the case further either with the constituent or, with his permission, the press, or, at his request, in Parliament, for lack of information. The substantial delays led me last Thursday to telephone the council housing department about yet another long-overdue case. When my office contacted the allocation officer—one of the housing managers—she informed my secretary what she was instructed to transfer any calls from me to the NALGO shop steward for the support group. My office was informed that since 13 November—more than a month before—a motion had been passed to black all my correspondence, subject to decisions being taken at shop level. That had taken place in the members' support group. For more than a month neither NALGO nor any of the officers of the council informed me of that decision.

When I telephoned the NALGO shop steward, he said that because of my

"supposed business dealings with South Africa",

the local NALGO branch had decided that my mail to the council was to be intercepted, a mailing list drawn up, and a reply sent direct to the constituent concerned, without my knowledge or permission. Such a reply would include NALGO's reasons for blacking my correspondence. Such a process had already been partly implemented without NALGO, the council officers or the chief executive, who was also aware of this, informing me either verbally or in writing of their action.

That is a gross abuse of the correspondence of the man in the street, and, for my part, it is a gross interference in the relationship between a Member of Parliament and his constituents. I would make no distinction in my condemnation and anxiety should such action be taken by a council against a Labour Member because of his personal or political views. That is a matter for the electorate, not NALGO shop stewards.

For a month, many written representations to the council housing department have, without my knowledge, continued to be misappropriated, as the housing department has never sought to obtain my permission to use correspondence for any purpose other than to reply direct to me, as I have outlined in my written requests to them.

The weakness and temerity of council officers in the face of NALGO's grip on Lewisham council are regrettably self-evident. The fact that the chief executive was seen to take action only yesterday after I had insisted that a written undertaking be given to me that no employee of the council would be allowed to make use of any information obtained from correspondence in the way set out in the NALGO draft, the fact that his action is limited

to that, and not to the central point about blacking correspondence, the fact that the allocations officer could not speak to my secretary, but had to pass the call on to the NALGO shop steward, and the fact that an important meeting scheduled for today to discuss urgent cases, some of which I have alluded to indirectly, was called off by the housing manager because NALGO refused to give her the necessary files, make it clear that NALGO runs Lewisham council. Regrettably, come May of next year in the borough elections the electorate of Lewisham will have a clear choice—Conservative or NALGO.

It is only fair to place on record NALGO's anxieties. The only public record of its anxieties was expressed in a document published on 27 November, entitled "Viewpoint Lewisham Nalgo." It stated that its actions were part of a "policy of non-co-operation with individuals who are helping to prop up the racist regime"—

I certainly have not—

"by having investment in South Africa"

which I certainly have not. The document continues:

"One such individual is local Tory MP for Lewisham, East, Colin Moynihan."

That is not true.

"He is Chairman of Ridgway's Tea"

that is not true—

"a holding company for Tate and Lyle"

that is not true—

"which is South African based."

That is not true. It is pitiful that NALGO can use my constituents as political pawns and not even get its case right. Not one phrase of that document is right. I regret that NALGO cannot even spell my name correctly in correspondence.

I have declared an interest in the House regarding Ridgeways and Tate and Lyle, but never in its 150-year history has Ridgway had business dealings in South Africa. Of the five companies which I am informed have business activities in South Africa under Tate and Lyle, four were sold more than six years ago, and the fifth, a small company in Durban, handles molasses, as much for South Africa as for Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Does Lewisham NALGO know better about southern African politics than Mr. Mugabe does?

All hon. Members know that any accusations directed to me of racism, of propping up the apartheid regime or of supporting South Africa, are wholly inaccurate. I abhor apartheid and reject racism completely. I have views which may differ from those of hon. Members who might prefer an extremist resort to armed struggle, combined with a complete imposition of sanctions, which is the declared aim of NALGO in Lewisham. If that is their view, I respect the fact that it is different from mine. Equally, in our system of representative government, NALGO should respect freedom of speech, the rule of law, and the will of the people expressed through Parliament, and, in particular, through the ballot box.

Of far greater significance than the political or personal differences of opinion that separate a union or a far Left councillor from a Member of Parliament is the future relationship between an elected Member of Parliament and his constituents. Community politics is a growing phenomenon. Hon. Members differ in how far they should be involved in local issues. Some leave local matters exclusively to local councillors. If the local council is effective, that is fine. Others, like myself, believe that in an inner-city constituency, such as Lewisham, it is incumbent on the hon. Member to turn every paving stone, to take up personally every justified case and to do as much helpful work as possible on housing and other problems, irrespective of the personal and political views of the constituent.

That fundamental tenet of representative government is now jeopardised by union action. It is the constituents who will suffer. NALGO would do well to recognise that constituents who come to me about housing matters do so because they fail to get satisfaction from the housing department. They come to me as a last resort, often distressed and in need of moral and practical support. Because they are upset and frustrated by the combination of rudeness and inefficiency of the housing department, they seek my assistance. When I have had the opportunity to help, many cases have been successfully resolved. Many have not, but we must try equally on everyone's behalf. Many of those successful outcomes are now denied because constituents do not have the benefit of answers to my correspondence with the council. Without that knowledge, I cannot reply to the constituent to advise him.

Unless the problem is tackled now, for the benefit of both sides of the House, the constituents will suffer. What is worse is that the problem could increase, which would threaten our role as Members of Parliament. Is it right that we should have a political system under which the electorate expresses its view through the ballot box, but the local trade union can veto such an opinion? Is it right that the council should decide whether a policy is satisfactory to the Member of Parliament, whether it is satisfactory to NALGO and whether to employ a veto? Is it right to deny a Member of Parliament access to the information that he needs at his fingertips? I believe that it is not. I firmly believe in taking up constituents' cases and moving round the constituency to try to help. We are restricted greatly in what we can do, but we should at least attempt to solve, to the best of our ability, any constituent's problem, especially in the inner cities, where housing problems constitute over 90 per cent. of my cases.

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): Yes, because of cuts.

Mr. Moynihan: Some individuals have come to see me about problems arising from a lack of resources for housing. That shortage can be attributed to money being siphoned off by the council and not used in the best interests of constituents. That is a political point, and is not the reason for my asking the House to consider the implication of the principle. The principle is whether a Member of Parliament should be allowed access to a council's information to assist his constituents.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): My hon. Friend makes a proper point. It is not a matter of cheap political points or whether Government money is available for one area or another. It is a matter of whether a Member of Parliament is impeded in his duties because somebody else wishes to use political means to stop him serving his constituents. My hon. Friend is right to press the point that he serves his constituents more than he serves an esoteric interest abroad.

Mr. Moynihan: I hope that I have made that point clear to the House. The issue does not rest on political grounds. The matter should now receive the closest attention and consideration of the House. I look to the Opposition and the Government to recognise the implications of my remarks.

[Mr. Moynihan]

I intend to explore every avenue available to serve once again my constituents to the best of my ability. If I do not succeed, the House must consider the implications that blacking an hon. Member's work have for the future working of this House.

7.45 pm

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): I submit that this House should not adjourn for the Christmas recess until it has had the chance to debate the important question of corruption in small charities in the London area, especially the St. Olave, St. Thomas and St. John United Charities, to which I shall subsequently refer as St. Olave. This is an ancient charity in south London. In its current form it was established from an amalgamation of three Bermondsey parish charities in May 1939 with the purpose of helping the poor and elderly of Bermondsey. It has recently been seeking to sell property in my constituency.

I first drew attention to the activities of this charity in February 1985 when members of Vauxhall Labour party discovered that a block of flats had been advertised for sale in Kennington in the *South London Press*. On further investigation the flats were found to be offered for sale by the charity. It soon became apparent that none of the tenants in St. Olave's mansions knew that their homes were to be sold. Many were elderly and concerned for their future. Many had been bombed out during the blitz in Bermondsey and had lived in St. Olave's mansions all their lives. On meeting them it was quite clear that the charity had been a very poor landlord. Very few repairs were being done and the flats were run down. Contact with the charity proved difficult, if not impossible, for the tenants. All inquiries were handled by the clerk of the charity, Mr. Phillip Pollock—a name that will recur in what I have to say. It is to his misconduct and not to that of the trustees—several of whom, I stress, are blameless —that much of my speech will be addressed.

At the same time as secretly selling St. Olave's mansions, the charity was engaged in a peculiar exercise of preventing legally appointed trustees from Southwark council from participating in its affairs. St. Olave, in the memorandum of association 1939, had 13 trustees: eight appointed by the local authority, four co-opted by the trustees themselves and one ex officio.

In November 1984 Southwark appointed five new representative trustees to serve a five-year term of office from December of that year. The majority of the existing trustees refused to accept them. No explanation was given for this refusal, and the five new trustees were prevented from attending any meeting of the charity.

At that stage, I contacted the Charity Commissioner to express my concern regarding the activities of the charity and suggested that he investigate its affairs. I wrote to him in February of this year and had a meeting with Mr. Denis Peach, one of the chief Charity Commissioners. Mr. Peach seemed blithely unconcerned about this particular charity. On 1 March this year he informed me:

"in our dealings with the Charities (St. Olave's) Trustees over many years we have found them fully alive to their responsibilities and to the need to take expert advice in relation to sales of trust property."

That reply certainly did not resolve my suspicions, particularly after I had the opportunity to examine the accounts of the charity for the year ending 31 March 1984 —the latest available. From an income of £160,000 the charity had spent £51,000, or 31 per cent. of its income, on management expenses. The poor and elderly of Bermondsey, for whom the charity was originally established, received in the same year less than £15,000, or only 9 per cent. of its income.

Meanwhile, the five new local authority nominated trustees were still trying to attend meetings and were still being denied access. On 18 March this year I went with them to the offices of the charity at Druid street, SE1, when four of the five new trustees attempted to sign the record book of the charity and become accepted as trustees. Mr. Pollock, the clerk, refused to let any of these legally appointed trustees sign the record book, despite an assurance from a Southwark councillor, John Fowler, and myself that all five trustees had been legally nominated by Southwark council. It was only in April 1985, after a threatened court injunction by Southwark council, that the charity finally accepted those new trustees. But it soon became clear why there was so much resistance from Mr. Pollock to their appointment.

As well as owning property in Kennington in my constituency, the charity owned a substantial amount of property in Fairlawn park, Sydenham. There, too, there have been many complaints about its record as a landlord. With the assistance of the South West Law Project and Paul Foot of *The Mirror*, the tenants of Fairlawn park found that the company responsible for carrying out all the repair work for the charity was called Flowerbrook Ltd. That company, established in June 1984, had only three directors—a Mr. Brian Glen, Mr. Barry Rosomon and the clerk to the St. Olave charity, Mr. Phillip Pollock. Mr. Pollock had failed to inform the trustees that he was a director of the company responsible for the repair and maintenance of the charity's property, yet in 1983 and 1984—in the latter year I restate that the charity had disbursed less than 10 per cent. of its income to its alleged beneficiaries — it spent more than £120,000 with Flowerbrook in the project on Fairlawn park alone.

The charity was also trying to sell the properties in Fairlawn park, and the trustees were informed that only one bid had been received, of £432,000—or £11,000 a house—from Silvercount Ltd. The tenants, informed of the sale only at the last minute, were willing to pay up to £17,000 a house. The directors of Silvercount were Mr. Brian Glen and Mr. Barry Rosomon. As well as being a co-director of Mr. Pollock in Flowerbrook Ltd., Mr. Rosomon had other connections with the charity. Until 1984, his father was a trustee of the charity and his mother was assistant clerk to Mr. Pollock.

Increasingly alarmed at the activities of Mr. Pollock and the inaction of the Charity Commissioner, I tabled a parliamentary question to the Attorney-General on 25 July, requesting him to instruct the Charity Commissioners to conduct an inquiry into the charity under section 6 of the Charities Act 1960. My request was refused.

Since the arrival of the new trustees in April this year, the charity has elected a new chairman, Mr. John Thomas. He replaced the previous chairman of several years, Miss Lucy Brown. Miss Brown has ably served the people of Bermondsey as a councillor, especially—I understand—in the 1920s. But at the age of 92, I would suggest she was not the most suitable choice to be chairman of a charity with an estimated £7 million worth of assets, which were being stripped off by its clerk.

The new chairman, supported strongly by some of the former trustees, ordered an immediate inquiry into the sale of all property by the charity during the past five years, which produced some extremely interesting results. As well as owning St. Olave's mansions, the charity owned a large number of handsome Georgian houses along Kennington road and Walnut Tree walk in my constituency. The internal inquiry revealed that, in January 1985, 13 of those houses were sold to an Isle of Man registered company called Kindrid for a total of £52,000. Thus, 13 large, four-storey houses in Kennington were sold at an average price of £4,000 each. Incredibly, the Charity Commission approved that sale as the best deal possible for the charity—a point to which I shall return shortly.

This sale of the century was stongly urged by a so-called surveyor, Mr. Benjamin Gurvitz of Benjamin Glen and Company, Godalming, Surrey. Mr. Gurvitz was also strongly urging the charity to sell its property in Fairlawn park to Silvercount Ltd. Mr. Gurvitz is not a qualified surveyor. He was appointed by Mr. Pollock without any reference to the trustees, and in 1984 he received £31,000 — three times what the beneficiaries of the charity received that year—for his services to the charity. His reports on the condition of the property in Kennington road and Walnut Tree walk were completely fallacious. He referred to derelict property, when in fact most of the houses were tenanted and in the last two years had more than £70,000 spent on them, including new roofs. An independent assessment by a local estate agent reckoned that each house was worth at least £40,000—10 times what the charity sold them for, with the approval of the Charity Commission.

Kindrid Property, a faceless corporation registered in the Isle of Man, immediately resold two of its newly acquired properties to Apton Properties in January 1985. The directors of Apton Properties Ltd. are names which will be familiar to us — Mr. Barry Rosoman and Mr. Brian Glen. Just one of those properties is now back on sale for more than £110,000.

Apart from these sales to Kindred and Apton, other property owned by the charity was being acquired at knockdown prices—all with the approval of the Charity Commission. No. 126 Kennington road, a large five-storey house, was bought by a Mrs. Robinson for less than £17,000 in late 1984. No such person existed. The house was actually bought by Mr. Brian Clifford, a well-known criminal who was killed in Kennington in a gangland murder on 28 September. The police are currently investigating the connection between Mr. Clifford and the activities of the St. Olave charity. In all, it is estimated that the St. Olave charity has lost well in excess of £1 million in fraudulent property deals in 1984-85 alone; or, more precisely, the poor and elderly of Bermondsey and Kennington have lost more than £1 million.

The internal inquiry, following the appointment of Southwark council's new trustees, into the operations of the St. Olave charity included a report produced by its auditors Ball, Baker and Leake. It became apparent that Mr. Pollock had complete and total control over the charity. He authorised payments to the beneficiaries of the charity, he allocated empty property, and he authorised payment of all invoices, including those to Flowerbrook, the building company of which he was a director. None of this was referred to the trustees, and with respect to the allocation of empty properties, it is clear that he broke the allocation policy of the charity and simply favoured his friends and acquaintances. He even employed his father-in-law and a previous clerk to the charity as a consultant.

On further investigation it soon became apparent that there was a close and direct connection between Kindrid Property Company and Mr. Pollock. The Isle of Man is not renowned for the level of company information available to the public, but it was clear that Kindred was a shell company aimed to disguise ownership. More investigations revealed that the two signatories to the company's bank account were Mr. Barry Rosomon and Mr. Phillip Pollock. At this stage, the new trustees called in the fraud squad and Mr. Pollock was sacked as clerk in September 1985. Further proceedings now depend on the progress of fraud squad investigations.

The scandal surrounding the affairs of the St. Olave charity is an example of appalling personal greed and misconduct. It is also an indictment of, at best, complacency and, at worst, misconduct within the Charity Commission. That St. Olave's mansions and Fairlawn park did not follow the rest of the property of the charity into dubious ownership is entirely due to the efforts and hard work of the tenants, combined with members of the local community and Labour party, and assisted by the publicity given in *The Mirror* and in the *South London Press*.

Even now, many of those in the Charity Commission refuse to accept that they acted wrongly in allowing the charity to dispose of its assets — after I had made representations to and had meetings with Mr. Peach — on the basis of inaccurate statements from an unqualified surveyor. I accept that, under this Administration, the Charity Commission may lack the means fully to monitor the activities of charities. However, the suspicion surrounding St. Olave was first brought to its attention in February 1985 and it has consistently refused to investigate it throughout the year.

What is even more alarming is that the case of St. Olave is not the first of a major London charity being involved in fraudulent property deals. In the case of the Hampstead, Wells and Camden Trust, a charity well known to some members of the House, the trust's agent, Ronald O'Dell, disposed of 24 prime Hampstead properties for an average of £54,000 between 1979 and 1983. He was gaoled for fraud at the Old Bailey in February this year, for four months, with 11 months suspended.

There are three key questions now to be asked on the operation of key officials in the Charity Commission, and professional advisers in the asset stripping of the St. Olave charity. First, there is the role of the charity's solicitor, a Mr. Boodle, of George Carter and Co. It was Mr. Boodle who gave the advice to the charity to block the appointment of the new trustees nominated by Southwark in December 1984. It was Mr. Boodle again who, at the crucial meeting in November last year, approved the sale of the properties in Walnut Tree walk for £4,000 each, when any responsible solicitor would have challenged such a sale in such a location at such a price.

Again, it was Mr. Boodle who failed to take appropriate action to stop the sale of 126 Kennington road to the now deceased Mr. Clifford, who had applied to purchase it under a false name, following an evaluation by the unqualified surveyor, Mr. Gurvitz. Moreover, the same Mr. Boodle is failing to co-operate fully with the independent inquiry into the sale of properties by the St. Olave charity instigated by Southwark council. In my

[Mr. Stuart Holland]

view, had the Charity Commissioner, Mr. Peach, been adequate for his job, Mr. Boodle's activities should already have been the subject of an inquiry by the commissioners themselves.

Secondly, there is the role of the accountants to the St. Olave charity, Ball, Baker and Leake. They produced a report on 29 August 1985, indicating clear evidence of maladministration and admitting that they were unable to confirm that they

"have reviewed all relevant documentation, since the adequacy of the filing of information is insufficient to enable us to conclude with full confidence in this matter."

Yet despite this, Ball Baker and Leake made no recommendation concerning action to remedy the inadequacy of the information, and ended by thanking the clerk to the charity—the now sacked Mr. Pollock—for his co-operation.

Thirdly, and most important, there is the role of the Charity Commission in the approval of sales below market value to and through those who have been asset-stripping the St. Olave charity. The key here is the meeting that took place in the Charity Commission in November last year between Mr. Pollock and Mr. Rosomon and a member of staff of the Charity Commission. At this meeting, approval was given for the sale of properties belonging to St. Olave on the Fairlawn park estate in Sydenham at £11,000 each when the tenants of those properties were prepared to offer £17,000.

This situation demands answers to three questions. First, why was the sale approved at a price so clearly below value, and below what the tenants were prepared to pay? Secondly, why was there a change of policy by the Charity Commission or by someone in it within the half hour in which this meeting took place, granted that for months the commission had refused to agree to the sale? Thirdly, who in the Charity Commission approved such a sale during that meeting in November? Was it Mr. McManus, who also appears to have been involved in the approval of the sale of properties by Mr. O'Dell of the Hampstead, Wells and Camden Trust, which led to Mr. O'Dell being arraigned before the High Court and pleading guilty to fraud? If so, on what grounds did Mr. McManus come to such a change of mind so quickly on the matter of the sale? Was he offered and did he accept payment for such a change of mind?

It is clear that the matter must now be investigated at the highest level, since all the important prima facie evidence shows that corruption involving the asset-stripping of properties is not simply a matter of the abuse of a small charity such as St. Olave or the Hampstead, Wells and Camden Trust, but appears to extend into the Charity Commission itself. Let us by all means find that this is not the case and that individuals such as Mr. McManus can clear their names. Let it be a judicial inquiry instigated at the highest level, by the Home Office or the Solicitor-General rather than by the Charity Commission whose commissioner has proved utterly inadequate in his response to the grave charges brought now for nearly a year concerning the activities of St. Olave, just as it was for a longer period to the charges of corruption in the case of the Hampstead, Wells and Camden Trust.

Not least, let us, in such a judicial inquiry, have the full co-operation of hon. Members who have been associated with such charities, including the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg). He is, and for some years has been, a trustee of the Hampstead, Wells and Camden Trust, while Lady Pamela Finsberg was, until allegations of criminal activity were made, chair of the estates committee of that trust during the time of the offences for which the managing agent—Mr. O'Dell—of the trust was subsequently gaoled. I alerted the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate that I would seek to raise the matter of this trust. I am sorry that he is not in the Chamber. Granted the hon. Gentleman's experience, and the direct parallels between the offences that have occurred in both St. Olave and the Hampstead, Wells and Camden Trust charities, the hon. Gentleman is admirably placed to be able to co-operate with and aid the public interest in giving evidence to such a judicial inquiry.

In particular, in relation to both trusts, the following questions should be investigated, and their results made public. First, when was the attention of the trustees first brought to the fraudulent sales? Secondly, why did the trustees wait for several months in both cases before seeking advice from the Charity Commission? Thirdly, why did the trust not bring the matters concerned to the attention of police at an earlier date? Fourthly, what business dealings has any member or trustee of either trust had with any property company, estate agent or developer and what has been the nature of those dealings, with what remuneration, at what times and on what terms? The Register of Members' Interests is quite inadequate in this respect. Whose fingers were in the till? Were they those of Mr. Pollock and Mr. O'Dell alone? Or was Mr. O'Dell, who has been given a sentence of only four months, the volunteer fallguy for bigger names to escape the courts?

Why did Mr. O'Dell get off with so light a sentence and the obligation to repay only £65,000 to the beneficiaries of the trust, having sold 24 prime properties in Hampstead, when this represented only a fraction of the value of the properties that he had sold to his advantage? Is the House to tolerate a situation in which, with millions of pounds of such asset-stripping, it may pay some individuals to go to jail for four months and then retire abroad on gains made—but unreclaimed—through tax havens, for the rest of their natural lives? Is this to be tolerated by the Charity Commission or the Government in the case of the St. Olave charity and its operations in my constituency?

The present procedure operated by the Charity Commission in regard to the sale of charitable land and property has shown itself open to gross manipulation and abuse. But in 1984 the Charity Commission gave nearly 2,000 orders authorising charity trustees to sell property. Given what has happened in these two individual charities in London, how can the public, the Government and the House be confident that other such sales among small charities are not similarly subject to peculation and fraud?

There is one final and outrageous twist to the role of the Charity Commission in the whole sorry saga of the St. Olave case. The new trustees, recognising the legitimate fears of the tenants of St. Olave's mansions, have agreed that the property should be acquired only by a socially responsible landlord, such as a housing association. They have now entered into negotiations with the London and Quadrant Housing Trust for the sale of St. Olave's mansions at a fair and independent price as determined by the district valuer. However, the Charity Commission has now intervened and insisted that the new trustees must sell to a property company at the highest possible price regardless of the future of the tenants. Having allowed

most of the charity's property to be ripped off for a song, the Charity Commission's only action over all these months has been to prevent the new trustees from protecting the interests of its tenants and gaining a fair and independently assessed price for the sale of its assets to a housing trust.

The support and monitoring available to protect the beneficiaries of small charities need to be increased. If the Charity Commission is not up to the job, local authorities could and should be involved in the arrangement. Many trustees of charities are well-intentioned volunteers who are unaware of the full extent of their powers and responsibilities. They need support and training to ensure that their charities are properly administered. On the specific point of disposal of property and land, the present arrangements are patently quite inadequate. The whole concept of sale to the highest bidder, particularly in relation to tenanted property, forces charities into the uncharitable hands of property speculators and worse. The recent experience of the Church Commissioners with the sale of their tenanted property in Maida Vale is but one example of this.

Charities should be encouraged to dispose of their properties to other socially responsible landlords rather than to property speculators whose main interest is to secure vacant possession of property and make a quick profit. This could be achieved if charities were allowed to sell their properties at an independently assessed price determined by the district valuer, rather than open-market valuations which preclude all but property speculators from purchasing. That principle has been accepted by the Government in regard to council houses and it should surely apply to the sale of any property owned by charities.

The Charities Bill, which is awaiting Royal Assent, does not, unfortunately, address itself to these problems, as it is primarily concerned with charities having an annual income of £200 or less. St. Olave had an annual income in excess of £160,000, very little of which actually went to help its original beneficiaries.

The judicial inquiry for which I have called should produce recommendations for effective monitoring, support for trustees and guidelines for the disposal of land and property which should be incorporated into the amendments of the Charities Act 1960.

8.7 pm

Mr. William Powell (Corby): Like other hon. Members who have spoken, I seek to urge on my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House that our Adjournment be delayed, if only by a short time. Having heard the speeches in the debate, it is my earnest hope that we shall seek to adjourn the House more frequently than we do because we have had the opportunity to listen to a number of important speeches. One of the great advantages of a debate such as this over an ordinary Adjournment debate is that many hon. Members are present to hear what is said and all of those present in the Chamber for the debate have been educated and moved by what they have heard.

I have not the slightest doubt that the right hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Williams) will take advantage of the opportunity that he will have to comment critically upon the conduct which has taken place in Lewisham and which has led my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) to make his allegations. Equally, the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) has brought before the House a series of matters of the utmost importance which it is entirely right that the House should debate.

As I am rather an old-fashioned kind of person, when the hon. Member for Vauxhall asked for a judicial inquiry, my mind turned to the device that was used very effectively by the House in days of old, which was to set up a Select Committee to investigate particular abuses and to make recommendations to the House. However, the hon. Member for Vauxhall is not the first person to make such allegations against the conduct of the Charity Commissioners, though it is exactly the kind of matter which, it seems to me, should properly be investigated by the House.

I want to refer to the speech of the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Kilroy-Silk) who, as always, spoke very movingly about the plight of the unemployed in his constituency and the horrendous problems with which he is faced in representing a constituency where 10,000 people are out of work and where there appears to be no prospect of work for them. I take advantage of this opportunity because, as a Conservative Member of Parliament, I have some qualifications for speaking on the subject of unemployment.

When I was elected a Member of Parliament two and a half years ago, I was the Conservative Member of Parliament with the highest level of unemployment in his constituency. At that time about 7,000 to 7,500 people were unemployed. That is a horrendous enough figure, but it is not as high as the unemployment in the constituency of the hon. Member for Knowsley, North. But he is not alone. Many Opposition Members represent constituencies where there is five-figure unemployment. There are no constituencies represented by Conservative Members of Parliament, thank goodness, with five-figure unemployment. We should not turn a deaf ear to the pleas that are made, even if the solutions that are brought forward, during the period of either the present Administration or a changed Administration, make only limited progress towards dealing with the problem.

I am blessed further because, although the hon. Member for Knowsley, North sees unemployment in his constituency rising inexorably and quite hopelessly—I accept his analysis—fortunately, unemployment in my constituency has fallen further and faster since the general election in June 1983 than in any other constituency in the country. I was representing just over 7,000 unemployed persons in 1983, but that figure has now dropped to under 5,500. Furthermore, I can look forward to a continuing and substantial reduction in unemployment. It is therefore a racing certainty, if ever there was one, that by the next general election unemployment in my constituency will have been cut by, at the very least, more than half.

Let me reflect for a moment upon why that should be so. There are two aspects to it, neither of which should be overlooked by right hon. and hon. Members. First, a responsibility lies upon the Treasury Bench. My criticism of the analysis put forward by the hon. Member for Knowsley, North — I regret that he is not in the Chamber — is that he concentrates too much upon a public sector solution to his problems. My contention is that the public sector has an important role to play. There is no running away from that fact. I want that fact to be understood by my hon. Friends, the Opposition and the alliance. Let us not forget that overwhelmingly, except in two cases, the alliance represents constituencies where

[Mr. William Powell]

there is extremely low unemployment. The two exceptions are the inner city constituencies of Southwark and Bermondsey and Liverpool, Mossley Hill.

The public sector has a very important pump-priming role to play, but on the back of that pump-priming role the private sector must come in. That is exactly what has happened to a huge extent in my constituency.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): That would be the policy of a Labour Government.

Mr. Powell: The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) is always helpful. He says that that would be the policy of a Labour Government. I accept that that is their ambition, but another factor has to be considered. Not all the hon. Gentleman's friends are as assiduous about this point as they ought to be in the interests of their constituents. If the private sector is to come in on the back of public sector pump priming, it is vital that the reputation of the communities where that is to happen should be as sky high as it can possibly be. If private sector finance is to be attracted, it is vital that the private sector companies that one seeks to attract to one's community should be encouraged to come in because of the good reputation of that place.

An unfortunate fact of life—although it may not be welcomed by all right hon. and hon. Members if I spell it out as clearly as this—is that not all areas of this country enjoy a high reputation not only in the rest of this country but in the rest of the world. When there is competition for private sector investment, it is always a handicap when the private sector says that it does not like the reputation of a particular place. I stress that it may be a false reputation, but it is the duty of local communities, if people have a false and misconceived view of their community, to do everything that they possibly can to dispel it. That message is not coming through as loudly and as clearly as it ought to do from some of the places where unemployment is very high. I make that point not as a general, sweeping criticism but as a fact of life. It is well known in the rest of this country. It is also well known to international investors.

Let us not forget that all the time we are travelling through time. I was born and brought up in rural Suffolk. Today it is a boom area, but 100 years ago it was not. The villages of rural Suffolk were then being depopulated. The best of the local population frequently went to the large towns, among which were Merseyside, Manchester and London, to find prosperity and work. Many of them, though not all, found exactly that. The reason that they went in particular to Liverpool, Bristol and Glasgow was that those port cities were geographically in the correct place at that time in history for the role that they had to play. The ports of Liverpool, Glasgow and Bristol were servicing our empire. Therein lay their prosperity.

Today the role of history has changed the geographical axis of this country. We are living in an age in which increasingly the bulk of our trade is exported through our eastern ports to Europe. It is not exported westwards, via the Atlantic ocean, to the empire. Our trade goes to the European Community and to other European countries. That is simply a fact of life in the age in which we live. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that every community on the western side of this country is geographically at a disadvantage compared with every community on the eastern side.

The public sector undoubtedly has an important role to play. It has to do what it can to compensate for this very substantial geographical handicap. Nobody would be more pleased than I, except possibly the hon. Member for Workington, if unemployment in his constituency, on the western side of this country, were to be reduced to zero. However, because of the location of his constituency, he faces a very considerable handicap compared with mine where unemployment is falling substantially. It is on the eastern side of the country. It is two hours from the port of Felixstowe to which so much of its trade comes and from which so much of its trade is exported.

We have to face up to the many unfortunate, unpleasant and debilitating facts of life about the unemployed. I was grateful to the hon. Member for Knowsley, North for his contribution. However, we do not say enough about one other aspect of unemployment. I admit that unemployment in my constituency was high at the time of the last election. It is still very high, although it is falling.

One feature of the unemployment statistics in my constituency stands out. It is that the bulk of unemployed people there are middle aged. Middle age begins at a depressingly young age. At 30 years of age people are told that they will never work again. People aged 16, 17 or 18 have no difficulty in finding work, but at 30 finding work is difficult and it is even more difficult for the 35 and 40-year-olds. They are the forgotten unemployed. Yet the effect on people of that age is greatest because they usually have children.

A person of 30 is likely to have a young family. It is almost certain that the wife will be unable to work because of the responsibilities and demands of young children. The tax and social security systems act as a massive disincentive to work and that creates the grinding, deplorable, debilitating problem of family poverty.

I urge the Minister to counsel his colleagues on the Treasury Bench and in the Cabinet to do everything that they can, beyond the call of duty, to ease the effects of our social security and tax systems on young families when the husband is out of work and considered too old, the wife is unable to work and young children are growing up and imposing huge demands. The social security system does not provide sufficient for such families. The tax system bites too heavily and too low on the scale so that the disincentive to work is considerable. It is important to ensure that the thresholds are raised so that there is no disincentive to work if and when such people find work.

8.22 pm

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): The hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) spoke about the difficulties in the western part of Britain. I want to refer to the difficulties facing one of the traditional industries in my constituency. It is an industry which you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, know well and to which you made a significant contribution when you were a Minister. You are perhaps the Minister who has made the most significant contribution to that industry because you introduced the pneumoconiosis compensation scheme which has benefited many slate workers and their families.

I want to highlight publicly the long dispute in three slate quarries in my constituency in the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog. The House cannot take much action in the

dispute, but it is incumbent on me to exert as much influence and moral pressure as I can on the directors of the companies concerned so that a negotiated settlement is reached. To that end, I placed on the Order Paper this week an early-day motion which seeks to put pressure on the companies to refer the long-standing dispute to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

I do not want to take advantage of my privileged position to go into detail about the causes of the dispute; that is not my role. I want to stress that this has been a long-running dispute for four months. It began during the summer recess.

The dispute is over a bonus payment scheme. The workers have been working to rule and some have been dismissed. The directors of the companies involved have not been prepared to refer this official dispute to conciliation. I pay tribute to the attempts that have been made by individuals, by the town council, by the official shadow spokesman for Wales who has visited the area, and by ACAS officials who have sought informally to persuade the managements to agree to further negotiations.

Unfortunately, at least one of the directors is not prepared to communicate with me. That director has not answered a succession of letters that I have sent to him. He is not prepared to meet me to discuss the issue. He is not willing to meet the regional secretary for Wales of the Transport and General Workers Union, Mr. George Wright. It is clear that the dispute will continue well beyond Christmas unless the managements of the companies are prepared to negotiate.

The dispute is dividing a community. It is creating bitterness. That seems to be part of the legacy of the slate industry's industrial relations. We have experienced long lockouts before. We experienced long disputes, known in Wales as streic fawr, in the slate industry at the turn of the century. I regret that small local companies, owned by local Welsh people, are behaving in a way which is reminiscent of the behaviour of the landlords and quarry owners of a bygone era.

I want not to recriminate but to stress that employers in a small community have a social obligation. One of those obligations is a willingness always to communicate with the work force. They must be willing to negotiate with the official spokespersons of the work force. I pay tribute to the way in which the lodge and the trade union official responsible for the area, Mr. Tom Jones, have conducted themselves during the dispute.

Picketing has not occurred as it did in another dispute in the mining industry. The conduct of those concerned has been restrained. Throughout the dispute the community has supported the workers, and support has come from beyond Wales. The quarry workers face a Christmas on a reduced income and are much concerned about their jobs. I am worried that the quarry owners will seek to recruit other workers and will not reinstate those dismissed during the dispute.

I hope that the companies will take heed of my request that they meet ACAS officials so that a peaceful solution to the dispute can be found. I urge other hon. Members, either in this debate or by other means, to join me in exerting pressure on the companies so that good industrial relations can be restored to the slate industry.

When personal relationships break down, the emphasis is on the need for conciliation, or even compulsory conciliation. Perhaps we should re-examine our industrial relations legislation and find ways to make conciliation procedures compulsory when relations break down. I hope that as a result of the publicity that the issue has attracted throughout Britain the companies will respond to our request for negotiations.

8.30 pm

Mr. Christopher Murphy (Welwyn Hatfield): Before the House rises for the Christmas recess it should consider afresh three aspects of reforming zeal affecting local, national and international policies, all of which are of interest to my constituents.

The first aspect is rating reform and its special local significance. Having for long advocated the abolition of domestic rates, I welcome the renewed Government commitment to action—better late than never, as may have been feared at one time. Although I favour a system based on a poll tax, I recognise that many gaily bedecked and bewitching paths may lead to the ultimate Christmas box desired by many, but let us venture at last along one of these tinselled ways.

The current system adds additional problems to the evident and inbuilt one of unfairness. The rate support grant formula inadequately reflects the needs of shire counties such as Hertfordshire, as I have drawn to the attention of the House in the past. I will only say, to avoid rehearsing my lines again, that this pantomime must be taken off and restaged, for as it currently performs—bearing in mind also the requirements of districts such as Welwyn Hatfield—it fails to persuade me to vote for such settlements.

Indeed, in consequence of today's announcement, regarding the district council, it is literally a case of "thanks for nothing," and from the point of view of the county council, "thanks for very little", as the rate support grant has been significantly reduced despite adherence to Government guidelines.

I continue with shop hour reform, which is of national importance. I have never opposed a voluntary approach to Sunday trading, but have always opposed any compulsory element. A previous attempt via a private Member's Bill to overcome the present anomalous situation was something that I could support, but now we are faced with a Government measure which goes far further, in that people's employment is also being tackled in a way that creates potential new anomalies, which I could not support.

It must be appropriate, as we approach the eve of Christmas, to consider such matters from a Christian and committed viewpoint. I urge the Government to reconsider the matter and to agree that to sell the Bible on Sunday is no crime, but that nobody should have to work against his or her conscience on that day.

I conclude with Northern Ireland constitutional reform and its international dimension. The Anglo-Irish agreement is in danger of becoming a donkey from two thoroughbred stables—I am keeping to the Christmas theme—and I fear that no amount of coaxing will achieve the necessary movement. All men of goodwill must want the Nationalist as well as the Unionist view to be represented, but that should not be by proxy via the Dublin Government with no democratic mandate. Rather, it should be by way of full and fair local government, and that is sadly lacking in the Province.

I wish to see an end to the bloodshed, and that is why I favour the closest possible co-operation with the Republic to defeat terrorism from whatever source. Such

[Mr. Christopher Murphy]

co-operation should be freely given, without any need to accept an erosion of the sovereignty of the United Kingdom or a weakening of the commitment of remaining British while the majority wish it—hence my opposition to the accord.

To satisfy the angelic choirs that he has heard this evening, my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will need all the sagacity of the three wise men. I wish him well.

8.34 pm

Mr. Jim Craigen (Glasgow, Maryhill): In some quarters this is regarded as the hypocrites' debate. I hasten to assure the Leader of the House that I want my Christmas break and I am taking the opportunity of the debate to raise a constituency matter, though it has considerable health implications for Glasgow and the west of Scotland.

It concerns the proposed closure of the infectious diseases ward, No. 12, at Ruchill hospital in Glasgow. This proposal by the Greater Glasgow health board arises out of the serious financial situation facing the board, both in the current year 1985-86 and in 1986-87. I am optimistic enough to believe that the Leader of the House, being a man of some influence in the Cabinet, will have a word in the ear of his colleague who is responsible for health in Scotland, because I am anxious to see some Government follow-up to the points that I am raising about the recommended closure of the ward.

It is an 18-bed adult ward and it is estimated that £300,000 would be saved by its closure. The implication, however, is that 25 per cent. of all the adult cubicles in the infectious diseases unit, or two fifths of the support beds that are currently available, would be lost.

I need hardly remind the Leader of the House that Glasgow recently experienced some disturbing cases of legionnaire's disease and that there has been an increase in the number of hepatitis cases. The new Minister for Health has been making it clear that the Government are keen to do more to assist the prevention of AIDS. In these days of greater international travel, the incidence of tropical diseases is also on the increase.

I am raising this issue because the main areas of work done at Ruchill merit close examination by the Scottish Office. Legionnaire's disease has become far more common. Indeed, it is now one of the more common causes of pneumonia, and a number of recent cases admitted to Ruchill have been of legionnaire's disease.

The incidence of AIDS is causing that disease to have a higher political profile. We cannot underestimate the interrelationship between AIDS and the growing problem of drug abuse. I shall not bore the House with the figures, but I gather from them that many youngsters are becoming involved in this horrendous area because of the effects of drug abuse.

About 8 per cent. of cases admitted to the unit at Ruchill arise from tropical diseases and fevers, and the World Health Organisation recently pointed to the growing number of new viruses which the medical profession is having to combat.

The Ruchill unit deals with a broad range of referrals. In this area of health, all admissions are, by their nature, emergency admissions; one cannot have an appointments system when coping with infectious diseases. Some patients are admitted and found subsequently not to have infectious and communicable diseases, but 93 per cent. of cases are confirmed, so facilities must be available for early investigation and medical treatment.

In 1980 the Belvedere hospital unit in Glasgow closed and its infectious diseases facilities were integrated and concentrated at Ruchill, which now has a wide reputation in Scotland for the work that it does. We have two paediatric wards. Originally we had four adult wards, but one was closed, and now the Greater Glasgow health board is proposing that ward 12 should close in order to save £300,000 because of the board's terrible financial position, which has arisen from the mean-mindedness of the Scottish Office in not realistically appraising the health needs within the Greater Glasgow area.

An audit on bed utilisation recently showed that if ward 12 were to close, on one day in three no isolation cubicles would be available for any cases that may occur. I need hardly tell the Leader of the House that the attendant risks to the community at large do not bear examination. What seems to be an economy may prove to be an expensive cut in public expenditure. All too often trying to save a penny or two here leads to spending a pound or two somewhere else because of the consequential effects.

I hope that the Leader of the House will use his good offices to impress on the Scottish Office the need to examine the position at Ruchill in relation to some of the wider problems that arise from infectious diseases, not only in Glasgow, but in the west of Scotland, which the unit presently serves.

8.41 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): Before the House adjourns for what I trust will be an enjoyable Christmas recess for us all, we should consider the future of hospital radio broadcasting and certain anxieties about community radio. I have the privilege to speak in this place—I hasten to add, in an unpaid capacity—for the National Association of Hospital Broadcasting Organisations. Those unsung heroes and heroines are unique in that they are all unpaid, yet it is an extremely large charity. I should particularly like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the hard work of the executive committee.

I should say at the outset that my career as a hospital radio broadcaster has been extremely short. Some years ago I volunteered my services to Radio St. Andrews in Bow which used to operate in a cupboard underneath the stairs. After just three weeks the lady in charge of the station diplomatically told me that my services were no longer required. She implied that I did not have quite the sort of voice that they were looking for. Some other far less diplomatic person told me that I was just not cut out to be a disc jockey and that my voice was not altogether conducive to the recovery of patients. However, I did not take offence and I do not apologise to the House for having to suffer me at the moment.

The importance of hospital radio cannot be overstressed. There is an argument, backed by respected members of the psychiatric profession, that the therapeutic value of hospital radio contributes to the speeding of patients' recovery. People often come into hospital lonely and afraid. With the best will in the world, one's family, where there is a family, is not in a position to appreciate the problems. No one can be there all the time. The mental pain can be more traumatic than the physical pain which put the patient into hospital in the first place.

Hospital radio supplies a friendly voice, somebody who is of the local community and yet with the patient, somebody aware of the difficulties of that specific hospital. Indeed, the patient is likely to meet the radio voice as the person travels round the wards. That friendly voice takes the mind off the loneliness and pain, and that can only contribute to a successful discharge from hospital. As Seneca said over 2,000 years ago, the desire to be healed has always been part of health. Hospital radio assists in that desire to be healed by keeping a person in touch with the immediate outside world and away from the pain he experiences.

Practically all hon. Members will have some form of radio in hospitals in their constituencies. There are about 300 hospital broadcasting organisations which provide a service, in addition to that of relayed BBC and IBA stations, to their audience of over 217,000 patients. All hon. Members will have some of the 10,000 volunteers working in hospitals in their constituencies. We have 70 such people in Basildon, and I am delighted to say that a few weeks ago I opened the first television network in a hospital in my constituency.

I want the House to consider a fair charter for hospital radio. We are not asking for grants or funds, and we wish to retain our independence. Fund raising goes on through the year in order to keep items such as equipment up to date. However, hospital broadcasting organisations still meet opposition from within administrations. Each organisation is dependent for its existence on the attitude prevailing in each individual hospital. Many administrators are helpful and co-operative, but there are still some who are obstructive and unhelpful. One organisation was kept out of a hospital by a senior nursing officer who felt that the project was not worth while. Another had to argue for eight years to have the facility afforded to it.

Most stations can operate within a single room, 10 ft by 10 ft—the size of many hon. Members' offices. Many hospital radios interconnect with small hospitals in the same area. For some years they relied on telephone landlines whose price remained stable. Eventually, British Telecom had to bring prices into line with other charges to prevent large losses. BT co-operated to the fullest extent with NAHBO in trying to cost the alternative of using the private landlines of the hospital system. It was estimated that the use of such lines could produce savings of up to 80 per cent. Unfortunately, the Department of Health and Social Security wrote to NAHBO and put the entire burden back on to individual administrators, from which the organisation sought to remove the difficulty.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is considering the implementation of community radio. I know that he has received my representations and those of the society on that subject. All the arguments that I have researched on the use of internal hospital radio apply with more vigour to the use of a low-powered radio frequency transmitter. Broadcasting to several hospitals would be enormously simplified. Initially, there would be no need to use the internal telecommunications system of the hospital network. Nor would there be any need to spend recurring amounts on British Telecom landlines. The transmitter would be relatively expensive but would probably pay for itself in a few years. It would also be non-recurrent capital expenditure, towards which fund-raising could be directed.

As headsets take such a low priority nowadays, many patients are encouraged to bring their own headsets and transistor radios with them into hospital. That tends to lead to them becoming out of touch with the local community and to miss the personal service of hospital radio. A transmitter, even on a time-sharing basis, would put patients back in touch. As most organisations intend running some kind of two-way family favourites programme, the implementation of community radio would result in a much closer, more supportive relationship between the patient and his family—the kind of relationship which sustains and encourages the fight against illness and for which the DHSS laid down guidelines when referring to children. Adults become as lonely and afraid as children, especially when faced with the unknown. The provision of low-power transmitters would undoubtedly assist in the crucial area of patient recovery.

In all those problems there can be seen one common denominator. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services does not issue guidelines to district health authorities on their attitude towards hospital radio. Indeed, the message from the Department is that the matter is for the individual hospital administrator. The association agrees that decision-making should be left to individual administrators. It is in favour of local autonomy. Nevertheless, it looks to the Department to provide some kind of leadership.

I urge my right hon. Friend to look again at the difficulties facing hospital radio; at the marvellous efforts of so many voluntary workers; and at the worth of their contribution to the healing process. He will find the case for guidelines overwhelming, and I ask him to issue a circular placing hospital radio in context for the busy administrators of hospitals in Britain today. Let us never again take hospital radio for granted, but give it the support and encouragement that it fully deserves.

8.51 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): Before we adjourn for Christmas we should have a proper debate on Britain's nuclear policy and the need for nuclear disarmament.

Yesterday I visited Greenham Common and met the brave women in the peace camps. They endure much in the protest against cruise missiles and against nuclear annihilation of Britain that the use of such missiles would mean. Theirs is a peaceful protest. They totally renounce violence to the police or to anyone else on the base, but the converse is not the case. Yesterday an elderly woman, Sarah Hipperson, was savagely thrown into a 12 ft ditch by the police because she was standing in front of a tree in which another woman was perched. Miss Hipperson suffered severe injuries and shock, but it could have been worse. There is a continuous history of such violence against the women and it has been increasing. I am told that in August Ms. Ann Harrower was knocked down by a United States road patrol vehicle which deliberately swerved to hit her—a clear case of reckless and attempted deadly dangerous driving. I believe that the vehicle had a Royal Air Force police escort who just left Ms. Harrower lying in the road. If thuggish behaviour of that kind by police and military authorities is allowed to continue unabated, one of those peaceful women protesters will die. If that happens, the Government will be responsible.

The principal purpose of my speech, however, is not to prevent deaths of that kind, although that is clearly vital, but to prevent the millions of deaths to which Britain's

[Mr. Harry Cohen]

current nuclear policy is leading. The House, to its shame, provides scant opportunity to argue the matter. I intend today to show that Britain's nuclear policy is morally and militarily indefensible.

Of course Britain must defend itself. That is a straightforward moral and military stance which I accept, but our defence should be non-nuclear. Britain's long and unique history has always hinged on our ability to defend this sceptred isle. The history of the 20th century has brought home forcefully the moral and military imperative of protecting the people and boundaries of our nation from attack. Of course it was right to take up arms against Fascism in the second world war. Since then, however, there has been an immense break with our previous historic notions of defence—the development, proliferation and sale of nuclear armaments.

The scale of the current nuclear arsenal is monstrous compared with any previous arms accumulation. All the bombs dropped in the second world war amounted to about 3 megatonnes. The present nuclear capacity in the world is 15,000 megatonnes and rising. Our defence policies are now not just militarily but morally indefensible. They are indefensible, first, because they fail in their intended purpose of defending our nation state. In other words, they are dishonest and immoral in their own terms.

One of the best-kept secrets from the British people is that nuclear weapons are first and foremost weapons of attack. They are offensive, not defensive. They have never been developed as weapons of defence and star wars is no exception, despite the Government's shameful support of that policy. They may splutter, like President Reagan, about defensive umbrellas, but, as I discovered in the United States recently, the Pentagon makes no secret of the fact that if the Russians attempted to put a similar umbrella over the United States it would be interpreted as an offensive act. Essentially, the strategic defence initiative is a massive first strike capability. Nuclear weapons will be used to strike first or to counter-attack. Either way, there is no defence.

What possible defence of our nation state is envisaged in which there will be few, if any, survivors? Protection, in human terms, does not dispense with the population in favour of strategic war games designed to ensure that space weapons and ballistic weapons long outlive us. Yet the Pentagon's massive research programme into what it calls "survivability" is devoted entirely to arms survival, not to human survival.

Will civil defence come to the rescue? What have the Government planned for us in that respect? The Conservatives have decided on their own open-market, individualistic approach. At the top of the social scale, the stockbroker bunker will provide cramped accommodation with a chemical toilet for two weeks before jettisoning its occupants into the nuclear winter. For do-it-yourself addicts, the Government advise urine-soaked sheets, upturned mattresses and plenty of white paint. For those caught outside, in the words of *City Limits* magazine, the advice is to

"lay face down and kiss your arse goodbye."

That is a direct quotation, but the sensitive reader of *Hansard* may insert the word "backside" — same difference. That is hardly a serious protection strategy for the people of Britain.

When one looks more closely at the civil defence plans, it is clear that they are irrelevant to the real protection that the population will need in a nuclear war. Drastic powers are given to the armed forces. They are to control movement on main roads from our cities, preventing civilian evacuation and keeping the way clear for the police and the military. They are to cut off our phones, isolating families, relatives and friends. The plans provide for arrest and internment of anyone opposing moves towards nuclear war. Indeed, summary executions were part of the "Brave Defender" plans. The plans further provide for the takeover of stocks of food, petrol and drugs and the movement of Ministers, officials and military commanders to protected bunkers.

In short, the Government's civil defence plans are for our own armed forces to be used against our own people, the very people whom they are supposed to be defending. Such strategies are morally indefensible in purporting to meet the needs of people suffering the physical, medical and biological effects of a nuclear blast. The Government's message is clear: "Stay at home and die at home if you don't want to be shot in your own streets."

It is hard to see what protection there is for Britain in our current alliance with the United States. We have given away our national sovereignty by allowing American nuclear bases and weapons to be sited here. It is Reagan's finger that is on the trigger ready to fire cruise missiles. British military personnel are relegated to patrolling the perimeter fences and subjecting peaceful women protesters to the thuggish tactics that I have described. By amassing our own and an American nuclear arsenal on our soil, we have become a major strike target for an attack against which no defence can be mounted. This country has become the unwilling site of a European nuclear theatre so that the super-powers can keep the nuclear fight out of their own back yards. That is scarcely a list of morally edifying examples to give people faith in the protection offered by the United States.

Why do we not take the protection of our nation state seriously, and without delay get rid of all nuclear weapons? We should begin to build nuclear shelters on the Swiss model designed for all the population in the event of our not becoming direct targets, and we should become allies with those nations that are taking a moral lead against the nuclear madness.

Our nuclear arms system is an indefensible corruption and waste of human resources. In human terms, it is a depraved use of labour power. What can be more alienating than to work on a nuclear production line? What moral ideas of human dignity, creativity and self-worth are extinguished during such work when the unanswerable necessity of the wage packet drives out higher considerations of the genocidal consequences of this macabre production? What kind of morality places a higher priority on nuclear arms at the expense of the wilful neglect of useful production and research to meet human needs in Britain? There is ample evidence to show that our high levels of nuclear defence spending have played a significant part in Britain's economic decline.

But there is a practical, moral alternative called arms conversion, whereby resources misused on nuclear production could be redirected to civil markets to secure real jobs and to meet our obvious needs. That arms conversion programme should be massively expanded.

Furthermore, it is a scandal that more than 50 per cent. of Government-financed research is for military purposes.

This deprives research funding of projects that are attempting to solve a wide variety of real problems that face ordinary people. How contemptible is the Chancellor's cry that we cannot afford the welfare state when he rubber-stamps a 29 per cent. real increase in defence spending between 1979 and 1984.

The misuse of nuclear arms resources is at its most wicked when we count the cost of human suffering and misery in the Third world. No amount of Band Aid can stick over the shameful cracks in Government policy. With redirection, the scale of help towards global sufficiency would be remarkable. The cost of nuclear arms expenditure for two weeks would rid the world of infected water—a glorious prospect that is miles beyond the shabby vision of nuclear arms pedlars such as Reagan, Weinberger, the Prime Minister and the Conservative Front Bench.

The final thrust of my argument is to point to the global havoc caused by our needless rush to nuclear power. Communities throughout the world have unknowingly been exposed to the awful effects of nuclear testing and production. The extent of genetic damage, environmental pollution, radiation sickness and death following Britain's nuclear testing in Australia 30 years ago is only just emerging. The Government's response is to equivocate on their responsibility lest compensation proves costly and widespread.

Meanwhile, nuclear trains, with their deadly load, still trundle through many built-up areas every day, including my constituency of Leyton, and all that the Government can offer is public relations. That is their main plank of action. They rename areas to banish their radioactive connotation—for example, Windscale to Sellafield. Is anyone fooled or impressed? Is it any safer for children to play on those beaches? Is this the extent of the Government's moral responsibility to our land and people, including the military personnel engaged for our defence who are so casually subjected to radiation?

Even these shameful practices pale into insignificance when we consider the prospects unleashed for the entire world following a nuclear exchange. After deaths from burns, blasts and fall-out, the short-term aftermath would involve the collapse of food supplies, contamination of the water supply, the threat of fire, disease and pests, and the destruction of farm animals. The environmental devastation that that would entail would begin to upset the entire balance of the world's ecological structure, hurling us into a nuclear winter for generations to come. What a price to pay for moral disregard on this scale! We would have a world without hope, life and a future.

I urge the House to heed the words of Martin Luther King:

"We must either learn to live together as brothers, or we are going to perish together as fools".

9.3 pm

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): I must say immediately that I do not agree with a single word of what the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) has said. I believe very strongly in a nuclear deterrent.

There are three important matters that I should like to raise prior to the House going into recess. First, too many of our children are going missing each year, and I again make the plea for a central computer to record the details of the circumstances in which these children go missing.

Last year 20,000 children disappeared, although most were found. What my hon. Friend the Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers) said was perfectly correct. At the end of last year 4,500 children had still not been found, and 45 had been abducted, including two from my own constituency. I therefore call on my right hon. Friend to introduce a central computer to ensure that all the circumstances surrounding these missing children can be properly recorded. I congratulate and compliment the National Children's Home on what it is trying to do with limited resources.

My second point concerns motorway lighting. There are only 376 miles of lighted motorway, leaving 1,100 miles unlighted. It would cost £9 million to light the rest of the M1, and £81 million to light the entire motorway system. The Select Committee on Transport called for all motorways to be lighted. It said that lighting motorways at night reduced accidents by 60 per cent. As a fatality at night costs £205,460, that seems a reasonable amount to spend. According to column 112 of the *Official Report* of 17 December 1985, which lists motorway fatalities by lighting conditions, on motorways unlighted, at night, there were 62 fatalities in 1982, 54 in 1983 and 61 in 1984, on motorways lighted, at night, there were 40 fatalities in 1982, 24 in 1983 and 33 in 1984; and in the daytime there were 104 fatalities in 1982, 109 in 1983 and 117 in 1984.

Lives could be saved. As my hon. Friend the Minister of State has confirmed, if a serious night-time problem develops on a particular length of road, lighting is automatically considered. That should be done. My hon. Friend stated that she was

"keeping under review the need to provide additional lighting on the remaining unlit stretches of the M1."—[*Official Report*, 12 December 1984; Vol 69, c. *532*.]

The Transport Select Committee stated:

"We recommend the gradual installation of overhead lighting on existing motorways."

If there is a serious night accident problem which cannot be solved by other measures, lighting must be considered. That proposal has the support of the Royal Automobile Club, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. The evidence shows that during the hours of darkness the accident rate is worse than during daylight. The time is right and the money is well worth spending. The Department of Transport has promised to provide a cost-benefit policy for allocating lighting on our motorways.

My third point concerns drinking and driving. Drinking and driving kills, yet the campaigns that the Department of Transport regularly puts forward never seem to get the message across. Last year's campaign at Christmas was "Stay low". It wrongly seemed to suggest that we should not drink too much before we drive. That campaign cost £880,000. My hon. Friend the Minister of State made it clear that she was against drinking and then driving. Unfortunately, the campaign's message did not get through completely. It is wrong to have a campaign only at Christmas. I ask everyone to be careful when drinking if he or she intends driving. I believe that the campaign should operate throughout the year.

As my hon. Friend the Minister of State said when launching her campaign on 9 December 1985, "Don't drink and drive." However, she went on to say, "If you think that you can drink and drive, think again." It is clear that that is not the right policy.

[Mr. Peter Bruinvels]

Alcohol affects the performance of any driver, so drivers should desist from drinking. This is one of the most serious road safety problems. With RoSPA making it clear that mixing drinking and driving causes 1,200 deaths a year—one fifth of all deaths on the road—it is clear that there should be no drinking and then driving.

The police have unrestricted powers to stop all motorists if they suspect that a driver has consumed alcohol. I urge them to do so, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year. I would prefer random breath tests, but the Transport Select Committee opposes them. I believe that random breath testing would be welcomed, because it would save lives. I should like an increase in the level of enforcement generally—north and south of the border — throughout the year. As drinking and driving is a problem throughout the year, the introduction of random breath testing would be a deterrent.

The numbers of deaths in drinking and driving accidents in which a driver was positively breath tested were as follows: 451 in 1982, 340 in 1983 and 338 in 1984. There is no doubt that fatal accidents are caused by excessive drinking. The numbers of people disqualified from driving because of offences involving driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs were as follows: 64,000 in 1982, 86,000 in 1983 and 89,000 in 1984. I urge the House to give this policy the maximum support.

The policy will be effective. It will stop drivers taking the risk, especially at Christmas. We should take licences away immediately and not allow offenders to continue driving until their court appearance. That would have a deterrent effect. I want to see heavy fines imposed. The maximum should be at least £5,000, and not the present £2,000. If someone causes death by drinking and driving, he or she should go to prison for a minimum of 10 years. I want to see a Christmas clampdown on drinking and driving, and one that will continue throughout the year.

9.10 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The House should not adjourn until we discuss some elements of the Government's defence procurement policy. The elements with which I am concerned are of deep concern to my constituency. I refer to the placement of orders for conventional diesel electric submarines.

Last Thursday, I asked the Leader of the House whether he would ask the Secretary of State for Defence to make a statement in the next few days on the placement of these orders. The Leader of the House replied:

"I shall certainly convey that request."—[*Official Report*, 12 December 1985; Vol. 88, c. 1073.]

I should like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman conveyed my request to his right hon. Friend and, if so, the answer that he received.

In a letter of 28 November, the Prime Minister wrote:

"I understand that the competing tenders are still being assessed, but that Michael Heseltine intends to make an announcement on the placing of the order later this month."

I presume the right hon. Lady meant in December, before the House adjourned. A great deal of press speculation surrounds what appears to be a long-delayed decision.

I accept that I should not believe everything that I read in the newspapers, and that was pointed out to me by the Secretary of State for Scotland when I asked him to comment on his failure to persuade his ministerial colleagues at the Ministry of Defence to place these orders with Scottish yards. His press report suggested that the orders for all three submarines would be awarded to Vickers-Cammell Laird. I fully expect the Secretary of State for Defence to confirm that speculation. I say that with some confidence as the Minister of State for Defence Procurement stated on 26 November that the Government believed that there should be a number of submarine builders in the United Kingdom. He said:

"It is the Government's intention that there should be a number of submarine builders in this country, just as there are at present. Vickers has a monopoly not of conventional but of nuclear submarines. We envisage that there will be plenty of competition for conventional submarines".—[*Official Report*, 26 November; Vol. 87, c. 735.]

Much of the press speculation suggests that the orders are heading in precisely the direction of Vickers-Cammell Laird. If that is so, the statement which I have quoted is worthless. Two Scottish yards have tendered for the orders and I wish to confine my remarks—this should surprise no one in the House—to Scott Lithgow.

I was quoted recently in *Lloyd's List* as having said:

"there have been so many marked improvements in the yard that he"—

that is, the Minister of State for Defence Procurement—

"can be confident that any defence or offshore orders would not only be built to the high standards expected, but would be delivered on or before the specified delivery.".

Following that quotation in *Lloyd's List*, I received a letter from a consultant naval architect, who had this to say about Scott Lithgow:

"at the time of the 'Ocean Alliance' cancellation in 1983 and subsequently on four occasions since then I have been commissioned by Britoil to make a 'completely independent' evaluation of Scott Lithgow's performance.

It is my belief that your view is fully supportable. If you think I can be of any help, even at this late hour, I shall be very happy to do so."

He has helped me by sending me that letter.

If the Minister's words are to be believed, one of the three orders for SKK2400 diesel electric submarines should go either to Yarrows or to Scott Lithgow. All three should not go to Vickers because that would create a monopoly in conventional submarine building. Vickers already has a monopoly in nuclear submarine building. In fairness to Scott Lithgow, one of the orders should be given to that yard.

9.16 pm

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) for being so punctual in concluding his remarks on a matter about which he feels very strongly.

As the Leader of the House will appreciate, Back Benchers highly value both the time available to them on the Adjournment following the passing of the Consolidated Fund Bill and the opportunities that are provided by this motion to raise matters of concern to them. Therefore, it is to be regretted that today there were three statements before the debate on the motion for the Christmas recess. I cannot remember the Consolidated Fund debate starting so late. After all, the House made a concession to the Government by limiting the finishing time of the Consolidated Fund debate rather than it being open-ended as it was previously. In exchange, the Government owe it to the House to ensure that they do not hi-jack the time that legitimately belongs to Back Benchers. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues will ensure that it does not happen again.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) raised the critical issue of Manchester airport. I know of the local bitterness over this issue. It is frustrating that, when local authorities have reached an agreement, as a result of doctrinaire pressures by local Conservative Members of Parliament the local authority which seconded the original proposal has about turned and is trying to frustrate the objectives of the people of the area.

We are even more cynical about the matter, having read the memo from a local Conservative Member of Parliament advising his colleagues not to pursue privatisation at this time because it might divert attention from the more important objective initially of separating management from the city. It is clear what the second objective would be. It is a clear case of doctrine having preference over local interest.

The hon. Member for Gedling (Sir P. Holland) pursued a subject which I know he has promoted over the years —the need to contract the number of quangos. He must feel rather bitter about the loss of momentum in that campaign when, at one stage, he appeared to have virtually succeeded in his aims. I find it poetic that the party that is committed to the ending of quangos should give the right to fluoridate to quangos scattered throughout the country, regardless of the wishes of the local people.

The hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) spoke of the problems of the tin industry in his area. I appreciate those problems, because, as he said, it is a saga that we experienced when I was the Minister of State, Department of Industry. I provided the finance that helped to save Wheal Jane at that time. I am sorry that the area is now going through the same torture of uncertainty. I hope that the Government will do everything possible to support and sustain that exceptionally important local industry. This industry is not just important in job terms, but is of symbolic and historical importance to the people of that area.

My hon. Friend the Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Kilroy-Silk) and the hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) both spoke movingly and with conviction on the problems of unemployment. I can think of no hon. Member in the House who has campaigned more vigorously on behalf of his constituents over the years, under any Administration, than my hon. Friend the Member for Knowsley, North. I can imagine my hon. Friend's bitterness at seeing his area so deprived of hope.

The hon. Member for Corby referred to the locational advantages that the east of the country has over the west. That was a generous statement to make in view of the problems that his area has experienced. It underlines the Opposition's argument that there is a need for a strong regional policy. The Opposition bitterly regret the fact that regional aid has now been cut to 35 per cent. of the figure when the Government came to office.

I read the reaction of hon. Members as they listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan). All hon. Members were disturbed by the hon. Gentleman's speech, and it must be clearly understood that no one has a right to interfere with a Member of Parliament's correspondence. No one has a right to refuse a Member of Parliament in his duty to fulfil his obligations to his constituents. I hope that that point will be fully understood and appreciated by those who, for reasons which seem to them to be valid, interfere with the duties of an hon. Member. They should realise that that will inevitably lead to a clash with the House of Commons.

My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) made a staggering exposition of detailed research. I congratulate him on that. At the end of his speech I concluded that there must be something wrong with the Charity Commission. As my hon. Friend said, there must be a proper inquiry.

The hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas)—he has apologised for his absence—made a reasoned speech about a delicate situation in his constituency in Blaenau Ffestiniog. That area has been dominated for decades by the slate industry. A local employer is refusing to go to arbitration by ACAS, and one of the local directors refuses even to reply to the local Member of Parliament in writing or in person. That savours of stupidity as well as insensitivity. I know that area slightly, and the thought that the firm might recruit labour into the area to take over the jobs of local people is an unbelievably inflammatory thought and is absurd. I congratulate the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on the delicate tone in which he presented his points.

I should like to make my own bid as to why the House should not adjourn for the Christmas recess on the proposed dates. We should not adjourn until the House has received an apology from the Liberals. Earlier this afternoon I brought to the House a document which detailed double standards in connection with the House. The document was a press release issued by the Leader of the Opposition—I am doing it again. Today would seem to be my day for errors. Of course I meant to say, "the leader of the opposition to everyone", the permanent antis, the Liberals. It is the leader of the Liberal party's document which contains the double standards.

Let us look at double standards and the Liberals. I have some extracts from the document which the Association of Liberal Councillors is sending to Liberal campaigners. It is entitled "Responding to the Competition".

Mr. Penhaligon: That document has been withdrawn.

Mr. Williams: The hon. Gentleman says that it has been withdrawn.

That document urges Liberal campaigners to "Appeal to people's prejudices"—hon. Members should note that they do not appeal to people's common sense or to people's sense of right and wrong, but to their prejudices—

"and encourage them to think *(a)* you are on their side, and *(b)* those attacking you are by implication attacking ordinary people as well."

The Liberals are not ordinary people. We all know that they are different from everybody else and hon. Members have permanent experience of that in this place.

The document continues:

"Make full use of your 'good guy' image".

At least the Liberals have the grace to recognise that they are pure image and front and very little substance. The document goes on to say:

"Find out where your opponents' supporters are: you may wish to feed them certain information to mislead your opponent."

That is what the Liberals call political integrity. It continues:

"It might be worth encouraging attacks especially if you are up against numerically superior opponents."

That means, "if, democratically, you are outvoted."

[Mr. Williams]

It continues:

"The British love an underdog, especially one who tearfully tells the press he was 'only trying to stand up for local interests' against a seemingly hostile . . . majority."

It sounds like a seminar in cynicism. That comes from the party that was lecturing us on observng the correct standards in public life. The document continues:

"Be more clever, perhaps by phoning the Tory/Labour agent to say how impressed you were with their production, offer to help deliver the next one, etc."

Where are the good guys? People can pick up a 'phone, lie, cheat and mislead, and it is all for a good, moral objective.

I have seen such cynicism in my constituency. My local Liberal candidate, presenting himself as a Life candidate, came to my surgery to raise an animals issue and told me that he thought experiments should be carried out on subnormal humans rather than on animals. He is now circulating leaflets, again presenting himself as the Life candidate, saying that everyone else is in favour of abortion, but overlooking the fact that the Bill for abortion reform owes its origin to the leader of the Liberal party, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel). On Second Reading, 10 of the 11 Liberals voted in support of the Bill. That is the quality of life under the morality that the leader of the Liberal party would impose upon us. I should like to hear the views of the Leader of the House on that.

9.26 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I shall start by being remorseless and realistic: I stand entirely by my motion. The only thing that might be questioned is whether we are not staying here too late and coming back too early. Therefore, I say at once to all those who have impressed upon me that we should have a shorter recess than I have planned that I shall resist and, if there is a vote, I shall advise my hon. Friends to vote against them.

Hon. Members referred to the shortness of the debates following the passage of the Consolidated Fund Bill. That is not unprecedented. Of course it is not ideal, but it would have been more of a revolution if we had not had the statements on the rate support grant. We have to look at such matters and see whether we can order our affairs with a touch more brevity to protect the business for individual Members that lies ahead. No one can claim that my speech was too long.

I do not wish to be sidetracked by the extraordinary pamphlet prayed in aid to keep us here until Boxing day. It is a disagreeable combination of Machiavelli and Horatio Bottomley. There must be a better way than that of maintaining the moral and intellectual standards of our discussions.

Let me answer the points that were raised in the debate, which was opened by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), who was a powerful advocate on behalf of his hon. Friends of the most important institution of the provinces, Manchester airport. I shall of course report what he said to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. I am sure that the right hon. Gentlman will appreciate that I cannot go beyond that at this juncture.

I say fraternally to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon), in case he thinks that I am ambivalent about the Liberal party, that he and my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) have argued their case in measured, eloquent, restrained and therefore much more effective terms, saying what the tin industry means for Cornwall. As the hon. Member for Truro knows, there will be a debate upon that later this evening and clearly a ministerial statement would be appropriate on that occasion.

My hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) and the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Kilroy-Silk) talked about unemployment, and both spoke with the passion that comes from direct constituency interests in these affairs. I was attracted by the argument of my hon. Friend the Member for Corby about the need to raise tax thresholds. It is a part of the debate that continues. Tax cuts are as often as not used merely as a headline to confuse rather than to clarify the nature of the debate. Most people do not think of raising the threshold which, in reality, is the most substantial tax cut and which has considerable potential economic consequences.

I come now to the speech of the hon. Member for Knowsley, North who has explained his absence. There is deep concern in all parts of the House about the continuing high unemployment. I do not wish to elevate the controversy except to say that I believe that there is emerging evidence that at least the phase of the relentless rise is over and we are getting some stability in the national figures. It is true, as we move into a happier phase, that it will be partial in its application across the country.

To follow the practice of the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams), I couple the speeches of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) and the speech of the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland). I listened with deep concern to the points that were made by my hon. Friend, who has explained that he cannot be here for the end of the debate because he has gone to his constituency to deal specifically with this issue.

I do not know what possible distinction can be drawn between the work of an MP in his constituency and the work of an MP in the House of Commons. The work of an MP within the House of Commons is something we are concerned to protect. In all parts of the House — I welcome the remarks made by the right hon. Member for Swansea, West—there is concern that this matter should be resolved in a way consistent with the responsibilities of Members and their ability to discharge responsibilities without let or hindrance.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall elaborated a breathtaking state of affairs. I used to live in Vauxhall, and indeed the streets he mentioned were all familiar, but I had no idea that I was living so close to this extraordinary development. In my innocence, I used to pass by the Duchy of Cornwall property — which was absolutely blameless. I take his claim that there should be interest shown on the part of the Home Office and the Solicitor-General, and I shall ensure that his remarks are reported to my right hon. Friends.

The hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas), like the hon. Member for Truro, raised, with great charm, a most difficult constituency case. All those who know north Wales understand and feel for a region that has its roots, history, culture and economy related to the slate industry. Those who have seen the decline of that industry over the decades would be immensely saddened

if it were further debilitated by industrial action, which would proceed to some gloomy and inexorable consequence.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mr. Craigen) drew attention to the inherent difficulties of the closure of an 18-bed ward at Ruchill hospital. I shall certainly pass on to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland the anxieties that have been expressed.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) on raising the question of hospital radio broadcasting. It was a happy circumstance that no Government involvement seemed to be implied and no public expenditure involved. I wish my hon. Friend many more crusades of a similar nature.

The hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) raised the question of defence procurement and the three submarines. My information from the Ministry of Defence is that it hopes that an announcement will be made shortly. I am aware of the deep and proper constituency concern entertained by the hon. Gentleman, and I shall do my utmost to see that he is correspondingly informed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Sir P. Holland) reminded us that he has lost none of his skill, passion and advocacy in regard to quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations. I shall report this rather daunting news to my colleagues. It means that they will have to be that much more alert as 1986 proceeds.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers) most effectively used an example from his constituency to demonstrate a great many of the problems which relate to parents and their children, given the contrasting and often overlapping responsibilities of public authorities, and the need for the House to turn its attention to that in as much an administrative fashion as any other and to realise that this is a tangible way in which we can confer support on the family as the natural social unit.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) did a great tour d'horizon. I note his continued interest for a central computer to trace absent children. I also note his tempered involvement in public expenditure restraint when it comes to motorway lighting. I believe that £80 million was put into the kitty, which is not bad for a few minutes in the closing stages of this debate. He nevertheless made an extremely effective case because there are offsetting considerations. I wish him every success, without necessarily endorsing his campaign on drinking and driving.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Why not?

Mr. Biffen: Many others have campaigned. The hon. Gentleman must not get so excited. We are in the closing minutes of Christmas spirit. I am saying that from the great Plimsoll in the last century, who did a great deal for marine safety, hon. Members have campaigned on these issues. "Keep going" is my message.

My hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy) told me that he favours a poll tax, that he does not favour the rate support grant as it applies to Hertfordshire, that he is unhappy about the Government's Sunday shopping legislation and that he has views on the Anglo-Irish accord which are roughly in line with those of the Unionist parties. I shall convey all of those sentiments to my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary.

I come finally to the debate that we would all love to have about Government defence policy, nuclear policy and, above all, the delightful way—I accept his candour and sincerity—in which the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) says that we must disavow our reliance on nuclear weapons. Does that mean that we have to disavow any alliance which relies on nuclear weapons? [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Oh, I see. We disavow nuclear weapons ourselves. I do not think that the Liberal party should laugh too soon because we shall examine such issues more and more as 1986 proceeds. It is no good believing that we can approach the matter on the basis of the bun and the penny. It is one or the other. Either we are involved with a reliance on nuclear weapons or we are not. To suppose that we can wash our hands but depend on the Americans is the most unseemly stance of all.

I realise that all that now stands before the next debate in which the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) will raise the problems of driver psychology associated with alternative crossing modes of the Channel. The hon. Member gave us Aldabra, Belgrano and the West Lothian question. It looks as though this evening we shall see another great parliamentary saga opening up—and what a glorious way to end this part of the Session.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House at its rising on Friday 20th December do adjourn until Monday 13th January, and that the House shall not adjourn on Friday 20th December until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.

Orders of the Day

CONSOLIDATED FUND BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Question, That the Bill be now read a Second time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing order No. 113 (Consolidated Fund Bills), and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Channel Fixed Link

9.39 pm

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): This is a saga, because one of the prime duties of politicians is to warn their colleagues of all parties and their fellow countrymen about all-too-likely future fiascos and catastrophes.

I am no regular Jeremiah, but I foresee mid-channel mayhem in the mid-1990s, and 10-mile tailbacks in both directions under the Channel. Fanciful? If it can happen on the M6 and M25, why should it not occur under the Channel? I am using my luck in the Consolidated Fund draw, either to establish my fears about the Channel road link, or to have them refuted. I do not blame the Minister for not answering the questions about driver psychology that I asked in Monday's debate, which are reported in the *Official Report* c. 703, because I made a three-minute speech at the tag end of the discussion. Nevertheless, they remain unanswered.

In this era of "Members' interests," I had better say that I have the good fortune to be sponsored by the National Union of Railwaymen. But, as George Walkinshaw, Jimmy Knapp and Keith Hill will bear out, I initiated the discussion on this subject of driver psychology a month ago at the political committee of the NUR. Although the union has been extremely kind to my constituency Labour party, I am not a creature of the union

On purpose, I have never knowingly talked to, or had a meal from any commercial lobbyist or organisation involved in the Channel link.

The genesis of the debate was when, some years ago, I was stuck in the Dartford tunnel in a jam with my wife feeling increasingly sick from the fumes, and two whimpering small children in the back of the car. That is not an uncommon experience in the relatively short British tunnels.

The issue tonight is whether travellers who wish to accompany their vehicles across the Channel should be allowed to drive them, or whether they should be carried across with the vehicles by train. I am worried about highway hypnosis, and I had better define it carefully. It is

"the rigid cognitive set developing and creating a subjective notion of unchanging visual surroundings."

Highway hypnosis is associated with mental relaxation and lowered alertness. Bluntly, a great deal has been said even about the flora and fauna of Kent but not much about the psychology of humankind. Motorway madness has not had the consideration for the dimension of the Channel tunnel saga that it should have had. The serious work that has been done should make even the friends of the M6 a little uncomfortable.

G. W. Williams in his 1983 paper on highway hypnosis suggests that the monotony of the surroundings and the necessity to attend only to a small part of the visual field may induce some kind of hypnotic trance. The Department may have carried out serious work, but Mick Hamer of *New Scientist* has outlined all the cuts that have been made in the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, and the work that I have seen leads to the conclusion that a road link is flawed.

I have received a letter from the excellent scientific librarian of the Library, Dr. John Poole, who has served many Members well. I asked him to establish what the TRRL was doing, and he replied: "I duly rang up a psychologist at TRRL, who rang me to say that he was not at liberty to tell me anything about the R and D programme. He referred me to an assistant secretary of the DoT." Why cannot the TRRL have frank relations with the Library? For time's sake—I think of those who will be present at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning—I refer the Minister to the article in *New Scientist* of 5 September 1985, which shows how the TRRL has been affected by cuts. What work is the laboratory doing on the psychology of driving through the tunnel?

It is not that I have a bee in my bonnet. I have permission from the first five parliamentary colleagues whom I approached, to read what they told me. My hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) states:

"I find even going through the Blackwall Tunnel a worrying experience. Certainly I feel a sense of relief to come out the other side."

That is after the long distance between Greenwich and Tower Hamlets. My hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) states:

"I find the short distance involved in driving through the Clyde tunnel to be oppressive; I hesitate to think what the cross-channel link will be like."

My hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) states:

"I am always reluctant to go through the Mersey Tunnel; I would find the Channel Tunnel impossible."

My hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) states:

"I drive about 25,000 miles every year, and I do not suffer from claustrophia. But nothing would induce me to endure the tension of driving through a tunnel for half an hour."

My right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), a former Home Secretary, states:

"It is one thing to sit in a train through a long tunnel—even if it requires a certain effort. It is another to drive a car through a long tunnel with that light at the end a long way off. It will be a long time before I drive from Calais to Dover and when I do I hope there is room to pass by easily those who have given it up as a bad job."

My hon. Friend the noble Lord Carmichael of Kelvingrove, formerly responsible for transport, said:

"The second reservation is perhaps more substantial, and it has been mentioned by many noble Lords here. It concerns the question of driving through a 30-mile tunnel. I am always amused when I see the rather over-enthusiastic artists' impression of such things as these tunnels. You always see the lone motor-car, the Fiesta, the Metro or the Novo driving through a beautiful, clean well painted bright tunnel. You never see Aunt Agatha"—*[Official Report, House of Lords*, 13 December 1985; Vol. 469, c. 515.]—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not quoting from the Lords *Hansard*.

Mr. Dalyell: I must confess that I was, but I know that I should not.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): How does my hon. Friend respond to the experience of those who travel between France and Italy, who regularly pass through the 20-kilometre Mont Blanc tunnel but have no difficulties?

Mr. Dalyell: Ten miles, but I shall come to that later.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Dalyell: No.

[Mr. Dalyell]

Those were the collected views of people in the prime of life. What about our weaker, less experienced brethren, or sisters too, for that matter?

Some of my constituents say that they will drive from Edinburgh to Paris. Bluntly—I do not know whether this is a parliamentary word—they will be knackered by the time that they reach the entrance to the Tunnel. Most of my constituents are sensible people, but even in Linlithgow there is the occasional nut behind the wheel. That proves the case, because it needs only one nut to create motorway havoc.

Consider driving from Paris after that last good meal. The whole scenario of returning from a continental holiday has the ingredients of tragedy. *Motor* magazine of 28 September 1985 states:

"It's the last weekend in July 1992, and you're driving at 70 mph in bumper-to-bumber traffic in a tunnel 120 ft below the sea bed, halfway between Dover and Calais. Suddenly a 12-year-old Cortina seizes up in front of you and, as you stand on the brakes, you hear the screech of a dozen massive tyres behind you as a fully-laden juggernaut skids towards your rear bumper."

The longest tunnel in Europe, for the information of my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), is the Gotthard, which is 10·1 miles long. First-time motorists have difficulty envisaging the experience of travelling through it. Would any of us drive through a tunnel at 60 mph? Most of us would not go at more than 40 mph. What about overtaking, and what happens when the lighting goes wrong? What happens when cars run out of petrol? Some of us have suffered the indignity of running out of petrol when the gauges in our cars were defective. It happens to the best of us. What about the weekend drivers, just popping across to the Continent?

In the experience of the Simplon and of Japan, we have nothing like this. No one has driven through a 30-mile tunnel. I should tell my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) that the Channel expressway would be four and a half times longer than the Gotthard tunnel.

The subject has been studied by many psychologists. A paper published by Wertheim explains highway hypnosis, based on a theory validated in experimental research. Wertheim acknowledges that the explanation of Williams and others is difficult to verify, not least because the concept of monotony is not easily measured in such a way as to enable scientific experimentation. However, he argues that it is not monotony but predictability of the road situation that is crucial to the explanation of highway hypnosis.

The main points in the theory are as follows. Some of our mental abilities are related to the activity of our oculomotor system—the neurological system responsible for the initiation of eye movements. Car driving is a task where specific eye movements are required to follow predictable movements in the visual environment—other traffic vehicles as well as changes in the road. The more predictable those movements and changes, the more oculomotor control becomes intentive at the expense of the attentive component. As a result, drivers disregard most of the information present in the external visual field because of its irrelevance to driving performance. Thus, oculomotor control may become dependent on information derived from the perception of very few visual signals. In addition, those signals may become highly predictable in their movement pattern, especially during prolonged driving on long unchanging stretches of highway or during prolonged single file driving. That is what we are talking about in relation to the Channel. The Minister will contradict me if I am wrong about that.

The conditions thought to cause highway hypnosis would appear to prevail in the tunnel schemes; the visual images presented to a driver going across the bridge or through the tunnel seem especially prone to the predictability of the road situation examined by Wertheim. If it is, effects of such conditions on drivers should be understood in much greater detail during the design stages of the tunnel schemes. Symptoms affecting only a few drivers could have significant dangers for the functioning of the tunnel. Even 1 per cent. of drivers could create a dramatic incident in mid-Channel. It would need only a few fools, a few inexperienced drivers or a few panicking drivers to create such trouble.

Fatigue is not necessarily related to highway hypnosis but, according to the man who has done the work—Wertheim—it may sometimes have a facilitatory effect on its development. In general, there is likely to be recognition by motorists that there is danger in driving where certain circumstances may induce boredom, lack of attention or drowsiness.

Psychologists at the Institute for Science of Labour in Kawasaki, Japan, undertook a study of fatigue of bullet train drivers operating on multi-tunnelled sections. They recorded changes in the cab environment, heart rate, ear lobe, blood pressure, eye movement, flicker fusion frequency, responses to secondarily given visual signals and subjective fatigue. They concluded that continuous driving through tunnels "significantly hampers vigilance" and requires

"countermeasures against monotonous driving situations."

The generally monotonic driving situations through tunnels caused gradual decrease in heart rate and low flicker fusion frequency. The subjective fatigues scores

"increased remarkably during the journey."

Although driving such trains may not be strictly comparable with driving vehicles in well-lit tunnels, it is further medical research evidence that moving through a tunnel over long distances may have effects on driver vigilance that are not sufficiently understood.

I do not wish to boast about it, but I studied psychology for a year at Edinburgh university, and I know enough to say that this is a serious argument.

There is a serious risk of accidents in road tunnel schemes. The consequences of simple errors in driving in tunnels are illustrated in the case of the Caldecott tunnel. This extract from the official investigation serves to illustrate the possible dangers of road accidents in tunnels. This is from the official documents from California. They say:

"At about 12.12 am on April 7, 1982, several vehicles on a westbound California State Route 24 entered the north, No. 3 Bore of the Caldecott Tunnel near Oakland, California. A Honda car driven by an intoxicated driver struck the raised kerbs inside the tunnel and came to rest at the left edge of the roadway about a third of the way through the tunnel. It was struck soon afterwards by a following gasoline tank truck and tank trailer and then by an AC Transit bus which subsequently struck the tank trailer. The bus driver was ejected, and the empty bus continued west, exited the tunnel, and struck a concrete road support pier. The tank trailer overturned, and gasoline was spilled inside the tunnel. A fire erupted and heavy black smoke quickly filled the tunnel. The tank truck and tank trailer, the Honda car, and four other vehicles that had entered the tunnel were completely

destroyed by the fire. Seven persons were killed and two people were treated for minor smoke inhalation. The tunnel incurred major damage."

What happens should that happen mid-Channel? The National Transportation Safety Board determined that the probable cause of this accident——

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): It might well happen here.

Mr. Dalyell: Of course it might.

The board said that the probable cause of the accident was a combination of events involving first the erratic driving by the intoxicated driver of a passenger vehicle which stopped in a through-traffic lane, creating a traffic obstacle. It is perfectly possible for somebody who enters the tunnel from France or England to be intoxicated—there are no checks on that. A second factor in the accident was the inattention of the truck driver in causing his vehicle to strke the passenger vehicle. Many of the main lobbyists for a tunnel are the big truck-driving firms, whose drivers have to wait for the boats.

A third factor was the bus driver overtaking the truck too rapidly to avoid striking the passenger vehicle when it unexpectedly appeared in the path of his bus. There we return to the point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South.

Contributing to the cause and the severity of the accident was the presence of a flammable cargo tank truck and cargo tank trailer in the tunnel and the damage to the overturned trailer, which permitted a loss of flammable cargo and a fire. How does one control a fire in a confined space of parked vehicles? That question is at least worth answering.

Also contributing to the severity of the accident and injuries were the lack of adequate monitoring capabilities and the variable message signs or traffic signals at the entrance of the tunnel and within the tunnel, and the lack of a communications system betwen the tunnel personnel and the tunnel occupants, which if present, might have facilitated occupant evacuation.

Related to this is the proposition of driving over long bridges. I represent the area at the south end of the Forth brige. The vehicles have to go over, in moderate and high winds, two by two like the animals into Noah's ark, because, rightly, of police regulations. The winds in the Forth are nothing like those that blow up the Channel. Once again, problems are caused.

I refer to one letter of many that I have had, from Mr. G. D. Austin of 28 Alexandra road, Peterborough:

"Dear Tam Dalyell,

I noted your little piece in the newspaper about driving twenty five miles through a proposed Channel Tunnel, yes the Dartford tunnel is bad enough, we have to pass through the Dartford Tunnel when visiting my son in Canterbury, and I note when looking into the driving mirror that my wife always covers her eyes when going through this tunnel (she always prefers to sit in the back).

Now! on our last trip through the Dartford Tunnel in the late summer, the atmosphere was like a blue mist, being an ex-fireman I quickly realised the risk with what of course were petrol exhaust fumes, we were at the point of no return, so I at once instructed my wife and son, to close all windows tight, and to shut all ventilators in the car, even so the smell of exhaust fumes was terrific, and it was with a sigh of relief that we emerged at the Cambridge end."

If people cannot cope with the Dartford tunnel, how the heck does one know that they can cope with a Channel tunnel? Having skilled and experienced railway engine drivers — trained professionally — is one thing. Letting loose Uncle Tom Cobbleigh and all behind the wheel of a motor car is another.

We have to look at the effects of stress. The research by Dr. Ivor Brown and Dr. Roger Watt has shown that a large proportion of professional drivers flout the European Community regulations on hours of work. Many heavy goods vehicle and public service vehicle drivers are therefore suffering from the effects of driving fatigue, sleep loss and sleep disturbance. Many tourists are also fatigued from over-long periods at the wheel between home and their holiday destination. An enforced speed limit and the tedium of convoy driving may therefore depress to dangerously low levels the alertness of many commercial and private motorists using the tunnel, particularly from the southerly direction.

It is possible that the unusual conditions of tunnel driving will be sufficiently stimulating as largely to offset the effects of fatigue and sleep loss, at least initially. Thus, the effects of these forms of stress are likely to appear later in the journey through the tunnel, if they occur at all. Serious consideration must be given to the alleviation of these effects, if mid-tunnel multiple collisions are to be avoided. It is the multiple collisions, mid-tunnel, that concern many of us.

The two main effects to be guarded against are so-called "micro-sleep" and distraction. Micro-sleep, as the name implies, is a condition in which the driver actually loses consciousness for very brief periods. The experience is quite common. In a study of some 2,000 motorway and A-road accidents among truck and bus drivers, it was found that around 10 per cent. were preoccupied or distracted and that about 5 per cent. were actually asleep, just prior to the collision. Distraction occurs because fatigue causes the composite skill of driving to disintegrate. Thus, attention is given to events which may be of only peripheral interest for driving, and important sources of information are ignored.

Remedial measures against fatigue can therefore take two forms. The first is the establishment of advisory or mandatory, headways which are greater than the normally safe two seconds. This allows more time for recovery, even in the event of micro-sleep, but clearly it is not an infallible remedy. People are usually very good at detecting closure with an obstacle ahead. This ability could be aided by requiring the use of lights by all vehicles in the tunnel, but again this will be an ineffective measure if drivers are distracted. Are we to say that drivers will never be distracted? The introduction of special "arousing" stimuli to maintain the driver's level of alertness at an appropriately high level should be seriously considered.

Arousing stimuli can be visual or auditory. The former can take the form of verbal messages, light signals or markings on the road surface or tunnel walls. The latter can take the form of music, speech or warning tones. If one has to go to the length of introducing music or warning tones, one cannot be certain that there will never be major accidents. I repeat that, if this can happen on the M6, resulting in the kind of tragedy that has been reported to the House, how can one say that it will never happen on the Channel tunnel motorway? Repetitive stimuli produce a condition termed "reactive inhibition" in which the person ceases to respond appropriately to external stimuli. Any alerting system for drivers therefore needs to present continually changing sensations if it is to remain effective.

[Mr. Dalyell]

The auditory channel is more effective than the visual for alerting drivers, since it does not require the conscious direction of attention. However, specific applied studies would be required in order to establish the feasibility of auditory alerting devices, since ambient noise levels in the tunnel are likely to be high and warnings must not be pitched so high above them that they produce startle responses.

If auditory alerting techniques are adopted, advantage should be taken of the research on auditory warnings conducted at the MRC's applied psychology unit. The aim of this research has been to develop a technique by which the spectral characteristics of signal and background noise are specified so as to maximise the warning effect at minimal sound pressure levels in the signal.

Many users of the tunnel, at least in the summer, will be families. Young children will perhaps find the experience unpleasant and could then become an extra distraction for the driver. There is considerable scope for providing entertainment for young children. A painting of a different "Mr. Men" character at frequent intervals could help the time to pass quickly for them. In a similar vein, weather reports and pictures of tourist landmarks could be useful for passengers who are not quite so young. Clearly these should not be eye-catching to the driver, and high pressure advertising would be undesirable.

It is strongly recommended, say the psychologists, that some form of visual or auditory alerting system should be incorporated in the tunnel design to offset any difficulties which may result from driving fatigue or the tedium of tunnel driving. Research is required on the specific form that this signal should take.

If one goes to that extent to try to provide safety, how can any of us think that safety can be so certain as to ensure that there is not the nightmare of accidents which could lead to catastrophe?

What about the mixture of right-hand and left-hand drive vehicles in two-lane, one-way tunnels? What about the change at the French end? It is one matter to drive on the other side of the road after a two-hour boat journey, but if there are no boats and no bateaux and people suddenly have to change over, what difficulties will that create? We must remember that reflex actions are involved, especially when overtaking. Such details must be discussed now rather than later.

We could be the biggest Charlies of the 20th century. Let us imagine, week in and week out, sub-Channel pile-ups. It would be like the road between Cockbridge and Tomintoul. That is just about as reliable as the road from Banchory to Fettercairn in mid-winter. To imagine that we can have a successful road under the Channel is ill-conceived to a hazardous extent.

What work did the Department do before presenting a fait accompli? The trouble is that civil servants did not give evidence for the rail-only solution to the Select Committee because they did not think that Ministers would wear it. Civil servants should present to the Select Committee all the options, if there is a convincing answer to the problems that I have raised, either now or by letter in the new year, which should be made public to my colleagues. I would accept that publicly and privately. If a convincing answer——

Mr. Snape: Has my hon. Friend considered the role of civil servants, because like Ministers they are hostile to a rail link as they are hostile to railways anywhere else in the country?

Mr. Dalyell: I have a high regard for the Civil Service. I have been listening this afternoon to the Select Committee chaired by my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) which was examining Clive Ponting. Civil servants have difficulties, but I agree with my hon. Friend's substantial point. The Civil Service should be able to speak frankly and fearlessly, without ministerial pressure. However, I am upset that the TRRL apparently is not to be able to make its views known. I should like to have the candid view of those experts about the points that I have raised.

If Ministers at the Department of Transport cannot produce convincing answers, officials and Ministers will, I fear, find me as persistent, as difficult and as time-consuming as do their colleagues in the Ministry of Defence.

10.9 pm

Sir John Osborn (Sheffield, Hallam): Last week, on 9 December, I declared my interest in that debate because I am joint chairman of the all-party Channel tunnel group. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) is the other chairman. We have tried objectively to examine the options which the Government are considering. As I explained then, the group goes back about 50 years, and I have been associated with it for 25 years.

At a conference and exhibition in Lille last Monday, the French, because of this event's association with Trans Manche, insisted upon introducing me as the president of the British fixed link committee. I shall try to be objective, although the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has confessed his interest in and sympathy for the National Union of Railwaymen. In a humorous and delightful way he described the horrors of driving through tunnels.

They are also the anxieties of a motorist, whether he is stuck on the boulevard peripherique or the latest innovation of that—judging by the comments of some motorists who live near it — the M25. It must be accepted that statistically motorways are safer than other roads, though when an accident does occur it can be horrific, as many know to their cost.

I have previously said—I shall illustrate the reason for holding this view—that I like the idea of driving through a Channel tunnel. However, the point that the hon. Member for Linlithgow raised needs close consideration, for it is necessary to bear in mind the psychological reaction of drivers in a tunnel 27 miles long. Frankly, I do not know what that reaction is likely to be.

When the House debated this issue recently, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary pointed out that that and other matters were being examined by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, an organisation for which, I am sure, the hon. Member for Linlithgow has as much respect as I have, but is it possible to simulate the reaction of a driver in a tunnel for 30 minutes when at present no such tunnel exists? Is it possible to gauge that, whatever equipment is devised? I am not criticising the transport laboratory.

I, too, have made inquiries, being an enthusiastic motorist. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that the House of

Commons Motor Club, in which you have taken a close interest, is a body of which I have been chairman. By chance, that club visited the Institute of Advanced Motorists' centre at Chiswick today. The institute's theme is "Safe driving", and I have been president of the Sheffield branch for 25 years. I wanted to obtain the reaction of that institute, but I was not able to get a considered reply about whether it was safe to contemplate driving through 27 miles of tunnel. Thus, the motoring organisations are not united on whether the projects that have been put forward have been well worked out.

I have examined again the excellent report of the Select Committee. That Committee doubted the validity of the traffic forecasts and pointed out that they were not required by the Government to be submitted in the same format and to be based on common assumptions. The Committee added:

"It is consequently very difficult for the Committee to make detailed comparisons between the schemes."

I should have liked those detailed comparisons to enable me properly to discuss this issue, but I could not obtain them.

Those advancing the Channel expressway put the case over in Lille extremely well. They have their own views on the number of air travellers that the expressway will attract. They believe that passengers and cars with drivers will number 2·4 million in 1991, that there will be just over 1 million lorries, and that rail and foot passengers will number 4·4 million. I should like to compare those with other forecasts, and I hope that the Minister will give some statistics of traffic forecasts.

The promoters of the expressway said:

"All types of internal combustion engine vehicles can drive through at 100 km/hr (62·5 mph) taking 30 minutes to do so."

I was interested to read in one of their documents in respect of safety and the problems of fatigue or becoming mesmerised through driving for 30 minutes along a straight tunnel:

"There is not a shred of evidence to support the allegations of driver fatigue or uncontrolled operation of motor vehicles in excess of that incurred on motorways by virtue of driving through a 50 km properly designed tunnel . . . All modern devices which have been found useful for keeping the driver alert for open road and tunnel driving have been incorporated into the Channel Expressway, such as strong lighting, signalling, roadway surface variations, painting and closed circuit radio systems."

That was described in their video. I hope that the assessors will question whether that has been gone into in adequate detail.

Sir John Wells (Maidstone): Is it not true that the expressway scheme has been vetted by some eminent medical people? Naturally we want to have a governmental medical view, but I believe that the expressway promoters have gone to a lot of trouble on the medical point.

Sir John Osborn: Yes, and their report refers to that. The assessors must question that medical evidence, and I would wish to see that. Of course the adequacy of the ventilation must be questioned.

Euroroute has a slightly different idea of speeds—100 kph on bridges, 80 kph in tunnels and 50 kph on the islands—the spiralling projects. Euroroute states that it will install sophisticated traffic management and control systems using closed circuit television cameras, excellent lighting throughout the link, frequent patrols and 24-hour assistance teams to provide fast response. That is all nicely put down in the document, but how will it work in practice?

Will the spirals be safe? Will traffic be able to move without problems, without skidding or braking? The report says that the maximum gradient of 3·5 per cent. is half that on the Hyde Park underpass, and it points out that the radius of the helix is considerable, making the diameter rather larger then Trafalgar square. However, on a long journey, four of five circles, particularly for a heavy goods vehicle driver, could be a little detrimental. It says that two independent driver psychologists have reviewed the road link and reported that driving conditions on the bridge and tunnel sections will be as good if not better than on existing roads.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow makes me want my hon. Friend the Minister to look at the matter. Obviously I have looked at the traffic density put forward by the Channel tunnel group. It is definitely using a shuttle—a railway carriage in the old definition; one able to carry heavy vehicles, another with two tiers to carry cars. It points out that passengers will suffer less stress; that there will be none of the disorientation that could arise from driving through a long distance tunnel. There will be immunity from road traffic delays, traffic accidents and the vagaries of the weather. It also points out that accident rates on straight rail lines with no interconnecting rail line compare favourably with the accident rate on motorways.

I come back to my own experience. I have said previously that there was a debate on the bridge versus the tunnel in the early 1970s, at the Institute of Civil Engineers. The hon. Member for Linlithgow might have been there, through the parliamentary and scientific committee. A paper was given by General Sverdrop, who had just built the tunnel embankment bridge complex across Chesapeake Bay. I described how in 1972 I went across Transpo' 72 in Washington and met General Sverdrop. He arranged for me to visit that complex. I think that I crossed 22 miles in 17 minutes. I am not sure of my facts, because I might have been travelling above the American speed limit. I might have had a slightly fast driver. I liked that. However, the first year of work on Chesapeake Bay had a setback because a ship rammed into the bridge and it took several months to repair it, with a consequential loss of tolls.

Another experience was more than 30 years ago, when I drove from Milan to Zurich over the Lukmanier pass, which is next to the St. Gotthard pass. It was a tiring, all-day journey. I set off in the morning and arrived at around 8 pm or 9 pm, rather late for a business dinner. This summer I drove through the St. Gotthard tunnel—unaware that there was a tunnel, let alone that it was 17 km or about 10 miles long. I understand that it is planned to have two tunnels, but at the moment there is one tunnel with two-way traffic. There are notices telling cars and lorries to keep their distance and I had no problem in driving through that tunnel with the other vehicles, even in two-way traffic, although it was a novel and unexpected experience. I understand, however, that one or two drivers who have deliberately driven through the tunnel three times in quick succession to achieve the distance have found the 50 km drive far more exhausting.

Mr. Dalyell: The hon. Gentleman is a good driver.

Sir John Osborn: I like to think so, and I aim to be so. I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's kind words.

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): In the light of my hon. Friend's remarks and of the earlier comments, is not the answer to have a road and rail link both going through the tunnel so that the driver has a choice? If a driver feels tired, he can use the rail link and have his car transported, but if, like my hon. Friend, he regards it as a novel experience, he can choose to drive.

Sir John Osborn: My hon. Friend tempts me to embark on a full discussion of the wider options.

My hon. Friend organised an excellent meeting at the Institute of Advanced Motorists, which now has about 85,000 members out of perhaps 25 million drivers. A further 260,000 or so have taken the institute's test, so there might be 500,000 drivers in this country who can claim to be able to concentrate and to cope with any situation. I have no doubt that they could drive through a tunnel of the proposed length, but whether the entire 25 million would be capable of doing so is a matter of doubt.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow referred to a fire in a tunnel in the United States. Matters of that kind must constantly be borne in mind. I ask my hon. Friend the Minister, however, to inquire what problems the Italians, the Austrians or the Swiss have had with the Mont Blanc tunnel or with the St. Gotthard, which is currently the longest in the world. I believe that when drivers, especially heavy vehicle drivers, become used to driving through tunnels they temper their manner and drive more soberly, just as British drivers are now better adjusted to motorway driving than they were when motorways were introduced 20 years ago.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow has convinced me by raising the subject today and by his comments that the concept put forward by the Government in 1974 and by the Channel tunnel group now has much to commend it. My hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) has drawn me slightly on this. I should like him to consider the possibility of a shuttle as the first move. This would accommodate drivers who did not wish to drive through the tunnel. Certain categories of heavy vehicle which should not be allowed to go through the tunnel could be diverted to ferries or go on a shuttle if there is subsequently a road tunnel as an additional option. In my view, certain types of goods—for instance, dangerous chemicals and highly inflammable materials—should not go into the tunnel at all, but should always be carried by ferry.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North will agree that I am concerned about these issues. I am concerned that the two Governments should make the right decision, and also that that decision should not eliminate the use of ferries when the first tunnel is built. I have been drawn a little further than the question of safety, but I look forward to the Minister's reply.

10.25 pm

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): The House will be grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) for raising this subject and for the way in which he expressed his point of view.

In a way it is ironic that we should need such a debate, because one would have thought that a Government who were so obviously committed to some sort of fixed link —as the present Government appear to be—would have undertaken some research into the effects of driving long distances in a straight line. I hope that in his reply the Minister will address himself to the questions put by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow and also to some of the points that were understandably and relevantly raised by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Sir J. Osborn), who is co-chairman of the all-party Channel Tunnel Group.

I have not had the same number of years in that position as has the hon. Gentleman, but he will be aware, as other hon. Members are, that I have been in favour of a rail Channel tunnel for some years. I hope that that will not affect what I shall say tonight.

Sir John Osborn: Perhaps I should point out that my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Sir J. Wells) was chairman for many years. Along with the hon. Gentleman, I have been co-chairman for only 18 months. I would not like him to give the impression that I have been chairman for 25 years.

Mr. Snape: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. I should have said that in one way or another he has been connected with this project for considerably longer than I have.

The fact that we are having this debate demonstrates the enormous power of the road lobby, which insists that Governments of both political hues should cravenly accept that, whatever improvement is needed to our transport infrastructure, the road lobby must be catered for first and foremost. It continues to demand enormous public expenditure on such improvements on the ground that the lorry and private car should be allowed to go anywhere the driver wishes to go.

Mr. Greg Knight: What about the rail lobby?

Mr. Snape: If the hon. Gentleman has something to say, he should get to his feet in the normal way.

Mr. Knight: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. The points he is making could just as easily be applied to the rail lobby.

Mr. Snape: That might well be so, but, given transport history over the last 25 years, it is clear that the road lobby has been far more successful. Given the way in which the hon. Gentleman has put his view, it looks as if even he has succumbed to the argument that the private motorist and the heavy goods vehicle driver should be allowed to go wherever he or she likes and that it is the job of the Department of Transport to provide the infrastructure to allow them to do just that.

I make no apology for disagreeing with that view. I am well aware that many of the proponents of the fixed link have referred to public opinion polls which have shown that people would prefer to drive all the way across the Channel. There is nothing surprising about that. Ask average motorists whether they would prefer to go to the moon in a spaceship or to fly themselves, and a substantial proportion would say that they preferred to fly themselves rather than rely on someone else. I must therefore discount that sort of evidence.

The tragedy is that, if the Channel tunnel had been built when the idea was first mooted, it would have been a rail-only tunnel. I do not normally praise the foresight of Victorian business men, but I believe that Sir Edward Watkin, the chairman of the London and South-East Railway, was right when he said all those years ago that a channel fixed link—he did not say rail-only, but it was presumed that it would be—was sensible. In talking

of through trains from Waterloo to Paris and other continental cities, he was speaking with a great deal of foresight.

These days it is different. The fact that there is a demand for the type of options that the hon. Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) mentioned owes much to the strength of the road lobby. The lobby seems to forget that a torrent of cars and lorries will cause immense environmental problems in south England and north France. They will cause immense traffic and pollution problems in the tunnel.

Most hon. Members spend a considerable time behind the wheel of their cars. Some might say that they prefer to travel by some alternative means, as I do. I would prefer to go to my constituency—or at least as close as I can get to it—by rail, but it is often necessary for me to use my car. Those of us who travel a considerable number of miles are aware of the stupid behaviour of the minority of motorists, which can be seen most days, especially on the motorways but also on any trunk road or road in an urban area. Most people would be prepared to concede that an accident in a 21-mile or longer tunnel would have a greater effect than a similar accident on a motorway. Of course, our motorways are safer than most other roads, but, by the nature of the speed and type of traffic on motorways, an accident on a motorway is normally more serious than an accident on a minor road. I think that anyone who is prepared to be fair would concede that it is a matter of time before a major accident takes place under the English channel, if there is a fixed link that provides an opportunity for the two modes of transport—road and rail—to be used.

I do not want to be accused of painting an unduly lurid picture of what might happen. My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow showed the picture humorously and dispassionately in talking about accidents in tunnels in other parts of the world. I do not think that any of us would like to be in our cars if carnage of the sort that happened on the M6 a few weeks ago were to take place within the confines of a tunnel. I imagine that the tragic and appalling loss of life that occurred on the M6 would be multiplied considerably if there were a similar incident in a tunnel stretching across the Channel.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow talked understandably about the problems of exhaust fumes and the ventilation of a Channel tunnel. I am aware that some of the bidders have said that with the technological developments of recent years it will not be too great a problem to extract exhaust fumes from a tunnel, but there will be a navigation hazard wherever the fumes are extracted.

It is argued that it is safe to sail across or up and down the Channel. If we are talking about hazards below the Channel, we should talk also of some of the hazards on the surface, and I should like to know what research the Department of Transport has undertaken. We all know that there are about 300 near misses or near accidents in the Channel each year. If we were to add even more navigation hazards, as some of the schemes for the fixed Channel link are supposed to do, it is likely that there would be even more problems or accidents than at present.

I am aware that the Minister might say that there is nothing new about the bridge technology that would be involved. I accept that modern ships are equipped with better navigational equipment than hitherto, but, I have in mind a large tanker, such as the Torrey Canyon of 1960s fame, drifting out of control in the Channel and striking one of the likely navigation hazards. There are problems with a fixed link above the surface as there are with one below.

Of the schemes that are shortly to be considered by the Department, one of the front runners appears to be the Euroroute, which is the part-bridge, part-tunnel scheme. According to the newspapers, it was regarded as the favourite a few months ago. It has the drawback of featuring a bridge out to an artificial island, and my comments about shipping hazards must apply to an artificial island. Road traffic would have to travel to the island before descending a futuristic spiral which would take it beneath the sea.

If the average motorist is asked in a questionnaire whether he or she would prefer to drive across the Channel, I do not believe that he or she would pause to consider factors such as strain and sheer boredom, which would be involved in driving for a considerable time in a straight line in a tunnel below the sea. Those who built some of the long-distance roads in other parts of the world soon realised that straight-line roads were a likely cause of accidents. Most of us know who spend any time on motorways how easy it is to lose concentration and to indulge in what my hon. Friend described as microsleep. How much more likely it is to lose concentration and be more susceptible to microsleep when travelling in a straight line.

We all know that if we open the Channel fixed link to everybody, among those sitting behind the wheel will be a fair proportion of people with things on their minds that stop them from concentrating on their driving, a proportion of drivers who have drunk too much, a proportion of people who should not be allowed behind a wheel at any time, on any road—but who, thanks to our 50-year-old driving test, can drive legally — and a proportion of drivers, especially of heavy lorries, who will be anxious to get to their destination as quickly as possible because time is money.

That explosive mixture below the surface of the English Channel is an unacceptable risk. I hope that the Minister will tell the House what research is underway into those factors, and whether they will be taken into consideration before the Government announce which of the proposed schemes is to be accepted.

The hon. Member for Derby, North said that if drivers felt that they were not up to the psychological impact of driving through a tunnel, they could take the train. If he thinks about it, he will recognise that that is a naive way of looking at the matter——

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): The hon. Gentleman is daft, not naive.

Mr. Snape: I would not be so unkind. It is a naive way of looking at human reactions. If someone was driving from the West Country to Scotland, but not feeling quite up to that, it would be possible to put the car on a motorail train in ride to Scotland. But the number of impulse buyers of motorail tickets is infinitesimal, to say the least.

If a driver has decided to drive to the Continent and back, he will do so regardless of his physical condition or the availability of alternative services.

Mr. Greg Knight: The hon. Gentleman is slightly distorting what I said. My earlier intervention was in response to the point of my hon. Friend the Member for

[Mr. Greg Knight]

Sheffield, Hallam (Sir J. Osborn), who referred to the person who had driven through the tunnel once, then back through the same tunnel, then back again, and then back yet again for the fourth time.

While I accept that someone going on a long journey who has packed his car might, if he had the choice, decide to drive through the Channel tunnel, if on his return from his holiday he felt rather tired when he reached the link, if there is the alternative available of using a rail service, many sensible and reasonable motorists would decide to do so. That choice should be available.

Mr. Snape: I know that the Conservative party makes a song and a dance about availability and freedom of choice. The hon. Gentleman's view is unrealistic. A motorist in the position that he described will have psychologically decided to drive.

The argument that clinches the debate on the fixed link is this. Anybody with a grain, an ounce, an iota of common sense, rather than drive to a terminal at Cheriton, would prefer to load the car on to a train at a place away from the tunnel mouth, and pass the long journey in comparative comfort and safety on the train, through the Channel tunnel.

Notwithstanding the advanced technology from Japan that one of the fixed link advocates has talked about, I hope that the Government, despite their avowed dislike of commonsense solutions for transport, will opt for the only sensible cross-Channel link of the ones before them and for once will have the courage to say what Max Hastings, the well-known Left-wing journalist, said. He referred to the detestable road lobby. I hope that the Government will say "This time you are not getting your own way. We shall be sensible about our transport infrastructure." However, I believe that the French will tell them that anyway. Normally on the continent Governments are less susceptible to the wiles, blackmail and arm twisting of the road lobby than successive Governments have been in this country. I hope that the decision will be made for the Government by the French.

The only sensible solution is that of the Channel Tunnel Group. The points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow not only should have been discussed a long time ago and should form a part of the decision-making processes of the Department of Transport, but should provide an unanswerable reason why the only cross-Channel link that we should have is one connecting Britain with the continent by rail only.

10.47 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) helpfully sought to give an airing to several matters affecting the Channel fixed link, if any, and the decision that the Government have to make. I am grateful to him, for reasons that will come out during my remarks, for having initiated the debate, even at a later hour than both he and I thought it would be.

The hon. Gentleman drew attention to an experience that he had had while driving—*[Interruption.]*—through the Dartford tunnel. It is helpful that that was imprinted on his mind so clearly that he was able to describe it—*[Interruption.]* I do not think that the hon. Members for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) and for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) wish me to give way, but they keep interrupting from a sedentary position. I shall give way if they wish. *[Interruption.]* I apologise for interrupting the hon. Members' conversation, but I was trying to answer the hon. Member for Linlithgow, who raised serious points, which the House needs to examine carefully.

The point that I was trying to make was that the hon. Gentleman's Dartford tunnel experience, which was imprinted so clearly on his recollection, is the sort of thing that we have to try to ensure is covered when we make our assessments.

The hon. Gentleman also referred to the tailback that can be found on a motorway-type road and said that one nut can create havoc. That highlights vividly why we must consider the promoters' proposals carefully.

The hon. Gentleman rightly attaches importance to driver safety. It is a key element in our assessment. We are not simply considering the type of catastrophic event which he and his hon. Friend on the Government Front Bench——

Mr. Snape: The Minister is two years too soon.

Mr. Mitchell: ——the Opposition Front Bench described. We must be sure that the link is designed to cater for all conceivable conditions and incidents. It must therefore have adequate crossovers, high quality surveillance, traffic control equipment for close and constant monitoring and satisfactory contingency measures to deal with breakdowns or emergencies. The promoters' proposals are therefore being examined to see how they would cope with the three operating states.

The first hypothesis is the normal free-flowing condition, when the main need is to provide for the occasional breakdown. The second is when it is necessary for the operator to take a complete lane or carriageway out of service. That has not been mentioned, but it must be taken into account. The main need is the ability to divert traffic safely. Finally, we are considering the promoters' contingency plans to deal with emergencies. Important requirements in this regard are immediate response from rescue crews, clear and effective traffic signals and control of the ventilation system in case of fire.

Hon. Members have mentioned other aspects, which I shall ensure are drawn to the attention of our assessment teams. The drive-through schemes are being assessed critically on that basis. The Department's highway engineers, outside experts and experts from France will have to be satisfied on all of the counts that I have outlined before any road scheme could go ahead.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the findings of the assessment teams be made available to the Library for those of us who are interested? As I said in my speech, I was a little disappointed that the TRRL could not talk to the Library.

Mr. Mitchell: I give way to my hon. Friend.

Sir John Page (Harrow, West): Are some of the teams joint British and French teams, or is it possible that the two Governments will come to dramatically different conclusions?

Mr. Mitchell: The hon. Member for Linlithgow asked about the TRRL report. We will publish a White Paper. Some of the information from the promoters, for example, is commercially confidential. The White Paper will give the House as much information as can reasonably be made available. My hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West

(Sir J. Page) asked about the possibility of divergent views. We have 20 assessment groups, and the French have other groups covering the same issues. The two teams are in touch with each other. That does not necessarily mean that they will come to the same conclusions. So far there appears to be general consensus between the assessment groups about the risks that they have been asked to identify, consider and recommend on.

The question of driver psychology was also raised in the debate on 9 December, especially by the hon. Member for Linlithgow. That gave me the opportunity to satisfy myself that the question was being thoroughly considered in the assessments. The matter was also dealt with in the Transport Select Committee's report published on 2 December. Interestingly, the Select Committee referred to the need to be satisfied about the psychology, not only of driving through tunnels, but of loading and unloading vehicles from trains.

The promoters of the two fixed link schemes which involve drive-through tunnels have adduced evidence about driver psychology in support of their, admittedly different, schemes. Both promoters propose a range of measures to guard against any difficulty on that account. There will, for example, be permanent patrols throughout the link. Their evidence and measures are being examined closely by the assessment teams. For that work we are calling on the resources of the TRRL.

The hon. Gentleman said that the TRRL did not report direct to the Library or to hon. Members who had made inquiries. It is doing research for a client, and it is normal to report to the client—in this case the Department of Transport — and for the client to make available requested information. Certainly the hon. Gentleman's points will be kept in mind for the White Paper.

An important area in which we need to be satisfied is how the less expert non-professional driver will cope with what may be unfamiliar conditions. We need to know the answer to that question, both for safety and to determine whether the psychological effects of driving through the tunnel would affect usage and the viability of the scheme. The hon. Gentleman quoted extensively from a document which has come to me from the Channel tunnel group. I assure him that it has come into his possession, mine and that of the assessment teams. Therefore, they can take account of the points that are made.

Mr. Dalyell: I told the Minister's office that I would quote from it, as soon as I knew I was lucky in the ballot——

Mr. Mitchell: I am not complaining, but merely saying that the Channel tunnel group has sent that information, and that we have ensured that it has reached our assessors and is being covered.

The hon. Gentleman drew attention to the arguments in that document about the monotony and predictability affecting drivers, and the possibility of micro-sleep. Sometimes when hon. Members are in the House until late into the night and drive home, I am surprised that there are not more examples of that. The circumstances of the tunnel may induce boredom, lack of attention and drowsiness, and that must be considered carefully. There are ways which hon. Members have described, in particular my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Sir J. Osborn), which seek to deal with that problem. The question is whether they deal with the problem effectively.

The question of inebriated drivers has been raised, and of holidaymakers tired from long journeys. Some people drive long distances, for example across France, at the end of a holiday, flop into the ferry and are happy to put up their feet and let someone else do the work. I have no doubt that, should there be a Channel fixed link—we do not know that yet—many people will still wish to use ferries for those clear advantages.

Much more serious questions were raised by hon. Members who drew attention to the potential of fire hazards and of carbon monoxide hazards in long tunnels.

Mr. Dalyell: Rational people will use the ferries, where they can flop, but people who want to flop usually want to do it at home. Therefore, they will take the risk of using the tunnel. They will do so at the expense of others and themselves.

Mr. Mitchell: The hon. Gentleman is right to point out that danger. However, that danger also exists on our roads. The House will be well aware that tiredness slows people's reactions and helps to turn small accidents into major ones.

Mr. Rogers: Can the Minister illustrate in our roads system the comparable physical circumstances of a Channel tunnel—for example, a straight 20-mile road?

Mr. Mitchell: I am sorry that I gave way to the hon. Gentleman, because that was not the point raised by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape). I was trying to reply seriously to his question about multiple accidents and the pile-ups that can happen even on open roads such as the M6. We shall have to consider carefully what the effects will be, not just what we should do when a tunnel is jammed and the emergency services cannot reach the scene of an accident as easily as they might reach an accident on a motorway, but whether the tunnel ventilation will be able to cope in the event of such an accident. All of those are important matters of which we are aware, and during this short debate some of them have been highlighted. We shall ensure that they are covered by our assessment teams as they consider the problems.

All tunnel schemes require special ventilation measures. The invitation to promoters made it clear that the ventilation of a road link should comply with the recommendations of the PIARC tunnels technical committee report of October 1983. The Channel expressway scheme uses two systems of ventilation in conjunction: electrostatic precipitators and longitudinal jet fans. Electrostatic precipitators have not before been used in Britain, but they have a proven record in Japan and should be an interesting concept. Their purpose is to clean diesel smoke by scrubbing out the solid particles that it contains. The additional longitudinal jet fan system is required to dilute the carbon monoxide in the air. The hon. Member for Linlithgow referred to the Dartford tunnel. He also drew attention to a letter about the matter. It is clear that we are concerned, not only with the ability of precipitators to take out diesel smoke, but with the level of carbon monoxide, and whether we can ensure that people's health will not be put at risk by driving through the tunnel.

We are examining the details of the proposals as a matter of priority. The tunnel environment will have to meet acceptable standards in carbon monoxide levels and in visibility. In particular, we need to be satisfied about the performance of these combined systems in the range

[Mr. Mitchell]

of traffic conditions, and especially their effect in dealing with fires and smoke control. Ventilation shafts are being examined by two assessment groups. The engineering group is assessing the vulnerability of the shafts to impact from shipping. The risks to shipping and the implications for the International Maritime Organisation are being considered by our marine assessment team.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hallam drew attention to the ventilation in the Channel tunnel. He described his fears about the possible risks to shipping, and we have indentified that as something at which we must look carefully.

A number of other matters were raised by other hon. Members. The hon. Member for Linlithgow raised a question about civil servants and evidence to the Select Committee. I understand that none was called to give evidence to the Committee. I shall consider releasing the advice of the TRRL in the White Paper.

The hon. Gentleman also raised the problems of vehicles that might run out of petrol, experience a failure of lights in the tunnel and so on. I am grateful to him for having raised these matters, because again this adds to the valuable way in which, both this debate and the earlier debate, hon. Members have pointed their fingers at things that we have to consider thoroughly.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hallam drew attention to the differing forecasts of the traffic and asked me to publish them. Some of that is commercially confidential imformation, but we shall publish a White Paper. I can give a provisional timetable, which involves a decision in late January, a White Paper at about the same time, with a view to a treaty being signed in February.

My hon. Friend also spoke about the gradient on the artificial islands, and I shall certainly look at that. They are large, about the size of Trafalger square, and my hon. Friend's point is important. He also described his experience of driving through the St. Gotthard tunnel, which is about 17 km long. There is a great difference between his driving as an advanced driver and that of my elderly aunt, whom I would not encourage to take this journey.

Sir John Osborn: Surely there must be a fund of experience of good and bad drivers going through these tunnels. I hope that that experience, some of which will be coming from the Mont Blanc tunnel, will be made available to the French and British assessors.

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. Friend has drawn to my attention a point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Sir J. Wells) when he sought the Government's view on the medical aspects of drivers going through such long tunnels. We shall be drawing on the experience of the operators of Swiss and other long tunnels before we make a decision. We shall also be taking expert advice about driver behaviour in a road tunnel.

The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East said that it was odd that we should have this debate. It is not odd at all — it is helpful that the hon. Member for Linlithgow has given us the opportunity to hear more from the House. It is not odd, it is felicitous, because it has enabled me to recover from my disappointment at the absence of the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East from our proceedings when we last debated this subject. I am glad that the inhibition that kept him out of sight on that occasion has now gone.

Mr. Snape: I am grateful to the hon Gentleman. I hope to participate in many such debates——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should just like to thank the Under-Secretary of State for the seriousness and courtesy of his reply.

Juries (Practice for Challenge)

11.9 pm

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): In the debate on the Loyal Address on 7 November, in reply to an intervention from me, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary expressed concern about the current position on peremptory challenges of jurors. He was kind enough to say that he had read the speech that I had made the previous night in the debate on the Loyal Address, in which I put the case to curtail the right of peremptory challenge of jurors in Crown courts, especially in multiple cases with several defendants, which tends to handicap the police in their efforts to deal with violent and serious crime.

Before I develop that argument, may I please make two points clear? First, in the debate on the Loyal Address on 6 November I said:

"I do not blame defence counsel – they do their best for their clients within the rules. The rules are wrong, and it is up to us to change them."—[*Official Report*, 6 November 1985, Vol. 86, c. 92.]

That is consistent with early-day motion 152 which was tabled by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle), together with several other leading and distinguished parliamentarians who are also lawyers.

My right hon. and learned Friend's early-day motion says:

"That this House reasserts that so long as the right of peremptory challenge to members of a jury exists then, in accordance with the traditions of an independent legal profession, it is the right and duty of defence counsel to exercise that right if he considers that it is in his client's interest to do so, or if he has received instructions from his client to do so."

I added an amendment to the effect that I agreed with that.

Secondly, I believe that it is important that juries should comprise a broad cross-section of the adult population. We do not want to replace one slant by another slant.

Next, may I remind those right hon. and hon. Members who are not lawyers of the current position. In Crown courts, there are two types of jury challenge: peremptory challenge and challenge by showing cause. Under peremptory challenge, each accused person, through his lawyer, can challenge and remove three jurymen without giving any reason whatever. Thus, in a multiple trial where there are four accused there can be 12 challenges. Where there are seven accused there can be 21 challenges. Several defence counsel, either acting singly or getting together to work out their policy, can continue to challenge and to remove jurors until they get a jury that is broadly to their liking.

There is also the right to challenge jurors by showing cause. In that case, the accused has to show good cause why a juryman or jurywoman should be removed and to justify his objections. Nobody is saying that that second right should go. I would add that in criminal cases the prosecution also has the right to both types of challenge, but so far as I am aware nobody has suggested that the prosecution systematically uses that right to challenge in order to unbalance the composition of juries. Defence counsel, however, sometimes do so.

Lord Denning has said that peremptory challenge should be abolished. He said so in another place as recently as 4 December. In his book "What Next in the Law?" the passage on this subject caused such a reaction that he resigned as Master of the Rolls and the book was withdrawn from sale, but not before the House of Commons Library had obtained a copy. I shall now quote the relevant passage, which is headed "Packing the jury." Lord Denning wrote:

"It is now becoming apparent that the accused, by using the 'peremptory' challenge, may seek to 'pack' the jury-box with jurors who are sympathetic to his side, or at any rate to get enough so that more than two will disagree. The most important case in recent times was when there was a riot in a coloured area of Bristol called St. Paul's. The police moved in to make inquiries as to illegal goings-on there, such as prostitution and the like. They were attacked by mobs of the coloured people living there. They did not like their illegal activities being stopped. There was most serious disturbance. The police were outnumbered and had to withdraw for a time. Many police were injured. Twelve of the ringleaders of the riot were arrested. They were charged on indictment with riot at common law. The panel of jurors was composed of people of Bristol, both coloured and white. On the jury being called, each one of the twelve accused used his right of 'peremptory' challenge. So there were thirty-six challenges available to the twelve. They used up thirty-five of them. It was done so as to secure as many coloured people on the jury as possible – by objecting to whites. This meant that five of the jury were coloured and seven white. The evidence against two of the accused was so strong that you would think they would be found guilty. But there was a disagreement."

Lord Denning refers to another case, and continues:

"the right of 'peremptory' challenge has been used to secure for the defence a jury thought to be more sympathetic to the defence —such as long-haired youths—or timid women—according to the nature of the case. Sometimes it is used so as to object to any man who is dressed well or who looks intelligent or middle class.

This prompts the reflection: What is the justification today of the right of the accused to 'peremptory' challenges? Should we any longer permit the accused to exclude a juror simply because of his looks?"

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): My hon. Friend talks about packing a jury. How can any one challenging a juror say where the juror lives, what his occupation is, what his interests are, whether he is married or single—or anything about him? If one has no such information, how can one pack a favourable jury? Is not suggesting that that can be done unworthy of those people who spend so much time on jury service for which they are low paid?

Mr. Jessel: I hope that my hon. Friend will contribute to the debate later, since he made five or six points. I cannot answer them all. However, to tell what a juror is like one must go by the average and take into account certain characteristics. As a leading article in *The Times* said last June:

"Today the peremptory challenge seems to be used by defence counsel in an endeavour to achieve as far as possible a jury composed of people believed by the defence to be likely to be hostile to the prosecution and sympathetic to the defendant. Race, class, age, sex and education all seem to play a part in the selection process.

There is a discernible tendency to favour those who seem to be . . . unskilled and relatively uneducated . . .

The principle of random selection is fundamental to our jury system . . . What is now happening is that the right of challenge is being used not in order to achieve a fair and just trial but in order to defeat the principle of random selection and replace it by a partial, or in some cases a total, selection of the jury by the defendant . . .

If the jury system is to survive in this country, it must retain public confidence. The present abuse of the defendant's right of peremptory challenge is bringing the system into serious disrepute. This should be a matter of concern for all who care about jury trial. There is no longer any sensible justification for preserving the right of peremptory challenge, which ought now to be abolished."

I received a letter from a lady in Surrey a couple of weeks ago. She said:

[Mr. Jessel]

"I was recently a juror on a case involving the dealing and selling of heroin. The two defendants challenged five jurors, four of whom were elderly, the fifth was a very smartly dressed young man in suit and tie.

The drug squad and the police presented the fact very clearly and one of the defendants admitted that he smoked heroin and that it was found in the the squat where he and his girl friend lived. In spite of this, we were unable to return a guilty verdict.

Three youngsters on the jury were anti-authority, anti-police and in fact anti-everything to do with law and order. One said that all his friends were on drugs and he certainly wouldn't return a guilty verdict."

How can any hon. and learned Member justify that? We all know that it is wrong, that it is unjust, that it undermines the fight against violence and serious crime, that it undermines respect for the law, for the Bar and for the courts and that it must stop, and quickly. We know that it is going on and anyone who pretends that it is not or who plays down its importance is acting against the public and national interest.

I tabled an early-day motion a few weeks ago about the Cyprus secrets trial, in which I set out an account of a pre-trial meeting which took place at 9.35 am on Sunday 14 April in a private room at the Old Bailey. Because that motion was long, I will not read it. It was abundantly clear that leading defence counsel in the case got together and discussed how best to obtain a jury to improve the chances of acquittal — that is, to diminish the chances of conviction. It was, no doubt, a lawful exercise, but its revelation met with a deafening silence from the Bar Council.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clywd, North-West) : I do not wish to express an opinion one way or the other on the fundamentals of what my hon. Friend is saying. However, will he agree that a consequence of what amounts virtually to a selected jury may not merely be that guilty people are not found guilty but that people who are innocent walk from the court with a cloud over their heads because people will say, "The jury which found them not guilty was not a proper kind of jury."?

I am particularly concerned about that because, in the case of the Cyprus accused, one of them who was my constituent was, I am convinced, entirely innocent, and I believe that that was true of one or two of the others. They now feel that they have been acquitted by a jury about which there is some suspicion.

Mr. Jessel: I accept what my hon. Friend says, though it seems an added reason for getting rid of the peremptory challenging of jurors, or at least sharply curtailing the number of such challenges.

I should make it clear that a leading defence counsel in the Cyprus case—one of the seven—Lord Hooson, who was formerly a much-respected Member of this House, and his junior Mr. Britton were not present at the meeting to which I referred. All the other leaders were.

Challenges should be used to remove jurors who might be biased. Yet challenges are now being used systematically to introduce bias — a bias towards acquittal—and that is not fair to the public, who want to help the police deal with serious and violent crime.

The Home Secretary told me that the Crown prosecution service would look into the matter. I fear that that could take too long. The Crown prosecution service seems likely to have some teething troubles and manning and salary problems. It will not begin in London until April and in the rest of the country until October. We do not know how long it will take over its inquiries; how long the Government will take to consider its findings; or how long the Government will need thereafter to prepare legislation, which might then get caught up in an election period. Thus, any new law might not be on the statute book before 1988 or even 1989. Three or four years is too long to wait.

The Home Secretary was kind enough to see me in his rooms on 27 November last to discuss the matter. He referred to the forthcoming White Paper, early in the new year, on next year's Criminal Justice Bill. At that time he gave no undertaking about whether there would be any reference in the White Paper to the peremptory challenge system, but he said that it might be under consideration. I understand that since then there have been discussions between different Government Departments on the matter and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will reflect the need for urgency when he replies.

11.24 pm

Mr. Mark Carlisle (Warrington, South): We will all be grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) for raising this matter tonight, because it needs to be aired in the House, and I hope aired with some realism. I was delighted to hear my hon. Friend's acceptance that the use of the system that exists is not an abuse of the system by those who use it.

We are told that there is great concern about the use of the right to peremptory challenge. There is nothing new about this. The right to peremptory challenge by a defendant of members of the jury has existed for many hundreds of years. Indeed, under the Criminal Justice Act 1948 every individual defendant had the right to challenge without cause seven members of the jury. It was only in 1974 that that number was reduced to three. Throughout the years, as the Solicitor-General reminds us in a statement that he has issued, that right has been in existence, has been used and has been properly used by defence counsel on behalf of their clients.

So long as that right exists, it is the right and responsibility of defence counsel to use that right if they believe it to be in the interests of the client whom they are defending. My hon. Friend was good enough to say that he agreed with the terms of the early-day motion which I put down and which was supported by all parties. He was good enough to say that he was not suggesting that defence counsel had abused their right. But, unfortunately, he then went on to use language of the type which has led the press to suggest that counsel have behaved wrongly. He said that, when he raised the fact that counsel had objected to certain jurors in the spy case, it had been met by a deafening silence by the Bar Council. The only implication of that must be that my hon. Friend is suggesting that there was something that the Bar Council should have been inquiring into. I repeat that, so long as the right to object to jurors without cause exists, it is, in my view and I believe in the view of hon. Members and the legal profession, the right and duty of defence counsel to act in the interests of their client and to object to jurors if they are either instructed to do so or believe it is in their interest to do so.

The real issue is not the use that is made of the right at the moment but whether that right should exist. There I must confess that I share my hon. Friend's view. I am a radical on the issue. In 1970, when I was a junior

Minister in the Home Office and there was a right to seven peremptory challenges, I argued that we should not reduce that to three but should get rid of them entirely. I was overruled and those who overruled me may have been right. I take the view that the right of jury trial is a sacred right in this country and that every man has the right to be tried by his peers, but that he does not have the right to choose who those peers shall be. I question the right to peremptory challenge without cause rather than the right to challenge with cause. I appreciate, however, that that is a minority view in my profession. Most of my colleagues, whom I respect, believe that there is a case for limited use of peremptory challenge as a safety valve against an individual feeling that he is being tried by a jury which may be weighted against him. That may be right. Therefore, although I am prepared to reconsider the need for peremptory challenge at all, the matter is not so one-sided as my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham suggests.

In ordinary cases, I do not believe in using the right to peremptory challenge. I am no psychiatrist and I do not accept that a man in a jacket and tie is necessarily more likely to convict my client than is a man wearing a sweater. Indeed, I find the suggestion offensive to the man in the sweater. In my view, it is impossible to tell from the look on a juror's face what his attitude may be. In multiple cases, however, in which there are many defendants, I accept that defence counsel will use that right to try to eliminate certain jurors if they or their clients believe, rightly or wrongly, that the jurors in question are apathetic to the case being made for the defence.

Finally, my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham must not forget there is an equivalent right for the prosecution. Indeed, the prosecution has an unlimited right to stand aside anyone it wishes. I have no objection to re-examining the right of challenge because I personally question its validity, but if we do so it must be on the basis that we look at the rights of defence and prosecution alike. In other words, if we consider removing the limited right of the one we must also consider the unlimited right of the other.

Therefore, I say to the Minister: let us have a serious examination of the present situation if that is necessary, but let us not imagine that it is a major abuse of the legal system, because it is not. It is a limited area which may require examination—but in the light of reality and fact rather than in the heightened atmosphere of an individual case.

11.33 pm

Sir John Page (Harrow, West): I often think that debates of this kind, especially those which take place late at night, are of great importance because only those who are really interested in the subject bother to be here. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel), who I hope will shortly return to the Chamber to receive his bouquet from me, for raising this important matter. I am here because I thought that, as a non-lawyer amateur, I should stand shoulder to shoulder with my hon. Friend in case that proved necessary.

I am reminded of an occasion when I spoke—rather well, I thought — on the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure. On leaving the Chamber, I was greeted in the Lobby by Lady Gammans who at that time represented Hornsey. She said, "I would like to congratulate you on your tremendous speech tonight, Jack," and I said, "Thank you, Muriel. How kind." She replied, "I felt you were speaking for all of us who knew nothing whatever about the subject."

Tonight I speak for the well-mown and carefully nurtured grassroots of Harrow. There is definitely concern in the country about whether there is a possible abuse of the peremptory challenge in the jury system. As my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham will be aware, there is also a danger of what my hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) calls the "Alsatian syndrome". When an Alsatian dog attacks a person or child, for the following three or four weeks the newspapers are full of stories about Alsatians attacking people and there are demands for greater control of such dogs. Subsequently another fad occurs, and one never hears of the Alsatian attack again.

But that is not the case in this important aspect of our legal system. As the son of one lawyer and the father of two, I have always felt that the jury system should be preserved and is something of which we should be proud. As a pretty hard-line Conservative, I feel that there are dangers in changing, without the most careful thought, systems that have stood the test of time.

But my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle), in a well-measured, eloquent and impartial speech, reminded us that the last time peremptory challenge was tested was in 1974, when the number was reduced from seven to three. There is something innately fair in the opportunity for challenge to be made. In the case of a single accused the challenge of three merely on visual attitudes seems to be quite successful, but in cases involving multiple accused, I wonder whether each should have an equal chance of challenging three of the jurors.

A thought that I throw into the limpid pool presided over by the Under-Secretary is that, if there is more than one accused in a multiple case, there might be good sense in reducing the numbers that could be challenged by each individual. I would like to think that never more than nine out of 12 jurors could be replaced by this challenge.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): If all men are equal before the Crown, and if one man has a right to three challenges, how can it be argued that in a multiple defence case each man should be treated differently?

Sir John Page: I am grateful to the hon. and possibly learned Gentleman because I have been tussling with that very point this evening. If people are being jointly accused of a single crime, they may have a kind of joint attitude towards their defence — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) may laugh, but at least I have taken the trouble to think about the problem, and it seemed to me that that was not a bad way of getting over the hump.

Mr. Ashby: What happens if there are three people, all of whom are pleading not guilty initially and have all had their right to challenge, the jury is duly sworn, the prosecution opens, and two of them plead guilty?

Sir John Page: I am no Rumpole of the Bailey. I thought my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham got out of answering the question rather neatly when he said that he hoped that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West (Mr. Ashby) would have the opportunity of asking the question in his speech and answering it as well.

[Sir John Page]

Having suggested that there should perhaps be a limit to the number of challenges in one case, I wonder whether there is something to be said for looking at the catchment area for juries in cases where there is a major local interest in a case. It is difficult to find unbiased juries in an area where a local crime has had considerable local publicity. There is a danger in such cases of not having a completely impartial jury. An accused person has to be tried by his peers, and it is worth considering rather carefully who our peers are.

11.42 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): One of the investigators in the Cyprus spy trial is a constituent of mine. He came to see me recently, and I was very disquietened by what he said. I know that there is a Government inquiry into the circumstances which led up to the trial. As far as I am aware, the accused have not participated in the inquiry.

I have great sympathy with what was said by my hon. Friends the Members for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) and for Harrow, West (Sir J. Page), as well as by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle). The matter requires careful consideration, and I congratulate the Government on setting up the inquiry. The outcome should help us to arrive at a conclusion, not only as to the facts in the Cyprus case, but as to the principles on which peremptory challenge takes place.

I conclude my very brief intervention by saying that I have every intention of returning to the matter when the Government inquiry has concluded. I believe that it will lead to a very satisfactory outcome in the last resort.

11.43 pm

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): It is important to recall the more recent history of the jury system. In the days when Sir Edward Marshall Hall made eloquent speeches in which he quoted from the Greeks and the Latins, they were addressed to juries of householders. They were well educated people who had achieved a certain status in life. We enlarged the category of people who were eligible to serve on a jury as we spread the franchise—to women, to people over 21 and then to all people over 18. I am not decrying that, but we must look at the realities. Juries can be drawn from a complete cross-section of the population—good, bad and indifferent. We may have a jury on which some of the jurors cannot read or write, or on which some of the jurors are not the most intelligent people. There is a problem in fraud cases involving complex issues and many documents if the jurors cannot read, let alone understand, the documents. That is one of the fundamental problems that we must consider.

My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) has relied on anecdotal evidence with respect to a secrets trial, the details of which I understand to have been improperly leaked by some dishonourable member of the legal profession who had a duty not to disclose that information and who cannot therefore be trusted in any way. That dishonourable person gave anecdotal evidence about who decided within the meeting to take certain action with respect to the jury. Some people decided that one approach was a good idea, another group decided that another approach was a good idea, and yet another group decided that a third approach was a good idea. My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham is trying to say that a disgraceful action arose out of that, but it did not. As far as I can make out, the people had totally differing views on the composition of the jury. That is the fundamental problem to which my hon. Friend must address himself.

We do not know the composition of a jury. We can go on challenging until we are blue in the face, but we cannot be certain of what we are getting. That is right and proper. That is how it should be. In challenging juries, one has a right, as my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham said, to have "a broad cross-section of the population". I have seen juries comprising 11 women and one man and have thought to myself, "That is not a broad cross-section of the public. The population is not composed 11 : 1 of women. Should I use my challenge to reduce the ratio so that it is closer to the proportion in the population?" I have come across a jury composed of people of 50 or more and have said to myself, "That does not reflect the population. The jury can include people from the age of 18. Should we not have a few people on it who are between 18 and 25, or between 25 and 30?" Is that not a proper challenge to make?

One may look at the jury panel on the right and the jury panel on the left and say, "There are 10 people of 50 or more. Should I challenge three to try to get some of the younger people on to the jury?"

Mr. Jessel: Can my hon. Friend say with his hand on his heart that it is not his purpose when making those challenges to obtain a jury that will improve his client's chances of an acquittal?

Mr. Ashby: It is first of all my responsibility to do my best for my client, just as it is equally the Crown's duty to do its best for its client. The Crown has the police as clients. It is my duty to try to get a good cross-section on to the jury. With my hand on my heart I can say that, by and large, I challenge juries to obtain a good cross-section — to use my hon. Friend's words, "a broad cross-section of the population."

I speak for my colleagues at the Bar, with whom I have discussed the nonsense that has been talked about juror challenging in the past few weeks. Almost all my colleagues at the Bar take the view that it is nonsense. They have all asked, "How can we pack a jury when we do not have a clue who the jurors are? We do not know where they come from. We do not even know which part of London they come from, for example. We do not know what their views are or anything else about them."

Mr. Jessel: Why is the peremptory challenge employed?

Mr. Ashby: My colleagues at the Bar all say that some juries are not composed of a broad cross-section of the public. There are some unbalanced juries.

If I could be sure of a number of factors, I should happily give up the right of peremptory challenge. First, I look for an intelligent jury. If a barrister has a good defence, he will want to submit it to an intelligent jury. He will not want a dumb jury to listen to his defence. Secondly, I should be happy to revert to juries of householders, but that will never happen and so it should be forgotten. Thirdly, if I could be assured that a jury consisted of a good cross-section of the public, I should be happy with it. I want to know that the jury is composed

of men and women in equal numbers and that it is representative of age groups in the population and of the area. That will not be achieved by the present system, and that is why the preremptory challenge is available.

I intervened in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham because I wanted to pay tribute to juries. I have been involved in a case which has run for five weeks, and the jury gave up its time to hear it. Jurors are virtually unpaid, and they give up their families, work and many other things. In the five-week case in which I appeared, the jurors listened to the evidence day after day with the greatest attention, as well as to counsel's closing speeches and the summing-up. I pay tribute to jurors throughout the country for undertaking that responsibility willingly.

To talk about juries being packed, to suggest that some jurors are less worthy than others and to refer to the jury in the secrets trial as one which was incapable of coming to the right decision on the evidence, is to mount the most scurrilous attack on the integrity of honourable and decent people. I challenge my hon. Friend to name one person on the secrets trial jury who was not honourable and did not come to his decision rightly on the evidence. The jurors came to their conclusion on the evidence. My hon. Friend was not there, and neither was I.

I listened to my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham referring to Lord Denning's anecdotal story about the Bristol riots. When a number of black persons come from a black area and they are charged with the most serious offences, is it not right and proper that they should ask, in keeping with having a broad cross-section of the population, that there should be a few coloured people on the jury? Where is our idea of justice and fairness? It is an idea that has evolved over the years. It has created a wonderful system which is the pride of our nation. It is one which we have exported, and one which is held in the highest esteem by many countries throughout the world. Where is our sense of value that we should try to denigrate something that has grown up well and honourably over the years?

The jury system is a well tried and true system; it is an honourable system; it is the best system that we can devise. We should uphold it, not denigrate it. What other country would acquit six people who had allegedly confessed to what amounted to treason? It says much for our system—and I have been proud to be a party to that system for 23 years—that that should happen in such a serious case. Indeed, the system is highly thought of by other countries.

What do people want? Do they want a system of rough justice? Do they want juries to be packed so that those who may be innocent are convicted? The tenor of the debate has been totally to misunderstand the system — that people are innocent until they are proved guilty; that each individual is to be tried and treated as an individual so that each should have the right of jury challenge; that cases should be tried separately and that evidence against persons should be judged separately. Those six people may have been on trial together, but they were not considered as a lump; each was considered separately.

I entirely disagree with the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham. I believe that three peremptory challenges are right and proper to ensure a proper balance and a proper cross-section of the population.

11.57 pm

Mr. Neil Thorne (Ilford, South): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) on raising this important issue. It should be aired in the House because, whatever hon. Members have said this evening, there is great cause for concern in the country. If there is cause for concern, the matter should be debated here. Where else would we want it to be debated? The question of peremptory challenges is a matter of some concern.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West (Mr. Ashby) for explaining why the number of challenges has been reduced from seven to three. I now understand that in the old days it was householders who usually served on juries, so by and large they were people of more mature years.

There are a number of defects in our present system because we do not provide that those who have been recently convicted should be excluded from jury service. Nor do we take account of those who have been awarded suspended sentences. When the present system was introduced, suspended sentences did not exist, so we have a right to reconsider the matter. Anyone who has been convicted, has served, or been awarded, a suspended sentence of two years or more, should be excluded from jury service for life. Clearly they are not the sort of people who are likely to apply a clear mind to the matter.

That causes considerable concern. I have no objection to people aged 18 serving on juries, but several people in the lower age bracket of 18 to 25 have no interest in serving on most juries, and those who serve with them confirm that. They are only anxious to get out of the jury room as quickly as possible, which is not good for justice to be seen to be done. Therefore, people under 25 should have the right to opt out of jury service if they wish.

I should like the age limit to be pushed up because people of 65 and over could ably and willingly serve on juries. Even some judges are considered capable of working until the age of 70, so there is no reason why people up to 70 should not be allowed to serve on juries, which might help considerably.

The problem today is that so many people try to get off juries when they are put on them. Many self-employed people and others could give extremely good service on juries, but they do not have the time because they are not sufficiently rewarded for the service that they provide. That is a major handicap. Undoubtedly the people who are given a pittance for their jury service do everything they can to get out of it. That is not good for justice.

I have watched with concern the high rates of acquittals in some courts—some are as high as 75 per cent. I am in doubt whether that is because cases are brought unsatisfactorily in the first place or because the juries are not capable of considering them adequately. I fully accept that juries that have given many days, if not weeks, to considering a case, are to be thanked for their public service, but unfortunately many of the people who could contribute greatly to that work are using every opportunity to be excluded.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West was honest in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham when he was asked to say that he did not try to choose jurors who would help his case. Rightly, he said that he must put his client's interests first. That is fully accepted. I do not think that anybody in the House would believe that that was the wrong thing to do.

[Mr. Neil Thorne]

When my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) was challenged by my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham about what interest the Bar Council should take, he was trying to say that the Bar Council should take an interest in the matter, from the point of view of justice being seen by the public to be done. If it felt that that was not so, it should be expressing an opinion, not allowing the problem to run on. My right hon. and learned Friend is absolutely right in his view. I fully support him in saying that peremptory challenges should be abolished. It does not stop people being challenged, but the explanation will have to be given to the judge, which is always right and proper.

My constituents have told me of their experiences. One bank manager told me that when he was called for jury service, on the first day he appeared in a blazer and grey flannel trousers, and he was objected to each time he appeared. The next day he appeared in sweater and jeans, and no objections were raised to his appearance. That seems strange. For the rest of the week he played a full part in the court.

Mr. Bermingham: Does not the hon. Gentleman accept that if one looks at any jury panel on any day, one sees people dressed in almost anything? It is almost impossible for somebody appearing on behalf of the defence or the prosecution to know anything about them from their dress. To draw conclusions because of anecdotes is to mislead the public, and indeed the House, about the reasons why objections might be obtained. Would it not be fairer to say that people appear and serve because they believe in serving? We should stop the farce of alleging that there is a devious motive in objections.

Mr. Thorne: If someone finds that his dress has a bearing on whether he is objected to, he is entitled to express such an opinion. It is also right for him to express some anxiety if he is objected to in court while wearing a collar and tie. I appreciate that a person's dress does not necessarily mean that he will deal with an accused person in a given way.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): They could be bank managers.

Mr. Thorne: Indeed they could. One, a constituent, spent the rest of the week in sweater and jeans serving on the jury. My advice to bank managers who want to serve on juries is to wear sweaters and jeans.

Mr. Rogers: Would not the hon. Gentleman's argument be completely destroyed if the bank manager turned up on the first day in jeans and sweater?

Mr. Thorne: He would not have been rejected. That proves my point. My advice to people who want to do their bit is to appear in such dress if they do not want barristers to object to them. That is unfortunate.

Mr. Ashby: Will my hon. Friend please explain how he knows that his constituent would have been rejected on the first day? It is fascinating us all.

Mr. Thorne: I can only say that that was my constituent's experience. He was objected to each time he appeared in the jury box on the first day and was not objected to for the remainder of the week. We must draw our own conclusions whether he was rejected because of his dress.

This matter requires careful consideration. My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham is right to draw it to our attention and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to give some encouraging news that the Government have the matter under consideration and will seriously consider doing away with peremptory challenges.

12.7 am

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): It was a pleasure and a relief to listen to the hon. Member for Leicestershire, North-West (Mr. Ashby) make such a spirited defence of juries. If I had not heard him, I should be getting deeply depressed by some of the speeches that I have heard today. They were not founded in fact and were insulting to many juries.

Whether intentionally or not, the hon. Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) has gone a long way to undermine public confidence in the jury system by the cheap publicity that he has obtained in the handling of this case. He has done it unacceptably and he should review his method of tackling the matter.

We have heard comments from the hon. Member for Twickenham and, I am sorry to say, from the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) about the type of dress and the type of person who might be acceptable in a jury. The hon. Member for Twickenham talked about working-class people being less likely to convict.

Mr. Jessel *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Soley: The hon. Member strongly implied that. He also implied that young people were less likely to convict. The hon. Gentleman should look at the evidence that is produced by the Government whom he supports. He should examine the British crime survey and other surveys, which show that the typical victim of crime is the young working-class male—young blacks as well. If any lawyer or solicitor is stupid enough to select people from working-class or black backgrounds simply because he believes that that will get his client off, he is wrong, because those people are more likely to take an authoritarian view towards people appearing in court.

Mr. Jessel: Did the hon. Gentleman hear me say almost at the beginning of my speech that I wanted to stress that a jury should be a typical cross-section and that I emphasised that I did not want to replace one slanting with another?

Mr. Soley: I heard the hon. Gentleman say that, but if he reads his comments in *Hansard* tomorrow he will find that he implied that working-class people and young people were likely to be anti-authoritarian and to let people off. I shall have to look carefully at his words about ethnic people, because I am not sure whether he also included them in that statement. That is wholly wrong, even according to the Government's evidence.

The hon. Gentleman could have told us that every member of the jury was vetted by the special branch. Let us have some balance. If we are to have peremptory or other challenges for the defence, we should extend them to the prosecution. If we are to have some form of vetting, let us vet both sides. My advice would be to defend the jury system, not undermine it.

The failure to get convictions in courts has nothing to do with the jury system. The Government and the hon. Gentleman are worried about the failure of their law and

order policy. They cannot face the increase in crime. In 1984, one half of all the Crown court acquittals were by judges, not by jurors. Is the hon. Gentleman saying that we should sack all the judges because they are not doing their job properly? Are they undermining the police as the juries are, according to the hon. Gentleman? Perhaps the judges are wearing the wrong clothes. Perhaps they are working class. I rather doubt it. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman had better start attacking the judges too.

In 1983 the Home Office conducted a study, and the Minister will undoubtedly advise his Back-Bench Friends on it. It found that jurors were not becoming more cynical or doubting of prosecution evidence. Indeed, I am not sure why we need the study by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr. Bermingham: Does my hon. Friend agree that if we were to carry out a survey of acquittals in the metropolitan area, as opposed to in the shire counties, we might find that the rate of acquittal in the shire counties was much lower? Does he further agree that that might have something to do with the quality of preparation for the cases, as in the shire counties there are professional prosecuting teams for that? One finds that the standard of preparation is better in those areas.

Mr. Soley: My hon. Friend has much more knowledge of the law than I have, and I shall take his word for that. I am sure that he is right.

The hon. Member for Twickenham is saying that he did not like the result of the Cyprus case. Therefore, he wants to change the jury system. I do not accept that. The jury system is much more important and longer lasting than one particular case, be it right or wrong. I cannot judge that, but I accept that 12 citizens can and should judge a case properly. Juries were never meant to be a rubber stamp for the Government or case-hardened judges.

Juries are there precisely because they represent the community. They are not supposed to be lawyers or to have detailed knowledge of the law, or to come into court with preconceived ideas. They are there to listen to the evidence that is put before them and to make up their minds on the rights and wrongs of the case. That is part of the democratic judicial system, which we have had for a long time, and we should go a long way to protect it.

The prosecution has the power of the state behind it. At present, the defence can rely only on appearance. It cannot even know the occupations of jurors. In Scotland, it is possible to know their occupations. Of course a defence might wish to challenge a shop manager on a jury if his client is charged with armed robbery in a shop, but he would not be challenging only on appearance. The right to challenge is exercised to obtain a different sexual balance, as the hon. Member for Leicestershire, North-West said, or a different racial balance. There is nothing wrong with that if the defence lawyer believes that the jury is out of balance.

The hon. Member for Twickenham gave the example of the lady who wrote to him about a drugs case. He should have been a little stronger and clearer in his principles when he answered that lady. The implication of the way in which he used her letter in this debate was that he would wish to exclude from the jury anyone who was in any way sympathetic to drug abuse. I have no desire to rake over the past, but the implication is that anyone who appears before a jury on a drink-driving charge would want to exclude from the jury everyone who believed that drinking was bad. Anyone opposed to drink might be seen as opposing the defendant. What sort of jury system do we want? What right do we have to challenge the attitudes and values of all the people in the jury system? I would have replied to that lady: the jury system is supposed to represent a cross-section of the community. In that community are people of different ages, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, views, attitudes, beliefs and everything else. That is what we should aim for, and that is what the right of challenge is about.

The Crown prosecution service is supposed to conduct a study, but I am not sure why we need it, in view of the 1983 Home Office study. If, according to the Home Office, there is no sign that jurors are more likely to be biased against the prosecution than they were previously, why are we asking the Crown prosecution service to study the matter? Why on earth are we asking the prosecution service of all people? That service is on the side of the prosecution, and no one has yet suggested that the Crown's rights should be restricted. It would be nice if the Crown Prosecuting Service studied the matter and decided to restrict the rights of the prosecution to challenge or vet. That would at least put some balance back into the system.

I draw to the attention of the House a few quotes from the debate which the hon. Member for Twickenham introduced in the press, when he used the press to make his case. The *Solicitors' Journal*, which wished to introduce hooded jurors, said:

"Most effective would be gowns buttoned up to the neck and hoods similar to those worn by visitors to a hospital operating theatre when surgery is in progress."

One could add that such hoods are worn when raiding banks or by members of the paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland. The Home Office response was:

"A jury ought to be a random selection of people and it would be artificial to insist on a standardised form of dress."

I wish that that response had been tougher and that the Home Office had said that such suggestions should not be considered acceptable in a sophisticated democracy. It is an insult to that democracy.

In the *Sunday Telegraph*, Paul Williams—who also appeared to wish to put the knife into juries—said:

"Those most likely to be challenged are middle-class matrons."

That is news. I do not know whether it is the experience of the hon. Member for Leicestershire, North-West that lawyers always challenge middle-class matrons. Paul Williams continued:

"they have probably themselves suffered at least one theft and are likely to be sceptical about the ludicrous alibis often presented. In the case where I played my little trick"—

he was talking of the trick that he played on the court—

"it was clearly the comfortable-looking ladies who were on the top of the list of objections."

Mr. Williams is making many assumptions, but perhaps more stupidly he seems to have misunderstood the pattern of crimes. Middle-class ladies are not highly represented in the crime figures. Again, these are prejudices based on fiction, not fact.

My final quote is from the Solicitor-General. I was a little puzzled when I found myself at short notice on the Front Bench to answer this debate, because my immediate reaction was that this should be Solicitor-General business. Only when I had discovered a little more about the law did I realise that the debate involved the Home Office. I saw that the Solicitor-General is strongly in

[Mr. Soley]

favour of the jury system, and I give him full credit for that. In response to the hon. Member for Twickenham, he said:

"The right to make a peremptory challenge of jurors without giving a reason has existed for the last 600 years. Until recently each defendant was allowed seven peremptory challenges."

He went on to refer to the 1977 Act, and said:

"So long as that law remains as it is, then counsel have a right and duty to use the peremptory challenge as they conscientiously think best for the interests of their clients."

I agree with the Solicitor-General, and I hope that the Minister does as well. For one wild moment I thought that he had been sent out to have tea with the Secretary of State for Defence to work out their policies against the Government. I hope that the Minister will come out strongly in favour of what the Solicitor-General said.

There is a major law and order problem, which to a considerable extent has been created by the Government's policies. They have a disaster on their hands, but there is no way that they can use the police and manipulate them to deal with the social and economic consequences of their policies, and using the jury system as a scapegoat for defendants getting off in court will not be acceptable.

This is a serious matter, and any attempt to continue the erosion of the rights of juries is a retrograde step. We should at least be looking at a balance between the rights of the prosecution and those of the defence. If we can do that, some good will have come out of the debate.

12.27 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Mellor): This has been a lively and absorbing debate and it is a genuine pleasure, notwithstanding the hour, to have the opportunity to respond to it.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) has rightly reminded us of the sage words of my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, and in particular his remark about the antiquity of the jury challenge. From as far back as 1509 comes a statute that restricts challenges to 20 for each defendant, and we know that, in the Juries Act 1825, provision was made for a right to challenge up to 20 jurors per defendant in a case of murder or felony, and up to 35 challenges for a case of treason.

We also know that changes have been made in this century, so that in 1984 there was a reduction to seven in the number of challenges that each defendant could make without showing cause. Even then, there was pressure to abolish the right altogether, and no one must think that what my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) has said is raising a new matter. He speaks as the latest in a long line of hon. Members who have expressed concern about this matter. These points were raised during the course of a debate in 1977 in which my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) played a leading role. As a consequence of those debates, and the concern that was expressed, the number of peremptory challenges permitted per defendant was reduced from seven to three.

It is important to begin by setting out why peremptory challenge has been permitted for so long in our law. It was very well stated by Mr. Arthur Davidson, who was then the Parliamentary Secretary, Law Officer's Department, in the debate on the Report stage of the Criminal Law Bill in June 1977. I cannot improve upon his formulation. He said:

"If someone, for whatever reason, thinks that a particular person is likely to be prejudiced against him or, for some reason, he feels that that person is not likely to give him a fair hearing, it is right that he should have the right to challenge him."

That is the basis for the peremptory challenge having been permitted. It was put very eloquently by Blackstone, one of the great creators of the English legal system. Many years ago, in justification of the system, he referred to the right to object to a person whose looks the defendant does not like. He said:

"It is . . . a provision full of that tenderness and humanity to prisoners, for which our English laws are justly famous . . . As every one must be sensible, what sudden impressions and unaccountable prejudices we are apt to conceive upon the bare looks and gestures of another; and how necessary it is, that a prisoner (when put to defend his life) should have a good opinion of his jury, the want of which might totally disconcert him; the law wills not that he should be tried by any one man against whom he has conceived a prejudice, even without being able to assign a reason for such his dislike."

The point that Blackstone makes is related to the occasions when almost all felonies were capital offences. Therefore, the right to alter the character of a jury in a capital offence trial might take on a rather different perspective from the right to alter the composition of a jury in a minor matter that is before a Crown court.

May I turn to the 1977 Act and perhaps have the attention of the hon. Member for Hammersmith as I do so, because I am trying to reply to some of his points? Whether or not he agrees with the concern about peremptory challenges—the same is true of my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West (Mr. Ashby)—that concern has never been confined to one side of the House. it has a lengthy provenance and it cannot be dismissed simply as an unfair response to a particularly celebrated acquittal or, even more inappropriately, as an attack upon the jury system.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith may be interested to know that the person who played the leading role in the 1977 changes was somebody whom he would be pleased to hail as a defender of civil liberties in this country. He was a man of great experience in the law and in the Home Office, Alex Lyon, the former Member for York. In the debate he said:

"it seems to be an anomaly that an accused person, or his counsel, should be able to prevent someone from going on a jury simply because, for some visual reason, he seems to the defence to be inappropriate for the particular trial . . . We have to ask ourselves whether in principle it is right. I have argued that it is wrong in principle."

That view, interestingly, was strongly shared by another hon. Member who is no longer a Member of this House; however, he was held in considerable respect as a lawyer of integrity, as I know that my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South will agree. That was Mr. Edward Lyons. In that debate he said:

"It is obvious to anyone who goes to the Old Bailey that most of the peremptory challenging that goes on there is based on calculation about whether a particular juror is likely to be helpful or not to the defence."

At a later stage he said:

"At the Old Bailey—although it must be said that many counsel refuse to participate in this practice—the defence appears to operate in favour of whoever is likely to be least intelligent and most anti-establishment. The very young, those without ties and those who look stupid to the challenger are not challenged. But it is expected that the middle-aged may be worried about their houses being burgled and may not be

sympathetic, and therefore it is thought best to get them off the jury. Those considerations are not proper. They are designed to achieve not a jury best able to deal with a particular case but, often, one which is least able to deal with the case."

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West might not agree with that, but please let it not be said that my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham is off on a mad frolic of his own. This case has a decent provenance and is argued by people whose experience of the law and of practice in the courts is every bit as lengthy and distinguished as that of my hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South, who in a previous incarnation was Member for Runcorn, made then a speech which reflected the points which he made today. As ever, he was right at the heart of the matter. I cannot improve on his phraseology. He said during the debate in 1977:

"The principle we should work on is that the individual is entitled to be tried by 12 of his fellow citizens, but he has no right to choose who those fellow citizens should be." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 28 June 1977; c. 642-9.]

That is an eloquent statement of the case against the peremptory challenge; it deserves not to be satirised and not to be regarded as an attack on the jury system. It should be recognised as a strong, dignified and sensible argument when we consider the detail of our criminal justice system.

In that light, I detain the House about the Cyprus case. I do not know whether what was recounted in the document put before the House is right or wrong. One counsel apparently wanted a young, middle-aged, middle-class jury, another wanted a young, working-class jury. I am not sure what a young, middle-aged person is. It is what a sycophant would call you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Another silk is alleged to have said:"We couldn't improve on fate." That piece of philosophy, no doubt, was worth the fee charged. Determining a person's attitude is like asking how long is a piece of string. We do not want to worry too much about that.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General was right. It is permissible under the rules for this to be done and counsel should not be blamed for doing what the House has said is right, after hearing the opposite arguments. If counsel chose not to exercise that right they would be blamed. But should they be put in their present position?

Anyone reading the document is bound to find it unedifying. We must question whether the practice should be allowed to continue. We must ask whether it contributes to the elevated principles upon which we pride ourselves and our criminal justice system rests. That is a proper question to ask and Government must try to answer it. That is exactly what we are trying to do.

Let us be clear that this is not an attack on the jury system. I do not blame the hon. Member for Hammersmith or my hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire, North-West for saying that it is, because no less a person than Mr. Bernard Levin, perhaps one of the most noted polemicists, said in *The Times* the other day:

"I find the increasing pressures on the jury system, of which this particular criticism constitutes only the latest of many, alarming and even sinister."

But surely we show our respect for the jury system by evaluating it and subjecting it to scrutiny, and particularly any aspect which might threaten the reputation and standing of the system. We cherish it by keeping it in good running order, and that means making changes from time to time.

That is exactly what we have done. We radically changed the basis on which jurors are selected less than two decades ago. We widened the base for disqualification for people serving on juries on the basis that those with criminal records should not serve, and in this Parliament we doubled the number of people disqualified from serving on juries.

Mr. Soley *rose*——

Mr. Mellor: No, only a few minutes remain and I will not give way. The hon. Gentleman overran the time by which I suggested he might finish.

The only way to achieve our aim of preserving the integrity of the system and public confidence in it is to take these issues as they arise and examine them sensibly, and that is what we are doing. The Home Secretary said in the debate on the Address that we shall be asking the Crown prosecution service to gather some factual information on the use of challenges — by the prosecution and the defence—and our research and planning unit will assist in designing the survey and the analysis of the results.

We hope that the Director of Public Prosecutions can make a start on those cases in which he is involved now and that the Crown prosecution service, which comes into force in April in the metropolitan counties and in October in the rest of the country, will continue from there. No survey can be conclusive on all the matters that have been canvassed in this debate, but it can provide a factual base, enabling us to get away from some of the anecdotage which, while in some cases it is illuminating, can in others be misleading.

We must recognise that for those who believe that, as a matter of principle, the defendant should not be able to influence the composition of the jury, no amount of research will make any difference to what is a perfectly honourable and considered position. In 1977, by consent of the whole House, a reduction was made from seven peremptory challenges to three, without any clearly researched basis at that time. There can be no reason why, in the interim, consideration should not be given to a further reduction—from, say, three to one—without any necessity for further research on the matter. The question of an upper limit on total challenges in multihanded cases also arises, as does the position of the prosecution and their right to stand by.

I wish to make it clear that the Government have reached no settled or concluded view on this matter, and it would have been wrong for us to do so at this stage. I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South that this is not a major abuse but a limited area that should be looked at again. I endorse that observation and that, calmly and sensibly, is what we are doing.

No one has any interest in delay, and I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham that there will be no question of unnecessary delay. I hope that we shall arrive at a conclusion that will commend itself to the whole House on a matter which, if it is interesting enough to arouse the passions that it has aroused tonight, is certainly interesting enough for mature reflection and a considered response in due course.

City of London (Fraud)

12.38 am

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Recent happenings in the City of London have given rise to great public concern. What strikes Labour Members so forcefully is that those happenings seem not to have been treated by the Government with the same concern or urgency. Indeed, who believes that we would be having the debate tonight if it were not for the persistence and insistence of my hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore)? I am pleased to see that they are present.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has attempted to claim otherwise, and we heard his false claim yet again yesterday. That, of course, was graphically exposed today for its falseness. But, even if his claim were true, it should be part of the Chancellor's duty, and it should not be something extraordinary that he should come to the House and claim bleatingly that he had done his duty. His response should have been normal and ordinary.

Of course the matter that we are dealing with tonight, fraud in the City of London, is extraordinary. It is extraordinary in moral, legal, criminal, financial and social—or perhaps I should say anti-social—terms. It is extraordinary in its scale, in the number of frauds that are perpetrated, in the audacity of the frauds that are perpetrated, and, indeed, in the treachery of the frauds that are perpetrated. We should remember that frauds in the City of London are frauds against the ordinary decent people of Britain who create the wealth of the country and entrust it to the financial institutions that lie within the City of London.

Of late, the Government seem to have an obsession with standards, probably because they do not seem to have many these days. Not long ago we were listening to the leaders of the Conservative party talking about standards in society — the need for more law and order, for hanging terrorists, for birching hunt saboteurs, for flogging miners, and, as Max Hastings said:

"All the other little human touches that would make British civilisation a better and a finer thin . ."

I am glad that the Right-wing extollers of those particular virtues have seen fit to join us, and I greet them.

The one area in which they seem to be lacking in standards is in dealing with their friends in the City of London. The Lord Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry have relatively recently stated that the standards of probity in the City have not declined. This is manifestly not so. Either that shows an appalling lack of judgment on their behalf or a great naivety, or probably both.

One of the things that we have to consider in the background to the frauds is the fact that the City has changed. The image that people often want to put forward these days in defence of their friends in the City of London is that it is filled with good men and true, working hard and honestly for God, Queen and country; people whose word is their bond, who meet together in their clubs or in their old boy reunions and order the world for the benefit of the others. That is the image that they would like us to accept of the City of London — a square mile of integrity and honesty. But, of course, that is a mirage.

That might well have been the position some time ago, but it is an image that bears no relationship to the modern high technology money markets, where vast sums of money are moved and manipulated, and where the measure of success is not integrity but acquisition and greed.

We know that nowadays the City of London is a dynamic institution, in that it is constantly changing. Andrew Philips, a City solicitor, writing in *The Observer* on 15 December, said:

"With all this, London has become an international crime haven, allowing financial racketeers from mainland Europe and the United States to continue their commodity swindles, advance fee frauds and the like unmolested. But we also have a fraud boom all of our own. Any firm you talk to will have its own in-house tale of woe. But it will probably remain under wraps. Exposing crooked employees in court is a rarity."

That is the City speaking of itself.

In the relatively superficial research that I have done for this debate I have been impressed by the scale and number of frauds perpetrated. *[Interruption.]* Yes, I am impressed — I came to the subject an innocent. Conservative Members may be experts on fraud, but I am new to the game. I bow to their superior knowledge of the criminal world. In my innocence, I was frightened rather than impressed by the volume and number of frauds perpetrated.

In 1981 the City of London police fraud department had 80 cases under investigation. In 1984 there were 117. New matters recorded were 536 in 1981 and 621 in 1984. In 1981 there were 35 arrests. By 1984 the figure had increased to 77. [HON. MEMBERS: "They are catching them."] Before the Conservatives draw any conclusions from those figures, let them consider the fact that there were 18 Crown court cases in 1981, and only 18 in 1984. If Members reflect on that, they will be led to certain conclusions.

The sums involved are extremely large. Andrew Philips writes:

"A recent study, for example, calculates that British companies are now defrauded of £3 billion and more a year."

An informed insider reckons that the recent reinsurance frauds netted £500 million, and the City of London company fraud squad reports ever increasing numbers of ever larger financial crimes.

The Government's own Inland Revenue sings the same song. Earlier this year Lloyd's agreed to pay the Inland Revenue £42·5 million in respect of liabilities wrongfully secreted by members of Lloyd's. That was a settlement by Lloyd's to buy off the investigators. There are now 77 major fraud cases awaiting trial.

All this is further compounded by

"the bizarre under-resourcing of those responsible for policing the City and bringing its malefactors to book. The Fraud Investigation Group of the DPP, for example, has a paltry qualified staff of 21. By contrast, for the last three years the Government has had 30 Specialist Claims Control Units in the DHSS comprised of 175 staff, chasing welfare chisellers",

as Conservative Members would describe them. There are only 21 investigators chasing the £3 billion, but 175 chasing the odd amounts that people might get away with under the welfare system. There is one law for the rich and another for the poor—steal £20 from the DHSS and one ends up in gaol, but steal £20 million from the City and one will end up in the Cayman Islands. That is the Conservatives' attitude to their friends in the City.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rogers: I want to finish, as a large number of Members want to speak tonight.

There is only ruthless severity for those whom the Government push into the ground, but for the Government's friends—the offshore dealers, the greasy manipulators, the property sharks—there is only laxity. I asked the Library today to provide details of instances of fraud on the stock exchange, the commodity markets, Lloyd's and banking. I was given a large sheaf of papers and told, "I have only gone back a short time, Mr. Rogers, as there were so many." I have with me the details of the frauds that have taken place during the past year, and any Conservative member can inspect them if he so wishes.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge) *rose*——

Mr. Rogers: City fraud is not a new phenomenon. The Opposition have always known that corruption has existed in the City, and it is a shame that it has not been dealt with previously, but in recent years this problem—as with all law and order problems under this Government—has exploded in size. Getting near the truth of City corruption is difficult and has been difficult. The old boy network prevented it in previous days, when it was called the guarding of institutional solidarity, and today's instant electronic manipulations make it much more difficult to detect fraud.

There has been an enormous increase in City activity. It is no longer a square mile of honesty and integrity. Reputations mean nothing to people whose God is money, who travel fast and who can easily put their money and that of others beyond the law. — *[Interruption.]* They are aided and encouraged by Conservative Members who mutter from sedentary positions and by the quick buck, free market amorality of this Government.

Yesterday my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) asked the Chancellor to explain where market forces end and fraud begins. To his great shame, the Chancellor replied:

"If the hon. Gentleman does not know that, he is not fit to be a Member of the House". — [*Official Report*, 17 December 1985; Vol. 89, c. 162.]

We could well say that of the Chancellor and of his actions over the last six to nine months. Indeed, I honestly believe that he gave that answer because, like his hon. Friends, he did not know the difference between fraud and free market forces. He does not know where one begins and the other finishes. He does not know the difference between fraud and an insatiable greed——

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The suggestion that the Chancellor does not know the difference between what is fraud and what is not fraud is surely totally unacceptable, and I suggest that the hon. Gentleman should withdraw that remark at once.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): I am listening very carefully, but I have not heard any personal accusation against the Chancellor.

Mr. Rogers: I am pleased that the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) defends the Chancellor. I do not know whether he has a particular interest in doing so, but we shall have to look into that. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman does not know the difference between fraud and insatiable greed——

Mr. Richard Ottaway (Nottingham, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that Conservative Members are party to some of these frauds?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We must get on with the debate. I am listening very carefully. All hon. Members know that personal accusations are not allowed, and I have not heard any so far.

Mr. Tim Smith: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Gentleman said that I do not understand the difference between what is fraud and what is not fraud. I am not prepared to accept that, and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I simply heard the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) suggest that the hon. Gentleman did not understand it. He was not suggesting that the hon. Gentleman was guilty of any kind of fraud. Hon. Members should not be too sensitive. Let us get on with the debate.

Mr. Rogers: I would hate to say, "Methinks he doth protest too much". I have merely said that Conservative Members do not know the difference between fraud, an insatiable greed as practised in the City of London, and, as Andrew Philips said

"a mechanistic commitment to the free market"

which

"is the perfect anaesthetic to moral disquiet. Some find it difficult to know where market forces stop and illegality begins. One opportunity can look very much like another, including the opportunity to escape the UK tax net. Hiding capital abroad is now widespread, as is juggling with the rules relating to tax residence and overseas earnings."

Many people in the City do not want to know the difference, and on occasions neither do some hon. Members.

In the City today, straight dealing is being sacrificed on the altar of competition. The Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the leader of the Conservative party, with their hypocritical cant about moral standards, do not know the difference either.

Mr. Nicholls *rose*——

Mr. Rogers: The Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, stated last week:

"The bottom seems to have dropped out of morality".

Yes, indeed, my Lord Chancellor, it has, and especially in your party, and especially with your Ministers. What is grossly unfair——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not accuse Ministers, and he certainly must not accuse the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Rogers: I am not quite sure when we can condemn Ministers for their laxity. All I said was that the Lord Chancellor said last week:

"The bottom seems to have dropped out of morality".

Some of the responses that we have had suggest that it has dropped out fairly close to home.

What is grossly unfair in this situation is that the wealth creators — the ordinary decent people in factories, mines, shops, offices, and also in the City of London— are being ripped off by the friends of the Tory party, who scuttle off to their tax havens to enjoy their illicit wealth. Considerable sums are involved, and it is no good Conservative Members scoffing at the huge sums of which the country is being defrauded.

The City of London must give a lead. It should purge itself and re-establish its reputation. Unfortunately, the Government seem not to want to come to grips with the problem, and foolishly and naively believe that a system of self-regulation is enough. I said yesterday that the

[Mr. Rogers]

Government's proposals would be seen by many to smack of setting a thief to catch a thief. There are many unanswered questions in relation to yesterday's proposals and the Financial Services Bill which is to be published tomorrow. I should like the Minister to answer one of them.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), who is in charge of the Financial Services Bill, is a clever young lawyer. He is evidently quite a rich one, too, for he admits to being in membership of five Lloyd's syndicates. Lloyd's is not, however, covered by his Bill. It is not, the Minister says, an appropriate vehicle. Perhaps in the reply to the debate we can be told what would be an appropriate vehicle, or when the Government intend to find an appropriate vehicle to regulate Lloyd's.

Many people would ask whether the Parliamentary Secretary is an appropriate Minister to bring in the regulation; whether he should be responsible for regulating his friends and colleagues, or his erstwhile friends and colleagues. How can Conservative Members talk about the probity of Lloyd's after recent disclosures? To argue that most other financial centres are more corrupt than the City of London, or that there have always been rotten apples in the City of London, is not an answer.

The debate is vital for the interests of Britain. The collapse of the integrity of and trust in the City of London is incalculable in relation to the economy. The debate on whether there should be self-regulation or legislative control could now well be sterile. We cannot legislate for an institution where the underlying moral foundations are crumbling. The opportunities for crime in today's financial bazaar are immense. Laws may not be enough. Perhaps nothing short of a moral reformation can prevent the City from drowning in its own excesses.

12.59 am

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): This is an important occasion, because it is the beginning of a debate that will continue for many months. In July 1983, in the first debate on this issue, I said that I thought that this would be one of the most important matters that we would consider. The City of London is one of those great important institutions not just for the few to make fortunes and certainly not just for the few to make illegal and immoral fortunes—it is a great earner of capital for the growth of this country.

I deprecate the grapeshot technique that is being adopted. It is not helpful. It is based not on evidence but on the belief that, if enough barrels are fired off, a crook will be hit. It is like some of the wild accusations made against the Governor of the Bank of England, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor or my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary of State — the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard). That is not helpful to the debate. It will not be helpful in regulating the City. It diverts attention from the fact that the changes that will occur in the City with the big bang and the financial conglomerates that will be formed will require severe regulation or there will be large-scale fraud. The stock exchange recognises that.

I mention one point that has not been mentioned in talk about people being employed to regulate fraud and to limit the possibility of fraud. Forty-five members of the stock exchange are employed in a surveillance department, which is separate and separately administered, to look at fraud and movements in share prices—not as they are reported to them but as they come over on the screens —to ascertain whether there are illegal dealings. If there is fraud in a business where the turnover through the stock exchange alone is £350 billion, that is wrong and it should be investigated. The people charged should be sent to prison. If there is one thing that the Americans have over us, it is not the Securities and Exchange Commission itself, which is a very heavy bureaucracy, but the fact that they are faster at punishing malefactors. Since 1980 the stock exchange has conducted 278 investigations, 89 of which have resulted in information being sent to the Department of Trade and Industry, resulting in only five prosecutions. One cannot help thinking that nothing would concentrate integrity more than mounting some of these prosecutions faster and more thoroughly and meting out the right sentences.

The hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) made it sound as though making a profit was quasi-evil.

Mr. Rogers: No.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: The implication was that somehow profit was evil. If there were not profits and people who wanted to use the capital structure, all our constituents would be much poorer because thousands of millions of pounds are added to this country's wealth every year — not through the malefactors but through the majority of honest people. The trade unions invest hundreds of millions of pounds each year on behalf of their members so that their members get better pensions and benefits, and it is right and proper that they should do so.

There is no doubt that the past of Lloyd's gives rise to dismay and not merely concern. The phrase "A1 at Lloyd's" has taken on a meaning that the great majority of its members would not want. It was excellent that Ian Hay Davison was appointed director-general, and it gives rise to ominous concern that the chairman of Lloyd's, Mr. Miller, who himself might be busy answering questions, or should be in due course, said in getting rid of Mr. Hay Davison that he wished to be the Prime Minister of Lloyd's. I wish to cast no reflection upon my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister—on the contrary—but we all know of the power that Prime Ministers have. I believe that the Bank of England and the Government wanted Mr. Hay Davison to be in the end the true director-general of Lloyd's, to ensure that it was run properly and not by those who, by jove, were pretty close to getting their fingers in the jar.

If a director-general is appointed to Lloyd's, it should be with the advice and consent of the Department of Trade and Industry. The Government have a presence in these matters and no Government can say that there can be entire self-regulation. It is not possible to have entire self-regulation, but it is possible to have self-regulation with the provision that there shall be a Government presence in those who are appointed to top jobs and, even more important, to those who are dis-appointed from them. The more effective people like Mr. Hay Davison are, the better for Lloyd's and the country. It strikes me that the more effective he became, the more some people wanted to get shot of him. That was bad for the City and for Lloyd's, and I think that it was bad for the Government.

I made another suggestion to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said, in his sweet way, that I usually meant well. I think that he meant well in saying that I meant well. I say in no patronising sense to my betters that the Department of Trade and Industry, or the Treasury, cannot say that the Bank of England is enough. These are matters that I hope we can discuss when we consider the Financial Services Bill, but the Bank of England is not enough.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not seem to like it yesterday—he may have been tired—when I said that no Government can wash their hands of these matters. In the end, good or bad washes up to the steps of the House. These matters are the concern of Government; if they are not, why are we discussing them now?

I still believe that taking people willy-nilly out of the City, often those of tender years, to advise and help is not enough. They will return to the big pool. I say on a subliminal basis that those who are taken from the City and who are likely to return to it are not as likely to be as even-handed as those who may come from the City and not thereafter return to it. That is why I say that it would be a good thing if about five people who have done great service and are of great probity—in spite of what has been said, the City abounds with more people of great probity that it does with villains—should be appointed advisers to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. It does not matter whether the advice comes from accountants, bankers or brokers. The five should be nearing the end of their business careers so that they have considerable experience of the City. They should be appointed for five to seven years, so that they are thereafter retired from the City. They should be able to call for all the evidence and all the papers, talk to anyone they wish and advise the Secretary of State that all is well. That would be a small price to pay for the Secretary of State to have his own advisory set-up—then there would be self-regulation, which, in the end, would work better.

There is certainly concern about the system, and the small number of cases always attract great publicity. But I genuinely believe that what the City does for this country is good rather than evil. It does not abound in corrupt people. One of the few sound statements of lawyers is that justice should not only be done but be seen to be done. If we get the Bill right, the country will benefit and so will the integrity of this House and the City.

1.10 am

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) was right to remind us that the first of our debates on the important question of regulating the City was in July 1983. I think that he would join me in expressing a debt of gratitude to my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) for giving us another opportunity to debate the issue, especially—I was about to say on the eve, but it is more appropriate to say on the morning—of publication of the Financial Services Bill. I have no doubt that the points made in this debate will be echoed in our debates over the coming months.

This debate takes place against the background—even in the foreground—of a rising tide of concern about the extent of fraud in the City. It is right to pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), who has done so much to promote this issue, to focus political attention on it, to raise the level of political interest in it and, in short, to put it on the front pages. The Prime Minister, the chairman of the stock exchange, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and many other luminaries are now queueing day by day to assure the British public and the House of Commons that they too are determined to stamp out fraud in the City. That is all to the good and we wait to see what actions will be taken to follow those brave statements.

It may be true that City fraud is the flavour of the month, as one Sunday paper put it last week, but the grounds for concern go back a long way. We should remember that it was in 1981 that Professor Gower was asked to begin his report on City fraud. After all, that report was stimulated by a rash of fraud. The Roskill committee was set up at the end of 1983 precisely because there was growing concern to get prosecutions and convictions in cases of fraud.

While my hon. Friend the member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch has made skilful use of parliamentary privilege, the strength of the case against what the City is up to at present, the strength of the case against the failure to bring people to justice, is such that we do not need the protection of parliamentary privilege. A simple statement of the facts is quite enough to explain why there is that sense of outrage, of anxiety, almost of incredulity at the fact that people who are committing crime on a massive scale have so far escaped without criminal penalty.

I need not weary the House with a catalogue that will be repeated time and again—a catalogue that inevitably starts with Lloyd's, with the frauds committed in famous cases such as the PCW syndicates. Those frauds accounted for tens of millions of pounds—one is tempted to say hundreds of millions of pounds.

The scale of the offences being committed can best be illustrated if we remind ourselves that individual fraudsters in some of those syndicates got away with as much money as was raised worldwide by Live Aid for the starving people of Africa. One or two people at a time in Lloyd's got away with that amount of money.

People are entitled to say that something has gone very badly wrong, not just because people were able to commit offences of that magnitude, undetected, but because they committed them and escaped without even being the subject of criminal charges. That is an astonishing state of affairs.

I can run through the rest of the catalogue quickly. The stock exchange is mercifully free of major frauds, with the exception of the Halliday-Simpson case in 1982. It is making an effort to deal with fraud and concedes that there is a rash of minor fraud that it hopes it is dealing with effectively. The commodities markets have also seen cases of fraud, with people getting away with tens of millions of pounds, escaping the jurisdiction and still not being brought back to face charges. There are also the banks; my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch has referred incessantly to that matter. The Johnson Matthey Bankers case shows that even in the banking sector, fraud is by no means a stranger, and can reach substantial proportions.

Let us be clear that when we talk about frauds and scandals, we are talking about real criminal offences—thefts and frauds which, in any other context, would be immediately recognised as criminal offences of the same

[Mr. Bryan Gould]

severity as muggings, robberies and various other criminal offences that we are more familiar with and used to dealing with.

Every pound of the hundreds of millions of pounds that have been misappropriated is money that belonged to somebody else. It is real money. That pound is just as real as the pound that the pickpocket takes from someone's pocket in Oxford street. It is sometimes instinctively felt among City people that somehow City fraud is less serious; it is not real money; somehow it has been conjured up out of thin air. It is real money, and those are real criminal offences.

We have in office a Government who have made great play of their stance on law and order. We know that in the realm of what one might call ordinary crime, the programme of law and order has been notably ineffective. There has been an explosion of crime, but at least in that area, the Government have said that they are concerned about it, are determined to devote more resources to its detection and prosecution, and are unhappy about the current situation. However, what has been largely unremarked by the Government until recently has been the greatest crime explosion — what Max Hastings called pin-stripe fraud.

It is noticeable that there has been no talk of short, sharp shocks and all sorts of other severe penalties, new resources and so on. I make it clear that I have been taking up the issue and writing to Ministers, Law Officers as well as Ministers in the Department of Trade and Industry, over the past two years. While there have been frequent expressions of concern at the fact that prosecutions have not been brought, the emphasis has always been on the great difficulties, problems and obstacles. That is not the same language as we hear about other criminal offences.

Many people will pause for a moment and ask: how is it that those insuperable problems seem to present themselves in the case of massive fraud in the City, yet in the case of social security fraud, which is no less a fraud —I am not making a distinction on that ground—they are much more minor? In those cases, there is no difficulty in bringing prosecutions and finding the resources to bring criminals before the courts.

My mind goes back two or three years to the famous instance in Oxford when hundreds of police rounded up 1,000 social security claimants, held them in detention for hours on end, grilled them and finally produced a handful of prosecutions and convictions of people who were among the most vulnerable in society, who did not have a roof over their heads. If the Government can mount such an operation against those people, we demand more effective action against City criminals.

What has been happening in the City is an affront to public opinion and to public morality. It is also very bad for the City. I think that I carry the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak with me on that. It is in the City's interests that these matters be cleaned up. It is in the City's interests that we have some prosecutions. Nothing will induce the re-establishment of that sense of integrity faster than the sight of one or two people going off for long prison sentences. It is also bad for the economy because, if we have an economy in which money is sloshing around and it is possible to make off with tens of millions of pounds without penalty, the result is a distortion of economic activity — a diversion of resources and energies. That cannot be good for the economy.

What has gone wrong? What has produced this rising level of fraud and therefore the rising level of anxiety? The mechanisms and instruments available for detection are simply inadequate for preparing cases for prosecution. It is unrealistic to expect 21 policemen to unravel the complicated affairs, some years later, of highly skilful fraudsters. As a result of that inability to deal with such cases, we are rapidly developing a reputation, which is now spreading worldwide—it is certainly being picked up in West Germany—as the fraud centre of the world. There have been recent press reports that the West Germans are astonished that some of their nationals have been the victims of bogus commodity dealers working in London, yet the police in the City cannot be persuaded to take any notice of those cases.

The vice-chairman of the Conservative party enlightened us again today. He has been told—he has some experience of this—that only frauds involving more than £10 million are to be investigated because the resources to consider smaller ones do not exist. If that is true—I would be the last person to suggest that there is any doubt about the veracity and accuracy of what the vice-chairman of the Conservative party says—it is a truly astonishing situation on which the Minister must comment. Perhaps he should persuade some of the Law Officers to set the record straight.

We await the Roskill committee, which might ease matters in some respects. We should be clear, however, that Roskill will help us, if at all, only if the matter has been prepared for prosecution and brought to court. There might be changes which make it easier to get convictions. We are concerned about the ease with which it is possible to detect such crimes and to enable the Director of Public Prosecutions in this case—but perhaps we should be thinking of a different prosecuting authority—to prepare a case that has a chance of success.

The second thing that has gone wrong, as shown all too clearly by Lloyd's and JMB, is that the supervisory authorities have been lax and inadequate. They are confronted with the need to exercise ex post facto supervision, so they also find it extraordinarily difficult, given the methods of supervision available to them, to monitor what is going on and to detect what has happened. All too often, by the time they discover what has gone on, the criminals have flown the roost and escaped jurisdiction. With JMB, it is clear that the Bank of England had to rely on utterly unreliable instruments. The Bank of England is entirely dependent on the audit process. The auditors, who are appointed by the shareholders of the company being audited, have a duty to report to those shareholders. They will resist any attempt to be persuaded to report to the supervisory authority.

A small step was taken in the White Paper announced yesterday, but we are still a long way from a proper system of supervision. For the Bank of England a statutory audit commission with a distinct and separate function would be required, so that there could be no conflict of interest or unwilling conscripts, and the statutory auditors would have a clear duty to blow the whistle to the supervisors when they saw that things were going wrong.

Another factor militates against any effective supervision and adequate detection of fraud; that is that the standards of disclosure among financial institutions are too

low. They lag substantially behind what is now the norm in most countries, particularly in the United States. Financial institutions simply do not publish enough information, and what is published is not sufficiently up to date to enable investors to make proper judgments. We know that the accounts for Lloyd's are sometimes five years out of date by the time they are subject to scrutiny.

The rules have hardly ever been applied to companies. Nearly 400,000 companies have not complied with their statutory obligations to submit the basic documentation to Companies house. That must be tightened up. If we are to have effective supervision, we need that information. That will become even more important in the City of the future where the maximum transparency will be at the heart of any effective provision against conflicts of interest. Unless we have that maximum transparency, and unless the City as a whole adjusts and adapts itself to that new requirement, we can kiss goodbye to any effective regulation, and expect a further rash of frauds.

The real problems have arisen, not just because there are a few crooks at the margins. Wherever large sums are handled, there will be criminals on the edges. It is important that there are rules to detect them quickly, and penalties adequate to deter them in future. But that is not the essence of what has gone wrong in the City.

What went wrong at Lloyd's, for example, was not just that one or two people introduced a few criminal practices, got caught and fled, but that the reinsurance deals, the offshore arrangements to avoid taxes and the baby syndicates were embraced by the establishment. The establishment was tainted by those practices and lost the ability to make the distinction between what was acceptable and what was not. The frauds are the most obvious symptoms of what has gone wrong in the City — the difficulty of distinguishing on any objective criterion what outside people would regard as acceptable.

That factor imposes an enormous obligation on the Government, and they must grapple with it. It is not just Lloyd's. Many people in the City still do not fully understand what is required of them now, and what will be required of them in future. Many people still do not accept the distinction between trading in a professional capacity, for which they charge fees and commissions, and trading on their own account. Too often the distinction is blurred, and conflicts of interest arise. Those problems will become worse in future when the old institutional safeguards have been swept away. The opportunities for conflicts of interest to arise will be enormous. It will not be good enough for the City to soldier on on the basis of the current practice, because the current practice is unacceptable.

For example, when British Telecom shares were issued, several aspects of the flotation were unacceptable. By implication, the Government have agreed that they were unacceptable, because they have changed the rules. In the future, the rules will preclude what happened in the case of British Telecom. When firms such as Kleinwort, Benson, which was charging the Government a large fee for advising them and helping them to fix the share price, and many other firms acting in an underwriting capacity realised that the price had been fixed too low and that an immense capital profit could be made overnight, they threw away and conveniently forgot the distinction between the role that they had undertaken to fulfil, for which they had privileged access to shares—there was no limit on the shares in which they could deal—and their ability to deal in shares on their personal accounts. There are many reports—some have been made to me—of City firms which dealt in the shares on their own account, and which gave those shares to their staff, distributed them to bonus funds, or gave them to favoured clients and friends of the firm. That is unacceptable.

One commodity firm, Rudolph Wolfe, took 1·3 million BT shares. I do not know what it did with the bulk of the shares, but it gave 20,000 to each head of department and 5,000 to each dealer. That is the confusion that leads to moral uncertainty, and I believe that it happened on a very large scale.

So far, the Government have refused to examine such cases. One case is with the Director of Public Prosecutions and another case was made public through the efforts of a journalist, but the Government have been extremely unwilling to provide the information on which we could make a proper judgement on how widespread the practice was. If the Government are to be regarded as treating the matter seriously, they must consider such cases so that we can clear the air, and so that we know that it will not happen in the future and that the Government are determined to deal with such practices.

I conclude by saying that the acid test for the Government will arise later today and in the months which follow as we consider the Financial Services Bill. It is one thing for the Government to say that they are worried about City fraud. We now need a determined and serious attempt to put in place the rules, penalties and remedies which will tackle City fraud. The Government have that opportunity, as the Minister well knows, in the Financial Services Bill to be published today.

The Bill must give the clearest possible statutory framework of rules, the clearest possible powers of enforcement, and the clearest possible remedies and penalties. If it does not, we are entitled to conclude that the Government are not serious about City fraud, that they retain their unfortunate attachment to their friends in the City which clouds their judgment. The Minister must say tonight whether the Bill will meet those criteria. If it does not, we shall give it a rough passage.

The Government say that the Bill will not embrace Lloyd's. On that basis, I presume that the Minister believes that he can handle the passage of the Bill, because it does not involve a conflict of interest, given that he is a member of Lloyd's syndicates.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Nonsense.

Mr. Gould: I shall ask the Minister now, and I hope that he will answer now or when he replies: if the Bill were amended so that it brought Lloyds into the regulatory framework, would he regard his membership of Lloyd's syndicates as a ground for disqualifying him from proceeding with it? If he were to answer yes, as I hope he would, he should quite logically be prepared to say that the decision whether the Bill should embrace Lloyd's should be outside his scope, for the same reason. If he is not prepared to say that, we see, in the person of the Minister, the very conflict that has been bedevilling the City in many of its operations, and which is the cause of so many of its problems.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that the previous Labour Prime Minister was incapable of making judgments on agriculture because he was also a farmer?

Mr. Gould: No, because, as the hon. Gentleman will appreciate with a moment's reflection, agriculture is a matter of public policy, and Lloyd's is the subject of a private Act, and it is a specific interest for which, if we were to legislate, we should have to use the procedure of a hybrid Bill, which is one of the arguments against doing so. That shows us that dealing with Lloyd's is different. It is not a matter of general public policy but of specific interests. As a member of a Lloyd's syndicate, the Minister is as much disqualified from dealing with Lloyd's as he would be if he were dealing in a company in which he held shares. The Minister is able to defend himself, and deny the statement if he wishes to do so.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The hon. Gentleman spoke about hybridity. Would that not in itself be a good reason for not including Lloyd's in the Bill? If he had any reasons for wanting another Bill to deal with Lloyd's, procedures are available to deal with those questions. He has given the answer to the problem.

Mr. Gould: It is not my purpose to argue that dealing with Lloyd's would involve problems of hybridity. I simply raised that point to show that Lloyd's is not a matter of public policy but one of specific interest, and I repeat that if the Minister is a member of one Lloyd's syndicate, or more, he is in the same position as that of a director of a company that is the subject of private legislation.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): I shall explain my position fully in my speech, but so that the House does not waste any more time on this argument, I make it clear that I am no longer a member of any syndicate at Lloyd's.

Mr. Gould: I am grateful to the Minister for that reply, and I look forward to an explanation.

This point raises general questions. Is the seriousness of purpose that the Government proclaim and profess to be matched by the provisions of the Financial Services Bill? I fear from what I have heard in advance that the Bill will not do that, and will be deficient in the clarity and directness that will be needed to regulate the City of the future and to exclude fraud as far as that is possible. If the Bill does not do that, the Government will have missed an opportunity and failed an obligation. I hope that the Minister will take that point seriously, and that during the debates on the Bill, we can persuade him to strengthen it so that it will achieve its purpose.

1.38 am

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) was right to draw attention to the fact that it was as long ago as 1981 that my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), as Secretary of State for Trade, asked Professor Gower to conduct his review into investor protection, in response to a number of frauds, including the Norton-Warburg scandal. It was also as long ago as 1983 that Lord Roskill was asked to look at the conduct of fraud trials. This gives the lie to the suggestion that this subject has somehow been raised by the hon. Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), when many right hon. and hon. Members have been concerned about the regulation of the financial services for a number of years.

We are concerned because of the growing scale of the problem. The figures speak for themselves. In 1981 the Metropolitan police and the City of London fraud squad together considered 378 cases of fraud, involving £262 million. By the end of 1984 that figure had risen to 711 cases, involving £776 million. That seems to refute Mr. Jeffrey Archer's suggestion today that they investigate only cases involving more than £10 million. If there were 711 cases involving £776 million, the average appears to be about £1 million. We know that there are a number of cases involving very large sums, but there are also quite a large number of cases involving sums smaller than £1 million. Mr. Archer's suggestion has already been denied by the police. They are obviously in a strong position to comment on these matters.

Ernst and Whinney, the firm of chartered accountants, has recently undertaken research on this issue. It conducted a survey and established that the average company loss through fraud each year — not just in financial service companies, but in business generally — was £6,100. Therefore, it is possible that the total loss each year is about £2·75 billion. Clearly, therefore, there is agreement about the scale of the problem that we face.

The hon. Member for Dagenham referred to the attitude of the public to fraud. It is not just that City people have adopted a slightly different approach to this issue compared with other categories of criminal offence. The point was well put at a recent conference on the subject by Detective Superintendent Perry of the City of London police, who said:

"Unlike serious personal crimes like murder and rape and organised crimes of violence such as armed robbery, fraud cannot be called a high profile crime. Neither can it be compared with crimes which have serious personal impact like domestic burglary which has a profound effect on the victim regardless of the value of any property stolen. Indeed not only is most fraud low profile, it is even considered by many people to be 'clean', provided the victim is an organisation rather than the man in the street. In short by a combination of lack of violence or other personal loss and the fact that the aggrieved is often a large commercial organisation fraud manages to hide behind every other crime that plagues society today."

I suggest that public attitudes generally to fraud are different from public attitudes to other crimes, and this is a matter for concern. It starts at the lowest level, with cheating on expenses. It goes right the way up, from cheating on perhaps a few pence or a few pounds on an expense claim, to the multi-million pound thefts that have been discussed today.

The House has expressed concern about the level of the resources that are made available both to the police and to the Director of Public Prosecutions. There are 200 detectives in London, both in the Metropolitan police and in the City of London police, who are investigating fraud. They are clearly stretched in trying to deal with the number of cases that we know they have been asked to investigate.

The Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Wood, addressed a conference which I attended in the summer on this subject. He related the background and said:

"When I first joined the Director of Public Prosecutions we had one man only dealing with fraud in London and in the Provinces. Prosecuting fraud cases was part of our general work. But as fraud becomes more prevalent, more international, more sophisticated we came to the conclusion that a separate division dealing with fraud in London and the Provinces was essential. Thus some ten years ago we created such a division under the control of an Assistant Director with five professional staff and non-professional support. A few years later we had to increase numbers and make two divisions, one for London and one for the

Provinces. Now with the advent of the Fraud Investigation Groups we have three divisions with a total of fifteen professional staff and three accountants. Such is the volume of work that they can barely cope and will have to be augmented."

Those figures — three accountants and 15 professional staff — speak for themselves. It is only recently that accountants have been recruited.

I have here something else that Mr. Wood had to say about the support given by accountants. He said:

"We now have three accountants on our staff. When they first arrived I told them for the first few weeks they wouldn't be too busy and that until their work built up they would have time to do my tax returns. In reality after a few weeks they were busy and they are now having difficulty in keeping up. Such is their value that I cannot see how we ever managed to do without them. My tax return I regret has had to do without the benefit of an accountant's advice."

It is essential that the number of DPP staff concerned with fraud is increased substantially. We must devote resources to that.

There are other ways in which the accountancy profession can help. Voluntary methods might help, but professional, perhaps newly retired, accountants might assist. We must ensure that the resources are available.

The investigation of fraud requires special skills, as does other crime. All those involved in trying to deal with fraud are in difficulties, because fraud is so complex. Even judges have difficulty. That is why the institute to which I belong recently organised a series of seminars for High Court judges, designed to explain some of the devices used. Such seminars could be extended to instruct Department of Trade and Industry officials, fraud investigation groups, and so on.

Lawyers are used to presenting a case orally, without any support, in court. This might emerge in the Roskill report. Courts are out of date in that respect. If court procedure were modernised, and if prosecuting counsel were allowed to use audio-visual equipment to explain the complex structure of a group of companies used to perpetrate a fraud, that would be a great help to both judge and jury. I hope that the Roskill report addresses that issue.

The resources problem is both qualitative and quantitative. It is essential to have the right number of people with the right skills. As I said to the Economic Secretary the other day, it is important that investigators have the necessary powers to obtain evidence. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which comes into force on 1 January, might help. The real problem relates to overseas evidence and the difficulty of obtaining it. It is difficult to persuade witnesses from overseas to attend court to give evidence. There is no simple answer. The matter needs careful thought.

Reporting fraud is essential. We must distinguish between employee fraud and management fraud. Directors and management are under no obligation to report a fraud. As a result, a large proportion of employee fraud remains unreported.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) said in a recent speech:

"If top management set standards of personal conduct which discourage irregularities and take quick and decisive action when irregularities are brought to their notice, then fraud will have less chance to take root. But if top management are equivocal on fraud and fail to act when cases of suspected fraud are brought to their notice, dishonest employees will take advantage of the situation."

That is the present position. When employee fraud is brought to management's notice, the normal procedure is to get rid of the employee as quickly as possible and to take no further action. Perhaps we should change the law and place an obligation on directors and managers to report fraud.

What should we do about management fraud? My hon. and learned Friend said that managers themselves could not deal with management fraud but that there was a special obligation on the auditors of companies. I agree that the auditors should report management fraud to the regulatory authorities.

There is the problem of client confidentiality, about which we have heard in the context of banking supervision, and we shall hear about it again in the context of building societies and in the context of the Financial Services Bill. Lord Benson said in a recent report that the auditor should first inform his client. There are two difficulties in that proposition, the first being to question who is the auditor's client. It is not the management of the company. The auditor's client is the shareholders of the company. That is the distinction which, I am afraid, sometimes my profession has difficulty in making. If that is the distinction, the question of confidentiality is not so important because we are talking about reporting to the shareholders, and that boils down to the public interest — reporting to the public.

The second difficulty is that if one tells one's client that one has it in mind tomorrow to arrange a meeting with the regulatory authorities about his suspected fraud, one will go to the meeting and one's client will go to Heathrow. I agree that it would be nothing less than a tip-off, so the auditor must in such circumstances report the fraud without informing his client, but that will have to be a statutory obligation.

We have heard much in the debate about self-regulation, but what the Government will propose in the Financial Services Bill will not be just self-regulation. It will be a mixture of self-regulation reinforced by a statutory framework. In the end we shall have to decide what to do if a self-regulatory organisation refuses to change its rules so that those rules are consistent with the principles set down in the Bill and the conduct of business rules published by the Securities Investment Board.

While we have not yet seen the Bill, I understand that it will say that the only sanction open to the SIB in those circumstances will be to derecognise the SRO. That is all very well, but there will have to a specific power to require an SRO to change its rules to be consistent with the conduct of business rules and the principles in the Bill.

If, as I hope, the House agrees on that, we shall have not self-regulation, but qualified self-regulation; qualified by the fact that there will be a statutory back-up with an ability to interfere. That, in these circumstances, is only to recognise the limitations of self-regulation. Perhaps one cannot expect people to go too far, which brings me back to what I said about auditors. I do not think that we can persuade the accountancy profession to change its rules, and if we cannot do that, we must change the law—that is clearly the alternative — so that there is no doubt about the position.

It is not reasonable to leave this to self-regulation, and I hope that the Minister will consider my two proposals for ensuring that suspected fraud is reported. That is as essential as the full investigation if fraudsters are to be brought to book. We need, in summary, adequate resources, adequate powers for the investigators and an obligation on directors and auditors to report suspected fraud.

1.54 am

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): I wish at the outset to pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) for initiating this debate about the City, Johnson Matthey Bankers, Lloyd's, the stock exchange and the whole question of fraud. He brought to the attention of the House some interesting facts that he had obtained — not from any Marxist periodicals but from the House of Commons Library—about the amount of fraud that had gone undetected and the millions of pounds that had been lost as a result. That there is fraud has been established without doubt by my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) and accepted even by Conservative Members.

The City is a powerful lobby. We were discussing lobbies yesterday — little lobbies, like the Channel tunnel lobby. They are little in comparison. The Channel tunnel is a once-and-for-all project. Build the tunnel and a lot of people make money. Tory Members make a few bob on the side—£2,000. Then they move on to another lobby. But this lobby is the most powerful that gets into the House of Commons. There is no question at all about that.

The hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) is part of that powerful lobby. That is why he can speak so well about the City. He knows it inside out. One just has to look in the Register of Members' Interests. He is parliamentary consultant to the National Association of Security Dealers and Investment Managers. He ought to know a bit about it. He is parliamentary consultant to the County bank. That is one of the little banks — perhaps a little bank like Johnson Matthey. I am not too sure of its size. So he is well versed in it.

One out of eight Tory Members, roughly speaking, are members of Lloyd's. That is discounting all those who are names. The Minister said that he was not a member of a syndicate, but I wonder whether he is a name. Perhaps he will tell us that. My barrister friend tells me that there is a significant difference. Perhaps he will explain it.

The power of the City finds a great presence in the House of Commons, and, for that matter, in the House of Lords as well. So is it any wonder that from time to time a few Labour Members decide that the thing smells like a sewer and that we ought to expose it?

It is at this point that we should pay a compliment to my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch for filling in a lot of gaps. Although many of us were arguing about the state of Johnson Matthey and Lloyd's for many months, my hon. Friend managed to insert into the gaps, as a result of the meticulous methods that he used, some of the names—the pack drill. He taught us all that what we could smell in the sewer of the City was something that was more tangible by explaining in more detail exactly who was up to their neck in the Johnson Matthey fraud. More lately, as he explained in the House recently, he wanted to get the Johnson Matthey affair off his back because he was entering into the arena of Lloyd's. He has done a wonderful job on that as well.

I want to refer to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said yesterday. When he accused some of my right hon. and hon. Friends in the previous Labour Government of not doing the greatest job of all time in the post secondary banking crisis, inadvertently, I suppose — he probably did not realise it — he was admitting fault himself. He was saying that there was a secondary banking crisis in 1970, 1971, 1972, when the leader of the Liberal party was up to his neck in London and County Securities —

Mr. Thurnham: There was a pact.

Mr. Skinner: Yes, there was a pact all right, with the previous chairman of the 1922 Committee of the Tory party. The chairman of Keyser Ullman temporarily tried to bail out London and County Securities—I mentioned it in the House at the time—in order to try to save the leader of the Liberal party's neck. It did not work because as a result of that banking crisis and the domino effect Keyser Ullman ran into the same trouble. It is no wonder he sometimes has a job to pay his rates. That is another story.

One of the things about that banking crisis was that the banks were given a long lease and a long rein. None of the big fish was caught. We have heard how the PCW people escaped to America and Costa Rica with the money they got from Lloyd's. Gerald Kaplan, the head of London and County Securities, went off to America as well. When I asked questions in the House, my hon. Friends in the Labour Government said that they could not get hold of him because he was in America.

I had not heard of sequestration in those days. That came up during the miners' strike. It is marvellous how the Government can sequestrate all the miners' money in what I thought were rock-solid banks in Switzerland and Luxembourg. I had been led to believe that anyone who gets hold of a million or so and wants to avoid taxation just has to put it in one of those banks and no one would be able to find out anything about it. But when the NUM did the same it was not long before a Conservative official was found to drop over and break into a rock-solid bank. By using their friends in the law courts and the City, the Tories managed to sequestrate the lot. There is certainly a lesson in that for the next Labour Government. About £50 billion has gone overseas as a result of exchange controls being lifted by the Government to help the City. We should have an official sequestrator — a Minister even — acting full time to bring that money back and have it taxed in this country. Then we could build up the National Health Service, pay decent pensions, get people off the dole queues, build houses and all the rest.

Those are the double standards under which the Tories operate. The Chancellor referred yesterday to the secondary banking crisis in an attempt to chide my hon. Friends for not doing enough about it. Why did he do nothing about Johnson Matthey Bankers when the climate was worse? Everyone acknowledges that, however great and corrupt and fraudulent the secondary banking crisis was, it was not so big as the crisis today. When the Chancellor saw Johnson Matthey going down the drain, he should have done something about it, but he and his predecessor promoted a free market economy which allowed the banks to make money hand over fist through high interest rates and made the Barber boom of 1972 look insignificant in comparison. In a climate like that a decent Chancellor would have recognised that the banks were in greater peril than they were in the 1970s because there were problems abroad as well as in England.

We have been surrounded by an international debt crisis for several years and it is growing all the time. I am told that about $975 billion is owed by about 50 out of 150 countries in the world. Imagine running a shop with 150

customers and 50 of them not paying anything off their debts but still shopping. There is an international debt crisis. The International Monetary Fund went bankrupt about three months ago and had to be bailed out temporarily. The United States has a $130 billion deficit. Fancy becoming a debtor and going to the top of the first division in one fell swoop. In a financial climate like that, any Chancellor who knew what he was doing would have decided to keep an eye on the little banks in case there was another banking crisis. If there was a crisis in 1972 when the international climate was so different, just think what could happen now. The Chancellor gave the game away yesterday by linking the 1972 crisis with the problems we face today. He should have recognised that special care was needed to see exactly what was happening in the banking sector, but he did not.

Is it any wonder that Johnson Matthey lent all this money to all these curious people? It lent Sipra about £70 million, and Abdul Shamji, who owed about £20 million, occasionally saw the chairman of the Tory party and was a friend of the Prime Minister and other Tory Members. If he was friendly with all these people in the Tory Government, is it not just conceivable that someone might have known that he was borrowing all this money from the Johnson Matthey bank? That same man, Abdul Shamji, finished up in an enterprise zone in Stroud in Kent, and he did so, according to my information, before anyone else knew that it was an enterprise zone. Is it not just conceivable that he was tipped off by the Tory Government and that some members of that Government knew where his money had come from?

In such a climate, would not a responsible Chancellor of the Exchequer have said, "We had better keep an eye on the Johnson Matthey bank. It is lending to people who do not have the collateral to pay back"? When I and other hon. Members put questions to the Prime Minister in 1984-85, she said that they had to rescue Johnson Matthey because it might have an effect on the others. The private lobbying that appeared in the newspapers—attributable or otherwise—suggested that one of the reasons was that the Midland bank was in trouble.

I suppose that the Chancellor knew that the Midland bank had problems. My hon. Friend the member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch said that the rescue was wrapped up with three different problems. I managed to spot the Midland's difficulties with Crocker in America whose debt ratio suggested real problems.

With an international debt crisis, with Midland bank tottering about, and with 80 American banks last year going bankrupt, is it not just conceivable that someone in the Tory Government should have kept an eye on Johnson Matthey bank? Should not someone have asked Ronald Leigh-Pemberton — appointed by the Prime Minister because, as she put it, "He is one of us"—"By the way, are you watching Johnson Matthey bank, because we think that it is a bit dodgy? We have a crisis nationally and internationally, and we have funny borrowers who are not likely to pay back. Are you keeping an eye on it, Ronald?" [HON. MEMBERS: "He is called Robin."] As a matter of fact, that is a more Tory name. It certainly was not Christopher Robin.

Mr. Rogers: Or Robin Hood.

Mr. Skinner: It was right for my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch to call for the resignation of the Governor of the Bank of England if he was incapable of keeping an eye on what was happening.

The Chancellor said yesterday that there would now be all these supervisors, but questions on that subject have been asked since 23 October 1984. I asked about supervision because I spotted in a journal that only one Bank of England employee was watching countless banks in Britain to see whether they were doing their job. When I asked that question, it was shrugged to one side.

Now the Government have decided to have some sort of supervision. So the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been negligent throughout the whole affair. Those who called for his resignation—my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch, myself and others—were right to do so, because the Chancellor was not keeping his eye on the ball.

What can we expect, anyway? If the Government decide to run a free market economy and to let interest rates go into double figures for about six years non-stop, sometimes at 17 per cent. — banks can make money hand over fist when interest rates are that high — is it any wonder that there has to be a day of reckoning eventually? It cannot be allowed to go on for ever. In that scenario, with the Johnson Matthey bank bubbling away, the Chancellor should have seen the warning signs. That is why we do not believe him when he says that he knew nothing about the crisis.

Consider the bizarre rescue. Imagine what happened on 30 September. Imagine the telephone call when the Chancellor of the Exchequer says to the Prime Minister, "It's uneconomic." She says, "Shut it, then." It is in the middle of the pit strike. The Chancellor says, "But it's a bank, Prime Minister". "Oh", says the Prime Minister, "keep it open if it's a bank. I thought it was a pit". That is roughly what happened.

The Prime Minister has the philosophy that a company must make a profit or die, but that philosophy does not apply to the casino economy, or when the Government's own friends are at risk, or when it is their people's money. If it is a little firm in the Rhondda valley or in Hackney, all the pleading by Labour Members to save 150 jobs falls on deaf ears with this Government, this Prime Minister, this Chancellor of the Exchequer and this chairman of the Tory party. It has to make a profit or go under, like all those miners who were chucked out of work.

The Government have double standards. A different law is applied to banks. They can be bailed out. There is no monetarist policy then, no free for all, no "Stand on your own two feet". At that point the Tory Government say, "Bail them out, and the use taxpayers' money if necessary to do it"—taxpayers' money that should be spent in areas such as Newcastle, where there is mass unemployment.

The debate is important because it shows the Tory party's morality in relation to the industrial economy and to the casino economy, Johnson Matthey, Lloyd's, the stock exchange, or anywhere that the Tory party's people proliferate, with the most powerful lobby in this building.

Imagine the scene, with all the people waddling up Threadneedle street, called by the Governor of the Bank of England to bail out Johnson Matthey Bankers. I wrote to the Prime Minister asking why all the shareholders were not allowed to go to the meeting. Only those who could be contacted at the time were called to the meeting. Why

[Mr. Skinner]

was there no ballot? All the talk in the autumn of 1984 was about having a ballot of miners. There was no ballot for the shareholders. Instead there was what is called an aggregate meeting. There they were, with their little square briefcases on a Sunday night. Just imagine 200 people going up Threadneedle street at midnight on a Sunday. They were not stopped at Dartford tunnel. The police knew that they were on a special journey—to bail out a segment of the Tories' beloved economy. There were different rules for them—one law for the banks and another for the rest.

There is another aspect of the case that has not been covered adequately. Why was not the parent company made to look after its errant child? Johnson Matthey plc spawned Johnson Matthey Bankers. The Prime Minister talks about the family; about parents having to look after the children when they go wrong. Yet when Johnson Matthey plc found that its bank was going under, what happened? The Tory Government sent in the social workers to look after the brat. They used taxpayers money to bail it out. Completely different standards were applied to the bank.

Why was Charter Consolidated, a major shareholder in the company, not told, "You have a bank that is bankrupt. We ask you to put your money where your mouth is"? But Charter Consolidated conned the Government and Anglo-American. The bank was saved while 20,000 bankruptcies occurred in Britain that year.

To top it off, according to the information available at the time, when the rest of the City people were asked to put in money to save the Johnson Matthey bank, some of the city financiers said, "We think that Charter Consolidated should bear more of the burden than it has. We are not happy about putting some of our money in. We might be putting more good money after bad." They were tipped off that they would be looked after by the tax authorities.

I sent another letter to the Prime Minister asking why those City financiers and institutions were given the nod and the wink and told that, if they put their money into saving the Johnson Matthey bank, along with the £100 million from the taxpayers, they could write off every penny against taxes in case they became bad debts.

It would be wonderful if the parents of the 4 million people on the dole could set off tax relief to look after the 20-year-olds who have never had a job. Different standards are applied to them.

Yesterday, the Chancellor launched a violent attack on my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch because of his questioning in past months. The right hon. Gentleman tried to imply that we had come across this information in July after he had made his statement. It is on the record that several Opposition Members had been raising the matter since the bank collapsed. On 11 November 1984, I asked the Attorney-General, who said that he was concerned about the level of crime in the City, to send in the fraud squad. He refused. The Chancellor is wrong to suggest that we have not argued about this case for long enough.

The fraud squad did not find the crooks in London and County Securities or in Keyser Ullman, although the crooks were staring them in the face. It did not find them in all the other secondary banks. Almost no one was tackled when Crown Agents went under. The fraud squad was sent in eight months after I had asked that question in November. I am not naive enough to suppose that the fraud squad is capable of catching someone who has been given eight months' start. The Government did not give the miners eight months' start when they were engaged in their battle to save their jobs.

Now the Government have the cheek to talk about self-regulation for the City. It means keeping it in the family for banks, for Lloyd's and for the stock exchange. Yet, during the past six years, the Government have said to the trade unions, "No self-regulation for you. We shall tell you not only how to organise yourself but you must conduct ballots when we say so. You must ballot to elect all your executives." Why do not the Government start on Lloyd's? Why not have a few ballots in Lloyd's and in the stock exchange?

Mr. Tim Smith: They have ballots.

Mr. Skinner: I know that they have ballots. They fancy ballots as well.

Mr. Smith *rose*——

Mr. Rogers: Why not give way to the banking consultant?

Mr. Skinner: The banking consultant — the hon. Member for Beaconsfield—knows.

There is no self-regulation for local government. It would be wonderful if we returned to the self-regulatory system of local government which would enable local authorities to levy a rate to provide services for those in the inner cities and elsewhere. There is a difference between the inner cities and the City of London, where self-regulation is the order of the day.

There is no self-regulation for teachers. Teachers would argue that they could carry out their own appraisal, but the Government say, "You cannot have self-regulation. We will regulate for you. We will decide which grades you should be in."

When it comes to auditors investigating the affairs of Johnson Matthey and others, the result is a clean bill of health. Lambeth and Liverpool councils and several other authorities did not levy a rate for a few weeks and the Government sent in the auditors post haste to try to drive councillors out of office.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has brought in new measures. We are to have bank supervisors. Why does he not allow the supervisors to confer with the auditors to ensure that everything is intact? Why does he not have an inspectorate? There is an inspectorate in the United States which controls about 14,000 banks. Why cannot we have an inspectorate instead of allowing self-regulation to continue?

The Government have a policy for the casino economy and one for those who work in industry and local government. Market forces and monetarism operate for the banks as long as they are making money. The moment that they run into trouble, the Government are there to bail them out. It is the job of Labour Members to expose these double standards when we see them. There has not been enough of that.

We have been under attack for the past six years. We have tried to defend our friends in the trade unions and local government while others have been making money hand over fist—*[Interruption.]* Tory Members like the hon. Member for Beaconsfield, who keeps chirping from

a sedentary position, have been making money out of the system. They have been lining their pockets while the Government have been attacking councils, cutting grants and attacking trade unions, the teachers and working people generally. At the same time, millions have been made by others.

It is no good saying that it is only those outside the House who have made money. We know that one in eight Tory Members are members of Lloyd's. At the latest count, 400 consultancies are divided by about 230 Tory Members. It is difficult to keep up with the Register of Members' Interests, for they are coming on it that fast.

Against a background of neglect, I agree with those who have called for the sacking of the Governor of the Bank of England. Heads should roll when there is fraud on such a scale and when the taxpayer is having to find the money to bail out the City. Of course, there should be a pubic inquiry into the cesspool at Lloyd's and into the Johnson Matthey bank failure and its rescue by the British people. That must be said over and over again. If the Tory Government will not do that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer should pack up and go.

2.23 am

Mr. Richard Ottaway (Nottingham, North): I join others in congratulating the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) on giving us a chance to respond to an important debate which has been going on for some months. My right hon. and hon. Friends have not had a chance to put in our two-penny worth.

As we have witnessed the rather dramatic learning curve of the Opposition on fraud in the City, there have been a number of opportunities for Opposition Members to say what they feel. I raised the matter in a debate in February, and we then had the debate on the White Paper on financial services, during which Opposition Members were strangely silent. Since those debates, there have been a number of developments. We have had the conference in Geneva of the United Nations committee for trade development on international and maritime fraud, the revelations in the "Panorama" programme of a few weeks ago and the publication of the Lloyd's disciplinary proceedings, which I believe is the first sign that the Lloyd's Act 1982 is working properly.

Above all, we have had the revelations from the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). I think that the hon. Gentleman has done three things, apart from demonstrating the fine art of the early-day motion, which he used to promote his cause. First, he made accusations of fraud in the City. I have no idea whether those accusations are true. If he has concrete evidence, I hope that he will not hesitate to pass it on to the fraud squad——

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): The latest bundle in the possession of the fraud squad comes direct from Johnson Matthey Bankers. I have it in my hand; it reached me only today. It was given to the fraud squad only because I asked the company secretary to authorise its release.

Mr. Ottaway: I am delighted to hear that. I am not criticising the hon. Gentleman. I only said that I hoped he would pass on any evidence. The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), if my ears heard him right, made the remarkable comment that Kleinwort Benson was a party to fraud in the British Telecom share issue. I hope that he will pass that information on to the fraud squad.

Mr. Gould: I think that it has been accepted by the Treasury Bench and Ministers at the Department of Trade and Industry that Kleinwort Benson, which was dealing with the matter and charging the Government a substantial sum for giving them advice, was itself dealing in the shares. That is an incontrovertible fact, and that is accepted on all sides.

Mr. Ottaway: If the hon. Gentleman makes such accusations, I hope that he will pass evidence to the appropriate quarters.

Mr. Gould: The hon. Gentleman is clearly astonished, as, indeed, am I, that such conduct has been passed by the Government almost without comment. The Government simply say that they can see nothing wrong with this. All that they have done is to advise merchant bankers in similar positions not to behave in that way. I believe, as clearly the hon. Gentleman believes, that that was a clear case of, at best, an undesirable conflict of interest, and, at worst, something that approached fraud. If he is with me in that, I hope that he will join me in putting pressure on the Treasury Bench to ensure that people committing such an offence are brought to book.

Mr. Ottaway: I thank the hon. Gentleman for explaining that. I accept that he is not making allegations of fraud. I am as concerned as he is about this matter, which I was not aware of previously.

I make no apologies for the fact that I work in the City. I daily move around the place, and I must tell the House that 99·9 per cent. of those whom we meet in the City, who travel on the commuter trains each morning and evening, have absolutely no idea of how to carry out fraud even if they wanted to do so. They are performing a useful function, which is to earn invisible exports for this country. What we are talking about are an irresponsible few who are not necessarily British. Many of the criticisms of Opposition Members are causing more harm to the City than that criticism merits, especially bearing in mind the sterling earning capacity of the City.

The second thing that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch has apparently done is to galvanise the Government into action. As someone who has been campaigning for action on this front, I welcome the hon. Gentleman to the club of those trying to achieve more movement.

The third thing that the hon. Gentleman has done is to highlight a rather important defect in the law—and that is the grey area of what is a civil and what is a criminal matter. During the debate on the Queen's Speech, when he managed to slip in that subject during the foreign affairs debate, the hon. Gentleman gave an example of someone pinching 80p from a barrow in Hackney, who would then be chased by two policemen and prosecuted. The difficulty is that if that person, rather than stealing the 80p, said to the barrow owner, "Will you lend me 80p?", knowing that there was no intention to return it, the question arises whether that is a criminal offence or whether the barrow owner should sue that person for the return of the 80p. That is one of the main problems with what is happening in the City. It is the confusion over what is a civil case and what is a criminal case.

[Mr. Ottaway]

The hon. Gentleman may know about the Chartwell affair, when Mr. Bruckman sold shares that he did not own. The fraud squad investigated, and it was confused about whether it was a criminal or civil case. While the confusion was reigning, Mr. Bruckman disappeared.

On this topic, the Opposition are short on remedies. The Government have instigated the fraud investigation group, initiated the inquiry and review of fraud trials by Lord Justice Roskill and instigated the Green Paper on extradition. Above all, as many hon. Members have mentioned, we have had the debate on the White Paper on financial services.

I do not know whether this will come out in the Financial Services Bill, but the White Paper says that the key to enforcement in the City is having self-regulation underpinned by criminal sanctions. The Attorney-General admits that fraud is growing in the City, and the director of the International Maritime Bureau says that it is running at $10 billion a year. I find that figure exaggerated, as it is staggering. We must ask ourselves whether self-regulation is sufficient, whether those doing the underpinning have sufficient support and resources, and whether the criminal sanctions are effective.

Lloyd's is the best example of self-regulation. It is understandable that some hon. Members are concerned. Mr. Cameron Webb did not feature in the disciplinary proceedings by the simple trick of resigning from Lloyd's, so he did not come under scrutiny. He disappeared to Spain, and as soon as we signed an extradition treaty with Spain, he slipped off to California. The Director of Public Prosecutions says that we do not have enough evidence to bring him back from California. I say to him that we should go out and get the evidence. It is available. We also have Peter Dixon, who was fined £1 million. It is a fat lot of use fining a man £1 million if he is living in Marbella at the time. We must get him back from Marbella.

Self-regulation can work only if there is no conflict between the regulators and the market. The other day Mr. Posgate, who probably knows his way around Lloyd's better than most people, said that business was being transferred to preferred syndicates and that members of the council of Lloyd's were members of the preferred syndicates. I have no idea whether that is true, but I hope that it is being investigated by Lloyd's.

When syndicates crash, we come back to the point that I raised earlier—is it a criminal or a civil matter? We read in the papers this morning of offers being made to some of the innocent victims of the crash at Lloyd's. That seems to show that some people say that it is a civil matter, because if it was not they could be suing for their money. Yet others say that it is a criminal matter. That distinction must be examined.

Let us consider self-regulation on the stock exchange. We all know that insider dealing is illegal, yet about 65 per cent. of all price movements before a major announcement occur as a result of insider dealing. The figure from the stock exchange is that four people have been prosecuted. In the unit trust world, we look at the cases of late booking. When people make transactions, instead of committing themselves to where the transaction is being placed, they put in a suspense account. I believed that M and G, of all people, was above suspicion. It looks after my investments. When it was discovered that someone in M and G had operated a suspense account, it had no records. That is disgraceful. The stock exchange confirmed that it had no rules to deal with late booking.

Despite those difficulties, self-regulation has to work. If the City of London cannot work on self-regulation, we might as well pack up and go home. We cannot have policemen sitting around Lloyd's and the stock exchange. The Government must get to grips with giving the self-regulators more power and effectiveness. As my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) said, auditors must be given more power to report suspicious circumstances. We must ensure that the criminal sanctions underpinning self-regulation bite, and are seen to bite. There must be a massive boost in the staff of the DPP, and the fraud squad must be expanded.

I do not know whether any hon. Member present has tried lodging a complaint with the fraud squad. I tried about four years ago, and was told to visit a man in a room in Holborn called the caller sergeant. The chap came out with his note pad and pencil, which he sharpened, and took down a little statement and went away again. About three weeks later I received a letter. I had given the circumstances of the fraud and the name and address of the person I suggested had committed it. The letter said that the fraud squad could not prosecute because someone would have to go to Yugoslavia to take a statement and it did not have the money to do that.

The City of London is the financial centre of the world. It must have the respect of investors, and we must give the fraud squad the tools to police it. We must ask ourselves whether the law can cope with what is going on. At the moment, the answer is no. We can make improvements with jurisdiction and with extradition. There is a glaring loophole in the law of jurisdiction. Any two people can conspire to commit a crime overseas, but it is not an offence. If the crime is carried out in, for example, Turkey, with which we have no extradition treaty, it is possible to publish details in the papers and not be prosecuted, because no offence has been committed. When I asked Lord Justice Roskill whether he was looking into that in his inquiry, he said that he was not. It is easy to understand why people say that Britain is becoming a haven for overseas criminals. People can operate without fear of prosecution.

The Home Office has produced a Green Paper on extradition. I am disturbed by some of the trailers about what will happen to the law on extradition. I understand that the prima facie rule will be abolished. That is disturbing, and I hope that we shall have a chance to discuss it. It is vital that the Home Office proposals on extradition are brought forward and that we consider with whom we have extradition treaties.

We should have multilateral treaties. We should sign the European convention on extradition. Britain and Malta are the only countries in Europe which have not signed that convention. We run into most trouble with the number of Government Departments with which hon. Members must deal when approaching this subject. In matters of jurisdiction, we are referred to the Home Office. Financial services are the province of the Department of Trade and Industry. Fraud trials take us back to the Law Officers. The rules of extradition are matters for the Home Office, but extradition relations are matters for the Foreign Office. If we want to talk about the DPP, we must go to the Law Officers again, but, oddest of all, if there is fraud on a ship

—if there is marine fraud — we are referred to the Department of Transport. If ever there was a classic example of a case for a Ministry of Justice, this is it.

There is no central drive in Government policy on this topic. The problem is international and requires an international solution. That has been recognised by the United Nations committee on trade and development, which is the only organisation that has got to grips with the internationalism of the problem. It is alone in proposing a convention on jurisdiction and extradition. When I referred that venture to the Department of Transport, which for some reason is dealing with the matter, it said that the proposals contained no practical solutions.

The Government are acting, but there is no co-ordination and no direction. Only this afternoon the International Maritime Bureau told me about a fraud involving some $2·3 million. The perpetrator is believed to have carried out a similar crime seven times in the past. We are not chasing burglars and leaving more men on the beat. We are up against sophisticated criminals. Until we are as sophisticated as they are, they will run rings round us until the cows come home.

2.39 am

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) on choosing this subject and opening the debate so lucidly.

The huge increase in City fraud has brought the Government near to panic. They say that they are anxious to deal with fraud, but one of their main anxieties is that fraud is about to become electorally and politically embarrassing for them. Only today I was talking to a fraud squad officer who said that the Government had promised them 25 accountants. Where are they? The fact that they have not been provided is a reason why so few people who commit fraud get caught. Despite the rhetoric and the fact that there have been years of fraud at Lloyd's and Johnson Matthey bank, not one person has been arrested, charged, or is facing trial.

Mahmud Sipra is in Karachi laughing his socks off. Michael Hepker is amazed that he is still the chairnan of a public company in Leeds. Abdul Shamji genuinely believes that he can still buy his knighthood from the Government. Peter Cameron Webb is spending the loot in Miami. John Walrock can be seen in a sauna bath at the Mandarin hotel in Hong Kong. Peter Dixon is sunning himself on a sun-kissed beach in the southern hemisphere. The greatest fraud supremo of all from JMB, Mr Ian Fraser, believes that the Governor of the Bank of England, Mr. Robin Leigh-Pemberton, will give him a job on the banking supervision board.

It is absurd that those major criminals are scattered round the world, and there is no chance that any of them, except perhaps Mr. Fraser, will be charged. The Minister and the Law Officers should tell us why. They created an enormous red herring over Lloyd's by saying that they could not catch those people because they could not get the internal transcript of the Lloyd's proceedings. The Lloyd's solicitor, Mr. William Beckett, agrees that that is a red herring. I saw him on Friday. If those people are to be caught on the basis of evidence given to Lloyd's, the police must go to the same people and get the same statements. They cannot use the statements that were given to Lloyd's. The police have not done that, and until they do so those people will go free.

The second excuse is that we cannot extradite those people. Why cannot we extradite John Walrock from Hong Kong? Only a few months ago when he came to give evidence to Lloyd's, why was there no warrant for his arrest? Was he told that there was some form of immunity to prevent him from being arrested? It is an enormous puzzle why not one warrant has been issued for their arrest and why no one has been charged. Those papers have been with the Director of Public Prosecutions since 1982. But for the fact that I started to kick up a stink about Lloyd's five weeks ago, we would have heard nothing more about it. Those papers would have been left with the DPP for a further year and still no warrant would be issued, no charge would be made, and no one would face a criminal trial.

When I first began to hear about the details of JMB, I said to myself, "Come on, Sedgemore, you are going potty. It really cannot be like that. It is an enormous fantasy or some terrifying nightmare." I have made no claims of making the running on fraud. If other people want to claim that, it is up to them. I started—Ministers cannot take this away from me—painstakingly to stitch together pieces of evidence over a long period and to get a picture of what was happening. We did not get that picture from the fraud squad, from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, from any member of the Government or from the newspapers. We got it because I asked a few people to help me with inquiries to get a broad picture of what was happening.

But there seems to be almost no limit to what some of the people who have been involved in those frauds will do. The most startling thing happened about three weeks ago. Mr. Abdul Shamji, who believes that there is no one he cannot buy, tried to buy me. It was extraordinary. He contacted someone whom he knew was in contact with me — an informant — and arranged to meet him at the Pavilion bar in Grosvenor House in Park lane. First, he tried to buy that person by saying that he should try to obtain confidential documents from me, and then he put forward a proposal which amounted to an attempt to buy me.

Who is Mr. Abdul Shamji? He has a perfectly proper relationship with the chairman of the Conservative party. There is no fraud involved; it is a normal relationship. There is a bit of minor entertainment, a couple of tickets at the Garrick, and tea at Park lane. He gives money to the Conservative party from his Gomba companies, via McAlpines, and he was a vice-president of the Small Business Bureau, which is located at Conservative party central office. But what happened when my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) said to the chairman of the Conservative party, "Mr. Shamji is a blatantly dishonest person and you should watch him"? The chairman of the Conservative party lost his temper and has refused to speak to my hon. Friend since. That illustrates the problems mentioned by my hon. Friends the Members for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). There is too close a relationship between the Conservative party and the people involved in the City. It is not that Ministers are fraudulent or that they are in any way involved in fraud. There is an unhealthy relationship, and they do not appear to recognise its inherent dangers.

[Mr. Brian Sedgemore]

I wish to talk about Lloyd's tonight, because, of the two scandals, it is by far the biggest. It is the issue that we shall be discussing in the House during the next few months. Lloyd's will be issuing a pack later today, and it will arrive with some Government propaganda, following the publication of the Financial Services Bill. The purport of that propaganda or publicity pack is to say that there has been no fraud at Lloyd's since the 1982 Act was passed. That is another Lloyd's and Conservative party mirage. It is not a claim by me; it is a simple statement of fact that after the passing of the Lloyd's Act fraud continued in the Peter Cameron Webb syndicate. After the passing of the Lloyd's Act, fraud continued in the Alexander Howden syndicate. After the passing of the Lloyd's Act, fraud continued at Brooks and Dooley. After the passing of the Lloyd's Act, a series of fundamental questions hangs over the operations of the former chairman of Lloyd's, Sir Peter Green, and his relationship with Cresvale Securities and his further relationship with Janeen Services.

It is not true to say that there has been no fraud since the passing of the Lloyd's Act. Indeed, I do not know why some people wish to stand so heavily on the Act, since people like Mr. Kenneth Grob and Mr. John Walrock, who are two well-known criminals out of the jurisdiction, were the people who came to the House and told that Committee, which included some of my hon. Friends, that they were honest, decent, god-fearing people and that we could put our trust in them. We could not put our trust in them, and we cannot put our trust in the Lloyd's Act.

I talk to many people in Lloyd's now. They not only write to me in large numbers but come to see me, or I go to see them. Almost all of them are saying that they cannot expect Parliament or Lloyd's to satisfy them by what they do to clean up the Act unless they can be sure that there will be a clean out at the top of Lloyd's. They say that there are serious question marks hanging over the top people at Lloyd's and, in particular, Sir Peter Green, the past chairman of Lloyd's. They are all asking why there has not been an inquiry about Lloyd's—an open, proper, decent scrutiny of the activities of Sir Peter Green at Lloyd's. Why is there so much mystery about his activities?

The questions are asked about a number of sectors. First, they are about a number of syndicates that Sir Peter Green ran. I have read shoals of papers on this subject, and they contain serious questions about the operation of his Imperial and Cayman Islands Offshore Reinsurance company that have never been answered, although they should have been answered by now. I know that in November 1982 Sir Peter Green was questioned by the council of Lloyd's at Leeds castle, in Kent. He told the council that his farm was a beneficiary of the company. He tried to sell his interests, but he could not, and he put them into a trust. He has had to admit that his farm is still a potential beneficiary of the trust. Why have we not heard more about that?

Why has there been no investigation into the questions asked about whether the names are being deprived of money in relation to Cresvale Securities and its related companies, which have been mentioned in an early-day motion of mine? Why has there not been an inquiry into the relationship between Sir Peter Green and Janeen Services, one of his companies? The company looks as though it may be one of the methods by which names are being deprived of money.

What did Sir Peter Green do to help to cover up for Peter Cameron Webb? It is as clear as a pikestaff to anyone who understands simple morality that he did so. If the chairman of Lloyd's can do that so that Peter Cameron Webb was not subjected to scrutiny how can any hon. Member be asked to put his trust in Lloyd's? We know for a fact that Peter Cameron Webb was allowed to resign from Lloyd's with a month's notice, when six months is the required period for notice. That restriction of time prevented the freezing of his assets. Why did Peter Green allow that to happen? Why did he turn up in Hong Kong this year, just before John Walrock came over here and threatened to blow the gaff by giving his evidence on Lloyd's in public? Why did he suddenly change his mind at the last moment?

Sir Peter Green was asked to look into Peter Cameron Webb's Unimar slush fund. Everybody at Lloyd's refers to it as a slush fund. It is not one of the biggest slush funds at about £500,000, but it is a lot of money to go into a Monte Carlo slush fund. How could the chairman of Lloyd's, having inquired into it privately and off the record, gone back to the council without a written report and simply say that he was satisfied that nothing was wrong with the Unimar slush fund? That is nonsense.

How did Tuckey QC conduct an inquiry into Sir Peter Green's operations and come back with a report that was an even bigger nonsense, based on a wholly false premise? We know that a report is to be published that will show that Unimar was a slush fund and that big names and figures are involved. I could give them to the House now, but I shall not bother because it is not part of my speech.

How does the chairman manage to get away with these things? Unless and until Lloyd's can tell the House and the country that it is prepared to hold a rigorous inquiry into the activities of its past chairman, there will be grave cause for concern. It is not just Lloyd's that is involved in the cover-up of Sir Peter Green. I ask any hon. Member to rise now to interrupt me and explain why Sir Peter Green was summoned in March 1983 to see Sir Gordon Richardson, the then Governor of the Bank of England, in the presence of Mr. Henry Benson, his chief tax adviser, to discuss Sir Peter Green's tax affairs.

The Governor of the Bank of England has no standing in law in relation to the tax affairs of anybody in this country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has no standing in law in relation to the tax affairs of anybody in this country. It is a rigid rule that every private individual's tax affairs, whether they are hon. Members, members of the public or members of the Monarchy, are not discussed by any official. During the last two weeks we have been told by a Bank of England public relations official that Sir Peter Green went to see Sir Gordon Richardson and said, "I've got a tax problem" and that Sir Gordon said, "I'll tell you what to do, Sir Peter. You go and talk to an accountant about it." Sir Peter Green is a multi-millionaire. Which hon. Member will tell the House that Sir Peter Green does not have a gaggle of tax accountants and that he needs to go to the Governor of the Bank of England to be told that if he has a tax problem he should get hold of a tax accountant? It is preposterous. What kind of idiots does the Bank of England think we are? We shall not tolerate that kind of cover-up—in this House, or on the part of Lloyd's, or on the part of the Bank of England.

How did it come about subsequently that Sir Peter Green, who wanted a second term of office as chairman of Lloyd's, was told by the current Governor of the Bank

of England, that he could not have it? Apparently, he went along and said that he had a few tax problems and that they would take him a little time to sort out. Are people trying to tell hon. Members that what Sir Peter Green said to Robin Leigh-Pemberton was, "I owe the tax people rather more money than I have paid. I have got a few problems, but they are not really serious" and that Robin Leigh-Pemberton said, "Oh, well, in that case you had better not carry on at Lloyd's. You had better get out because there is nothing wrong." No; Sir Peter Green has serious tax problems and the House, as well as the Inland Revenue, should be told what they are. That should be part of the inquiry. Until we can get to the bottom of it, nobody will take any notice of any protestation by Lloyd's. I am certainly not going to take any notice of William Beckett, the solicitor, telling me that they have cleaned up the place.

I saw William Beckett last Friday. I did not go along to see him. I went along just to look around the building. I was given a very pleasant guided tour, and he invited me to have a chat with him. I was surprised when he said to me that there was nothing in my early-day motion that Lloyd's did not know about. I thought, "Well, that's a bit odd, because these early-day motions are serious." The Chancellor of the Exchequer talks about McCarthyite smears, but his solicitor said, "I know about it all." If Lloyd's know about all of my early-day motions, may I remind the House that one of them relates to the fact that when Mr. Leslie Dew worked for Merrett he was leading substantial banking business for Alexander Howden. A number of the commissions were being paid direct into a Swiss bank account. Mr. Leslie Dew is a former vice-chairman of Lloyd's. How is it that the chairman and the vice-chairman of Lloyd's never seem to get investigated while the others do? If Mr. William Beckett and his predecessors — because Mr. William Beckett has just come from the Department of Trade and Industry — knew about that, why did they not hold an inquiry? If they want some leads, I shall give them a few.

The Alexander Howden banking business, which is related to Lloyds International and possibly to one other customer, was authorised by Mr. Kenneth Grob and Mr. Commerie, who are well known figures. The administration was carried out by Mr. Graham Sloan, the director of banking. Mr. Graham Sloan knows the Swiss bank account number into which the monies were paid because he paid them into the Swiss bank account.

The administration was also carried out by Mr. John Varney. All that Lloyd's has to do is to question these people and Mr. Leslie Dew to get to the bottom of the scandal. That seems fairly easy and straightforward. Why has it not been done?

I did not talk directly about that case to Mr. Beckett, but he asked me, "How far back do you want to go?" I told him, "As far back as there are people still alive." I am a barrister and I know that if someone commits a murder, a robbery or any other crime and someone finds out about it eight years later the person is not told, "You committed the crime eight years ago, so we'll forget it." People are charged for such crimes and go to prison, so why does not that happen in the Lloyd's case?

It is said that the information in my early-day motions is known. Several of the motions relate to the activities of Sir Peter Green and they give a lot of leads. If Mr. William Beckett and Lloyd's know all about this activity, why have they not at least—without charging Sir Peter Green as being guilty—carried out an investigation to answer all the questions that all the people at Lloyd's, not me, are asking? We must have some explanation from somebody. I can see some panic in the Box behind the Speaker's chair. The people there seek an explanation. The Minister laughs and shakes his head, but I shall be interested in his answer. I know that, because I can read him like a book. He is doing his best. I have no criticisms of his activity in any sphere, but I know that he will not give me a satisfactory answer.

Sometimes I wonder just how far the power of Lloyd's goes. I am about to send to the Lord Chancellor a document drawn up by a reputable solicitor. I have seen the solicitor and talked to his managing clerk and to some other people. When the British establishment starts to worry about cases, it illustrates how odd things can get. The document concerns the conduct of the Senior Master at the Royal Courts of Justice. He is not a judge, so I can talk about him. He deals with proceedings before they reach court. The case, which is over was called Tubero v. Toomey and involved 15,000 other Lloyd's names who were sued in a representative capacity. It was a recent action which was struck out. It concerns the loss of gems in Los Angeles.

I make no comment on the merits of the case. I have no interest in the plaintiffs and no interest in the defendants, but I am concerned with what happened. On 4 November 1984 the case was listed to come before Master Turner but the Senior Master, J. R. Bickford Smith, for reasons that nobody can understand, grabbed it for himself and insisted that he should deal with it. There is evidence that he had seen the papers, although he was not to deal with the case.

In December of that year——

Mr. Cash: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Perhaps you can give some guidance about whether article 9 of the Bill of Rights applies in this case. Will you reflect on the matter?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: (Mr. Harold Walker): I am not here to interpret the Bill of Rights.

Mr. Sedgemore: The case went before Master J. R. Bickford Smith. Counsel said to him, "Do you really feel you can deal with this case because one of the defendants is called J. Bickford-Smith. J. R. Bickford Smith does not have a hyphen in his name, but J. Bickford-Smith does. Master Bickford Smith lied to counsel. Yes, he lied. He said:

"You will not find another master in this corridor, nor a single judge in this building, who is not a Lloyd's underwriter."

That statement was manifestly untrue, because all the masters are not Lloyd's underwriters.

There might have been an inference that those Bickford Smiths were related. I have had a genealogist check the position and I can report that the grandfather of both of them was George Smith and that J. R. Bickford Smith is the cousin of J. Bickford-Smith. What is the Senior Master doing when one of the defendants in a case is his cousin? What is he doing when one of the other masters just down the corridor, Master Topley, is also a Lloyd's underwiter and a defendant in a case and is his best friend, and when the wife of Master Topley witnessed the marriage of Bickford Smith?

Further, what is happening in this case when of the solicitors, Elbourne Mitchell, Elbourne is a member of

[Mr. Sedgemore]

Lloyd's council, is a consultant in the case and is also a defendant in the case and Mr. Mitchell, the senior partner who is dealing with the case, is also a defendant in the case? It is all beginning to look very mucky.

I will take the grin off the Minister's face when I tell him that there was an absurd, pathetic letter from the Lord Chancellor's office which will have to be answered when it is claimed to an American attorney that there is no relationship between the Bickford Smiths. The Law Society is still looking into the activities of the solicitors in this case. Master J. R. Bickford Smith, the Senior Master — who happens to be a member of the Athlumney Freemasons Lodge, and there appear to be other freemasons in this case; we have a curious combination of freemasonry and the power of Lloyd's— actually makes orders which are outside the rule book for which he is personally responsible.

When the Lord Chancellor looks into this case, he will find a vipers' nest. It makes one wonder how far these sorts of relationship can go when we are talking about the vice-chairman of Lloyd's and no inquiry; about the chairman of Lloyd's and no inquiry; about the Senior Master at the Royal Courts of Justice and things going wrong; about the Law Society saying that it cannot believe what it is hearing; and about the Lord Chancellor's department writing silly letters to American attorneys. Where will it end?

There is grave public concern over this matter. I have received 800 letters. I shall not get round to answering them all for the next six months. About 100 of them concern serious cases and about 700 say, in effect, "You must carry on with what you are doing." I have a letter with me—it came this morning; that is the only reason why I have it in my possession now—which is typical. It says:

"Dear Mr. Sedgemore"——

and it is interesting because it links Johnson Matthey with Lloyd's——

> "As one whose company lost money through Sipra's film ventures and has personally lost a very large sum through fraudulent underwriting at Lloyd's, I can only ask that you keep up the pressure against the ever-increasing criminal activities in the City of London. Self-regulation purely means that the most blatant excesses are curbed, and self-enrichment continues unabated by those who are on the inside track."

I have had many letters of that type. QCs have been writing to me saying that they intend to sue Lloyd's, and there will be a great deal of dirt and flak about. They are writing to me as though I can do something to help them, so that they do not have to sue Lloyd's and there does not have to be any flak. I cannot do anything to help them. Lloyd's must clean itself up or the Government will have to do the cleaning up for it.

I have a letter here which mentions Sturge and Company. I have a letter from Peter Rawlings which is so hysterical that it could have been written by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He complains bitterly that I have mentioned them in an early-day motion and says that there is nothing to inquire into. I am going through a file on Sturge and Company, and when the new year comes and I have had a chance to sort it all out I shall make public what I know. Then Mr. Rawlings can write me another letter, although I hope that he will write it in less hysterical terms.

There is a serious problem, and the kind of self-regulatory devices that the Government are thinking up for the City of London are not sufficient. I hope that I shall be able to speak on Second Reading of the Financial Services Bill and even get on the Committee. It will be the only Committee that I have ever volunteered to go on. We can then go into these matters in great detail. It is not fair to say that we have not yet come forward with proposals. We shall come forward with a clutch of proposals which should help to alleviate the position.

3.10 am

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I congratulate the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) on initiating this debate, but I find the attitude of Labour Members difficult to understand. The Labour party decries profits, but if investors do not make profits Labour Members are the first to shout fraud.

Mr. Rogers: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Profits have been mentioned twice now, first by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) and now by the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham). If they had bothered to listen to my speech, and if they read *Hansard* tomorrow, they will know that nowhere did I mention the word "profit". I mentioned fraud on many occasions. My hon. Friends have now provided manifest evidence that there is a lot of fraud going on. Never at any time have I mentioned the honest——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is not raising a point of order for me.

Mr. Thurnham: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman has forgotten that he is a member of the party that taxed investor's earnings at 98 per cent. It is fraudulent for a Labour Member to initiate such a debate when one looks back at the Labour party's record. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) talked about not liking a grapeshot approach. It is the grease gun approach, the smear gun approach, that I do not like. If the allegations of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Frauditch are true, he should take them to the police in the first instance, as the police have said they wish he would. If they are not true, is it not a gross abuse of this House for him to publicise them in the way that he has done?

I thought that the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) would lift the tone of the debate somewhat, but I was disappointed at the way in which he attacked my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary of State. I hope that he will not persist in that line of argument. That is no doubt why his leader struck such a poor deal with the Common Market if he was benefiting from his land holdings.

I did not hear all the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith), but I should like to take up the point about the importance of auditors having powers to report on fraud. That is one of the most interesting aspects of the White Paper which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor gave us yesterday. I hope that we shall hear more about the powers of auditors when my hon. and learned Friend produces his Bill shortly.

We have lost the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), but it was his union which was so busy trying to bankrupt the country at the time when he was saying the Government should have been worrying about our banks.

I want to look at the job that the City does, because it is the financial centre not only of Britain but of the world. It is the greatest financial centre, and we must ensure that it remains so. I look forward to the White Paper later today setting a legislative framework which will ensure a successful and great future for London as the financial centre of Britain and the world.

I trust that my hon. and learned Friend has considered the White Paper carefully in relation to the new Bill, as I believe that the key to self-regulation is for auditors to have power to go to the relevant body if necessary. If the power exists it becomes unnecessary because the client will wish to discuss the matter with the regulatory agency if he knows that the auditor has power to do so in any case. That was a key proposal in the White Paper on banking supervision, and I shall be interested to know the extent to which my hon. and learned Friend believes that it would be valuable in the new Bill.

I remind the hon. Member for Dagenham that we do not just look back to 1981. We can go back to 1720 and the South Sea bubble. More recent incidents include London and County Securities. It is extraordinary how long the Labour Government took to act in the secondary banking crisis. Indeed, we had to wait until 1979 for legislation on that. Yet Labour Members now criticise the present Government, who have acted very promptly.

The Opposition talked about fraud in the City, but no one mentioned fraud elsewhere, although the Library can provide notes on that, too. In 1984 there were 77 reported incidents of fraud in local authorities. As so many of them failed to answer the questionnaires sent to them, it is thought that a large number of frauds also went undiscovered. Fraud is not just a matter for the City. It is a matter for all activities, both commercial and municipal, and we must be on our guard on that account.

I shall not detain the House any longer, as I know that my hon. and leaned Friend the Minister wishes to begin his reply.

3.16 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this debate on a subject of great importance to people far beyond the City.

Honest dealing is fundamental to the working of our economic system, but our concern goes even deeper. Our whole system of morality is threatened if it is thought that fraud of any kind is tolerated. If it is tolerated in one place, it will quickly spread and become the norm elsewhere. That is why the Government have taken a whole series of steps to prevent fraud and to punish it when it occurs. They are serious steps, not just allegations about particular losses.

The foundation for many of the measures that I shall describe were laid over a period of several years and are not simply responses to recent headlines. The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) acknowledged that. He referred to the setting up of the Roskill committee in 1983 and the Gower committee in 1981. These steps have been at the forefront of Government attention for a considerable time.

Maintaining confidence in our financial institutions is a major task of my Department and of others primarily concerned — the Treasury, the Law Officers and the Home Office — and we recognise the seriousness of fraud. It not only causes loss to individuals, sometimes on a disastrous scale, but it can lead to business collapse and unemployment. The reputation of London, Edinburgh and other financial centres is a precious national asset which we must constantly strive to maintain. Fraud damages us all, so combating it is a national priority. I believe, too, that we all have a duty not to inflict unnecessary damage on those interests by exaggerating the scale of the problem. Serious though it is, it must be kept in proportion.

Despite what has happened at Lloyd's, for example, no Lloyd's policy holder has not been paid when he or she has a valid claim. The depositors in JMB have not lost their money. It is just as dangerous to exaggerate the scale of the problem as to minimise it. Those who exaggerate the problem are doing us all a great disservice.

I should like to review the Government's action programme on fraud. First and foremost, fraud involves crime, and I want to deal first with the criminal law aspects. Action to combat fraud is essentially a matter for the criminal law. The government have been active in seeking to overhaul our systems, laws and procedures, the better to tackle the growing amount of fraud and its increasing sophistication.

The difficulties in tackling commercial fraud should not be underestimated. Those who perpetrate fraud are usually careful to cover their tracks, and unravelling complicated transactions is a lengthy and painstaking process. Any criminal prosecution must be founded on evidence that is both available and admissible in criminal proceedings in this country. Interested parties are often reluctant to co-operate with a police investigation, for fear of prejudicing themselves in civil proceedings. Difficulties often exist in obtaining overseas evidence. If a witness is located within the jurisdiction of a foreign state, no power exists where by investigators in this country can compel the production of his evidence here.

A striking example of this kind of problem is provided in some of the cases involving Lloyd's. As my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General informed the House, the investigations concerning the affairs of the PCW syndicate and Alexander Howden were first referred to the Director in 1982. He added:

"Two separate but related investigations are being conducted under the auspices of a fraud investigation group formed for that purpose. It comprises police officers, members of the Director's professional staff, accountants and very experienced specialist members of the Bar. Despite the considerable financial and manpower resources devoted to the case, serious delay has been imposed upon the progress of these investigations by the necessity of securing, in a form admissible in any criminal proceedings in England, evidence which hitherto has only been available from witnesses located within the jurisdiction of a foreign state." — [*Official Report*, 25 November 1985; Vol. 87, c. *362*.]

The Solicitor-General went on to explain the difficulties and the way in which he hopes to overcome them. There one finds the distinction between cases such as those before us tonight and cases that were the subject of a comparison which the hon. Member for Dagenham must have known was too facile to be seriously helpful in the context of this debate. He spoke about frauds perpetrated on the DHSS and about action that was taken to deal with them. Is he suggesting that there is a problem in relation to frauds perpetrated on the DHSS because one cannot get the evidence that is located in a foreign country? Is he suggesting that the difficulties of getting the evidence necessary to satisfy a criminal court on the burden of proof are remotely comparable in cases involving fraud on the

[Mr. Michael Howard]

DHSS and the cases with which we are now concerned? If so, he is demeaning the tone of what I hope over the weeks and months ahead will continue to be a very serious debate on this topic.

Mr. Gould: Had the Minister listened carefully to what I said—I am sure that he did—he would know that I was suggesting that we expected to see the same zeal, prompt action and use of resources in respect of the Oxford social security investigation put to the service of detecting major criminals who have got away with thousands of times more money than did any of the pathetic people in Oxford who were rounded up by the police.

Mr. Howard: I share the hon. Gentleman's desire to bring to book those who have got away with these large sums of money, and so do the Government. My hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General told the House frankly of the difficulties encountered in bringing these prosecutions. The kind of problem that he identified is precisely that which has been studied by the Roskill committee. That is what it was set up to consider. Its terms of reference were:

"To consider in what ways the conduct of criminal proceedings in England and Wales arising from fraud can be improved and to consider what changes in existing law and procedure would be desirable to secure the just, expeditious and economical disposal of such proceedings".

Mr. Rogers: We could well accept that the Government are applying themselves to a change in the law so that frauds can be prevented or made more easily detectable, but if a criminal act is taking place today, when there are obviously insufficient resources to pursue the criminals assiduously, why do the Government not take specific action to make more money and resources immediately available? I understand that there are only 21 people associated with the DPP investigating fraud, whereas there are 175 people associated with investigating social security frauds.

Mr. Howard: There is no secret about resources. My hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General has made it plain to the House that the question of resources is under active consideration. An application has been made and the matter is under consideration with a view to increasing the resources available to the fraud investigation groups. The difficulties, essentially, do not arise out of a lack of resources; they arise out of the procedural difficulties which the Roskill committee was set up to consider.

We look forward to the recommendations of the Roskill committee. We hope that its report will be published early in the new year and that it will play a critical role in enabling the criminal law to be a more effective vehicle for prosecuting fraud. Meanwhile, the Government are undertaking major changes in the system of prosecuting fraud. We have heard mention of the fraud investigation group system, which is designed to co-ordinate the legal and investigative aspects of an inquiry. It comprises police officers, members of the professional staff of the DPP, accountants and specialist members of the Bar. It has its own staff accountants. There is a training programme to ensure that the lawyers have the necessary understanding of accountancy, and a panel of specialist accountants is being compiled. The Department of Trade and Industry puts at the disposal of the fraud investigation group investigatory powers under the Companies Act. There we have machinery set up, representing a new way of pooling all the skills that are needed to combat sophisticated crime, and beginning to show its effectiveness. The central role which the criminal process will play in relation to fraud will always remain.

I turn to another area in which we have made less progress than I should have wished, and where again we propose to increase our powers to improve the effectiveness of the action we take. My hon. Friends the Members for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) and for Nottingham, North (Mr. Ottaway) referred to the number of prosecutions for the offence of insider trading. We created a criminal offence in 1980, and a lamentably small number of successful prosecutions have been brought since that offence was put on the statute book. It is difficult to prove as a criminal charge. It is necessary to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that the defendant knew that he was in possession of price-sensitive information — not probably knew, or might have known, but definitely knew — and other jurisdictions have similar disappointing experiences.

I invite the attention of my hon. Friends who raised that point, and of all others who are seriously interested in the problem, to the powers that we propose to take to deal with the matter. They are contained in the Financial Services Bill and go considerably further than any powers that have ever been brought to bear on the problem. I put that forward to hon. Members as an indication of the seriousness with which we take the task of tackling abuse, malpractice and fraud.

I could cite a number of other measures that the Government have taken: the prosecutions that are carried out by my Department for fraudulent trading and failure to keep accounts, company investigations, the compulsory winding up of companies and the disqualification of unfit directors, where powers have been considerably extended and enhanced under the Insolvency Act 1985.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) was kind enough to refer to my recent speech on the role of accountants, especially auditors, in the fight against fraud. The Government's concern about this originated with my predecessor — my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher)—and, as a result of his concern, the Institute of Chartered Accountants set up a working party a year ago, chaired by Ian Hay Davison, to examine the whole subject of fraud and what the accountant should be doing to prevent it in today's conditions. The working party's report was a most constructive response, and I pay tribute to those who produced it.

Since then, there has been a further report from a committee chaired by Lord Benson, which has also been helpful. The Government believe that those reports do not go far enough and that it is necessary for auditors to recognise a duty to report evidence of fraud, when they come across it, to the relevant authorities. We think that it is necessary in certain instances for that evidence to be reported without first informing the directors of the company concerned.

In a few hours, the Financial Services Bill will be published. It establishes a number of additional protections for investors, some of which are sufficiently well known for me not to be breaking any confidence by revealing them at this stage. All investment businesses will have to be authorised. There will be at least one designated

regulation agency, with a wide range of powers to enable the investment authorities to ensure effective regulation. There will be compensation schemes to protect investors. There will be powers for the Secretary of State and any designated agency to apply to the court for injunctions to counter breaches of the legislation and to obtain restitution orders designed to recover for investors money that has been obtained in contravention of the legislation or the rules. There will be wide powers of investigation for the Secretary of State and any designated agency. All these measures will go a long way towards creating a climate that will be hostile to those who set out to perpetrate fraud. The debate has concentrated on the detection and the prosecution of fraud—the prevention of fraud is, none the less, important. It is in that context that we see the importance of the Financial Services Bill.

I turn to the subject of Lloyd's and begin by making my position clear, as I undertook to do. I ceased all underwriting at Lloyd's on 2 September, the day on which I was appointed to the Government, as required by the rules for Ministers in my position. I accordingly resigned on that day from all syndicates in which I had previously participated. I have done exactly what the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) suggested to the Prime Minister that I should do, except that I did it three months before he wrote to the Prime Minister about it. It is true that I remain a member of Lloyd's, but I have no further business there save for the running off of my pre-existing contracts.

Mr. Gould: The House will be grateful to the Minister for that explanation. As he has now made it clear that he was obliged to give up his membership, I think that he gives the lie to those of his hon. Friends who attempted to argue a little earlier that his position on this issue was no different from that of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who might own some agricultural land. Will he concede that what he has told the House is at variance with what his hon. Friends attempted to argue?

Mr. Howard: The arguments of my hon. Friends is on the record and those who examine it will form their own assessment of its validity.

I shall deal with the substantive issues which have been raised on Lloyd's. I do not propose to respond to the various matters which were aired by the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch. He assures the House that he has drawn to the attention of the police all the information that is in his possession. The police are clearly the appropriate people to be in possession of the information to which the hon. Gentleman has referred. What he thinks he will achieve by using the privilege of the House to repeat that information, if it is in the hands of the police, is a matter that only the hon. Gentleman can answer.

Mr. Sedgemore: I am puzzled by what the Minister is saying. Lloyd's has a disciplinary machinery which it has not used in certain instances. Why is the Minister talking about the police? We are talking about Lloyd's making its own inquiries.

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman assured the House earlier that he had put all the information in the hands of the police. He has said that he has done so, and I do not doubt that he has. However, I wonder why, having done that, and having ensured, so he tells us, that the information is in the hands of the police, he thinks it necessary and appropriate to use the privilege of the House to make various allegations.

Substantial progress has been made since the passage of the Lloyd's Act 1982 and the putting into place of the regulatory system under that measure, to establish an effective regulatory system at Lloyd's. It is too early to judge whether that system is sufficiently effective and one in which the Government can have sufficient confidence.

It may be appropriate to conclude by saying that the Government will not hesitate to take any action that is necessary to ensure that there is an effective regulatory system at Lloyd's. The Financial Services Bill, which is designed for entirely different purposes and to deal with a different area of concern—to set up a regulatory system to deal with investment business—is not, as we see it, the appropriate vehicle for that sort of action. If it is necessary to amend the Lloyd's Act 1982 to ensure that a proper regulatory system is set up, we shall not shrink from doing it, just as we have not shrunk from discharging our duty——

In accordance with MR. SPEAKER'S *Ruling*— [*Official Report*, 31 January 1983; Vol. 36, c. 19]—*the debate was concluded.*

Low-paid Workers (Incentives)

3.39 am

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): Despite the lateness of the hour, it is important that the House be given an opportunity at the end of the year to debate the options which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have in his 1986 Budget. I believe that that debate will continue throughout the country and the House for several weeks until my right hon. Friend rises in his place in March and tells an expectant nation how large the tax cuts will be. Because of the considerable economic recovery, which has now been sustained over a number of years, almost all neutral independent economic observers believe that the Chancellor will have room for substantial cuts in taxation in his next Budget.

I wish tonight to discuss some of the options available to the Chancellor. He has the option of cutting the basic rate of tax, the option of increasing thresholds, he could cut national insurance contributions for employers or employees, he could restrict any cuts in those contributions to the lower paid in the bottom three bands, or he could choose to have a lower rate of tax for those earning below average incomes.

I immediately dismiss the last option, because that would cause structural difficulties for the Inland Revenue, and therefore is not a practical option even though it is superficially attractive.

I and many of my hon. Friends believe that certain important factors must be considered when deciding on which option. We strongly believe that the the lower paid should obtain the maximum benefit from any cut in income tax or reduction in national insurance contributions. There are several reasons for that belief: first, it is a matter of equity, secondly, because it is in the interests of the economy; and, thirdly, because it will increase employment opportunities and encourage many of those who currently choose not to work to find employment.

Currently, the basic rate of tax is 30 per cent. The great majority of us, if we are not on the bottom two bands, pay a national insurance contribution of 9 per cent. I suggest that that, in practical terms, means that we are paying 39 per cent. tax at basic rate. I do not believe that people notice on their pay slips how their deductions are divided between taxation and national insurance contributions.

The Chancellor, in his imaginative Budget this year, set the precedent for a varying level of taxation by reducing to 7 per cent. the national insurance contribution paid by band 2 earners—those earning between £60 and £95 a week—and by reducing to 5 per cent. the contributions paid by band 1 earners — those earning under £60 a week. Therefore, their real tax is 37 per cent. and 35 per cent. respectively.

My hon. Friends and I believe that a sensible option would be, first, further to reduce the national insurance contributions that we are paying, and secondly, to increase the level of thresholds and not change the basic rate of tax. Let us assume for the sake of argument—and it is not an unreasonable assumption—that the Chancellor has £2·5 billion to play with, and that is a conservative estimate. We could allow a 6 per cent. rise in thresholds, which would take 500,000 workers out of having to pay tax, and, more important—because we should not by and large be in the business of taking people out of tax brackets altogether—it would help considerably many low-paid workers, who would then pay only a small amount of tax.

The other half of the £2·5 billion could be used for reducing national insurance contributions. We could cut contributions by 2 per cent. in band 1, 4 per cent. in band 2, and 6 per cent. in band 3. There would be real tax rates of 32 per cent., 34 per cent. and 36 per cent. together with the standard rate of 39 per cent., when including national insurance contributions.

The Chancellor, in his forceful and well-received speech at the Conservative party conference in October, hit a chord to which many people could respond when he referred to the single nurse earning £140 per week. He rightly said that deductions of tax and national insurance contributions amount to £41 per week, and her take-home pay is only £99 a week. If we reduced the basic rate of tax by 2 per cent., as many people suggest, that nurse would be only £2 a week better off. On the other hand, if we followed our proposals of reducing her national insurance contribution and raising thresholds, she would be £5 a week better off—in other words, over twice as much better off under our proposals.

There are dangers of fiddling with the basic rate of taxes, of helping the better off in the community, while the benefits to those whom we are most anxious to support, the lower paid, would be minimal. That is why we feel strongly that whatever assistance is available should go towards the lower paid as the most deserving in the community, who will improve employment prospects and the economy by having that extra boost.

3.46 am

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) on securing the debate and on the extremely eloquent way in which he put all the points that I was intending to make. I do not think that I would be betraying any confidence if I said that I have enjoyed working closely with him on the subject during the past few days and weeks, and with several other hon. Friends whom I am delighted to see in the Chamber at this early hour of the morning.

The concern of political parties about the problem of low pay is clearly illustrated by the number of hon. Members in the Chamber. There are no fewer than five Conservative Back Benchers present, but only one Labour Member and no Members on the Liberal and Social Democratic party Benches. That typifies the cynical way in which the latter two parties are willing apparently to express emotional concern about the problems of the low paid, but when they have the chance to take part in potentially a three-hour debate, they cannot produce a single representative, at a time when there is not even a by-election.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): I make it clear that we in the Labour party have agreed that it is foolish for large numbers of us to stay up all night when there is no vote, and I shall speak for the Labour party. We are aware that a private argument is going on the Tory party. Staying up all night to make speeches on which there is no vote does not mean that there is a serious commitment to the low paid. The hon. Gentleman's points are cheap and have no significance.

Mr. Yeo: I find that a most extraordinary attitude towards the process of parliamentary debate. Any

argument is far from private. We are having a constructive public discussion about some of the options open to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. The fact that the alliance cannot produce one representative suggests a lack of real interest in this subject.

I endorse everything that my hon. Friend said. My experience during the past few months has convinced me of the political wisdom of following the route that he described. I have been struck during my constituency duties by the fact that people on average or even above average earnings, who would benefit substantially from a cut in the basic rate of tax, say as clearly as anyone that they believe that resources should be devoted to the low paid in the 1986 Budget.

Many people find that it is not worth their while taking up employment. I admit that it is often low paid, as many unemployed people's first opportunity of work is likely to be low paid. We are anxious that the next Budget helps them. My hon. Friend gave the example of the nurse earning £140 a week. Someone earning £100 a week provides an even more dramatic illustration. For such a person, a 2 per cent. cut in the basic rate of tax would be worth 60p, whereas our proposals would be worth £4·27 a week. Such a decision would be politically wise, and there is ample economic justification for it.

We are not advocating a specific level of tax relief. We do not know what the Chancellor's judgment will be. He does not know himself, as variable factors must be assessed nearer Budget day. Employment can be stimulated by means other than tax cuts—we must also consider employers' national insurance contributions. If they could be further reduced, the cost of employment would also be reduced. Other steps were initiated in the autumn statement. There is to be additional expenditure on housing, roads and hospital building, all of which is good for employment.

I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major) is the Minister who is to reply. His experience as a Whip means that he is quite familiar with my views on these issues. I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on achieving his new position. We are fortunate to have him here, because he has been deeply involved in the social security White Paper. If he had had the choice, I dare say he would not have chosen this morning to reply to a debate. He spoke of national insurance contributions only last week.

The changes introduced in last year's Budget were of historic proportions. The Budget introduced reduced rates in bands 1 and 2 for employees and in bands 1, 2 and 3 for employers. It has already done much to improve incentives for the low paid, and in 1986 we want to build on that start. If we follow the route that my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East signposted, we shall target the available relief towards more than 6 million full-time adult workers, that is, those who earn up to £140 a week. It is a way of introducing a reduced rate of tax. I hope that during the coming weeks my hon. Friend the Member for Huntingdon and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will urge their colleagues in the Treasury to adopt that course.

Finally, I strongly welcome the social security White Paper proposals on family credit. My only anxiety is that the possible shift of child benefit from being paid directly to the mother may mean that some benefits will not reach her. As family credit is based on net rather than gross income, it represents a major step forward and opens the way for large-scale tax cuts at the lowest end, because those tax cuts will be partially self financing. The Government have a chance to move into a genuinely virtuous cycle. This is an important debate, and I commend my hon. Friend's ideas to the House.

3.55 am

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): If it was difficult for my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay), whom I congratulate on initiating this important debate, it is even more difficult for me to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South. As my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South frankly pointed out, many hon. Members have worked on this subject for some time, and it is fairly obvious that our views generally accord and run along similar lines. I am encouraged that the foundation of my hon. Friend's logic on why it is important to direct any available spare finance in the next Budget follows exactly the same lines as mine. There are two strands of argument. One is about social equity, and the other is about the practical consequences of the measures available to the Chancellor.

I congratulate my hon. Friend on the excellent article called "Tax cuts that would make jobs" which was published in *The Times* of 16 December. All hon. Members will recognise that it was an important, and a welcome, contribution to the debate. My gloss on my hon. Friend's arguments is as follows. It may be uncomfortable for many Conservative Members to accept that a written answer on 29 March makes it clear in a stark and tabular form that the direct tax burden on a family of four who are on two thirds of average earnings has increased since 1978-79 by 10 per cent., while for the same family on 10 times average earnings the burden of taxation has fallen by 22 per cent. It is equally true that the highest marginal rates of tax — the sort of rates that used to have Conservative business men jumping up and down in the aisles — are more than 90 per cent., and are, sadly, being paid by the low paid. No Conservative Member could welcome that. I recognise that it is the product of a complex relation between tax and benefits, and that even those who find that the burden of tax on them is proportionately greater than it is on those on higher incomes are, nevertheless, in many ways significantly better off then in 1978-79. However, an unforeseen by-product of some of our more positive financial and fiscal changes was the present position, and the low paid now rightly demand our attention.

I endorse in the strongest possible terms the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South about the extent to which, in Conservative circles, people who earn many times average earnings and for whom the concept of average earnings has no relevance are saying that they do not need reductions if the alternative is that the money can be better expended in alleviating the plight of the unemployed, creating jobs, and getting industry and the economy moving more quickly. It is to their credit that they say that.

This strand of representation made to me and to many hon. Members runs counter to the traditional, Labour-inspired image of Conservative business men as unmitigatedly venal and avaricious. The reality surprised many of us, but the message is clear and unequivocal: in terms of social equity, the point is accepted even by those

[Mr. Steve Norris]

who would have most to gain from the alternative—one among those put forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East—of a direct cut in tax rates.

As powerful as the arguments about social equality, to which I hope I have added in some small way, are the arguments about the practical effectiveness of direct tax reduction as against threshold and national insurance adjustments. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) will forgive me if I indulge in some private grief this morning and discuss the fortunes of the Conservative party with some of my hon. Friends. It may be believed that reductions in income tax rates have a dramatic quality, in terms of their perception by the electorate, which make them especially valuable and desirable.

I question that conclusion. It has been my consistent experience that when the Government knock 1 per cent., 2 per cent., or even 7 to 8 per cent. off income tax, those who are paid on PAYE will find that almost no difference has been made to them. Therefore, even on the grounds of its supposed marketing effectiveness, I do not believe that the 2p argument—I am using 2p, because I agree that we should suggest a figure of £2·5 billion as being available to the Chancellor, because it is a figure that has been used before and because it is as convenient as any other for the purposes of this argument—bites at the level at which it is suggested it should.

In addition, what I know with even greater certainty and clarity, because it is a conclusion that I can draw for myself, is that while I am sure that every hon. Member welcomes 2p in the pound off tax and would not look a gift horse in the mouth, it will not get me to work much earlier than I do, nor will it make me stay there all that much longer. In addition to my duties in the House, I spend every other waking and breathing moment trying to earn a decent living. In so doing, the rate of tax that I pay is in common with that of a number of my hon. Friends—we seem to share much personal experience in the debate, never mind our confluence of thought.

I simply do not buy the argument that 2p off income tax will give the average business man the greater incentive with which he not only becomes richer, so the theory runs, but goes out, works harder, innovates, invests and produces more jobs at the end of the day. Unless I am mistaken, the thrust of the argument about incentives to the better off, to those with intitiative and entrepreneurial skill is that as one reduces tax and makes them perceive a greater reward for their labour, they are inspired to greater effort to work harder and, in so doing, to produce more jobs. I do not believe that that argument works in relation to the amount of money that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is likely to have, on even the most optimistic forecasts of what is available for this year. I do not believe that 2p in the pound is effective as a mechanism either in terms of its marketing impact or of its impact on incentives.

Secondly—here I express a different view from some Labour Members as to its impact—I take the view that it is reasonable for any person on unemployment benefit, faced with the prospect of low-paid employment, to say that it is simply not worth his while taking a low-paid job at less — for example as a married man with two children—than £120 a week when that amount will be available on benefit. One of the most unhelpful and unrealistic comments that is occasionally heard from these Benches is that such people are drones on the system, and that they are morally reprehensible because they are seeking to live on benefit and not to get jobs.

If I were offered the choice between bringing into my household £120 in benefit for not working and any significant smaller amount if I took a low-paid job, I would be likely to take the former course, and I suspect that that is a rational and reasonable choice to make. In a positive sense, not a condescending or critical sense, I believe that the relationship between unemployment benefit and low paid jobs is crucial.

It follows that when my hon. Friends adduce the example, much quoted in the newspapers, of the nurse on £140 a week, I would infinitely prefer to see that nurse, if a single person, £5 a week better off as a result of adjustments to the national insurance rate and thresholds rather than be £1·90 better off if she gets a 2p tax reduction.

One always feels reticent about employing such a phrase, because it is hackneyed, but anybody who has employed people in low-paid jobs will recognise that a constructive contribution can be made by employers who are prepared to take on people in low-paid jobs. There are jobs that it is not worth an employer's while to offer if he has to pay high wages for them, but if he can offer a real, realistic wage for them that can allow him to be profitable it will at least enable him to offer some person, perhaps on a part-time basis, employment at a low wage. Such jobs exist, and the money that an employer is prepared to pay out is as real as any other amount of wages that he is prepared to pay.

Therefore, it is of crucial importance to recognise that the trigger mechanism of national insurance which operates not necessarily at the top band but at the £35·50 and the £55 marker on present rates is a significant factor in determining what kind of low-paid employment will be offered. National insurance is different in this respect from the thresholds. The irony is that this is because it is in the interests of both employers and employees that wages should be kept below the trigger figures. Above those figures one reaches the ridiculous position that one earns an extra 50p but loses £2. That cannot be sensible.

The longer-term goal is the complete reform of national insurance charges. If one were to delve into the matter, I suspect that one would find that there is no significant justification for the principle of national insurance charges. The principle that there is any direct relationship between what one pays and and what one gets out of the system has been blown to smithereens time after time by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer, of either political colour. The crucial argument about triggers is whether their impact will encourage or discourage employment. Anybody who has offered salaries or wages of around that figure knows that they are a discouragement.

Last year my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said frequently and, I thought, to some considerable effect, particularly at Budget time, that her concern was to address precisely the anomaly that my hon. Friends and I have addressed this evening: that there is a significant number of people who, quite rightly, do not seek employment and who, for other reasons, may not be offered employment by employers because of the mismatch between the social security arrangement, such as it is, the taxation arrangements and the availability of

low-paid employment. That was a crucial part of my right hon. Friend's explanation of the Budget strategy last year. I hope that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, my hon. Friend the Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major), will convey to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer the view that what was good for the country 12 months ago in relation to this argument is good now.

To that may I add a final rider. To imagine that either the mood of the nation, or the logic of the argument, or the rules of arithmetic have changed in the last 12 months would be a profound misjudgment, the consequences of which would be extraordinarily far-reaching for this Government.

4.13 am

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): I believe that in this debate we are addressing one of the most crucial and difficult matters that could be discussed at this time in the morning. I join in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) on raising this subject for debate. His heretical views have been echoed by my hon. Friends the Members for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) and for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris). I join them also in welcoming the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, my hon. Friend the Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major), to his post. It is the first time that I have spoken in a debate when he has been sitting on the Treasury Bench. I congratulate him upon his appointment. We are glad that such a sensitive, sensible person is holding that position at this particular time.

The really important issue that has to be addressed is one of the absurdities of our national life today. My hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East said that it would be logical and sensible for a married man with two children to remain on benefit rather than to work. That is because we have not tackled the inter-relationship between our tax system and our benefits system. The Conservative party, in the run-up to the general election in 1970 and during the lifetime of that Government, have had as one of its objectives the establishment of a system that took account of both the tax system and the social security system. We have lamentably failed to follow that argument through, but we must continue to aim for that solution. It is crucial to getting employment going, particularly for young people, and to providing the human energy necessary to expand the nation's economy. That is why this discussion is so important.

The review by the Department of Health and Social Security was heralded as the "new Beveridge", but it does not take account of the fact that child benefit is paid universally regardless of need and it does not tackle the stupidity of paying supplementary benefit to people leaving school at 16 years of age. If we do not tackle those issues, we cannot begin to tackle the whole crucial problem.

If we fail to combine the social security and tax systems and compound that by trying, through a miasma of seeking popular support by reducing the tax rate from 30 per cent. to 28 or 25 per cent., we are seriously mistaken.

We must remove from tax large numbers of people in the lower income tax brackets. But we have no mechanism by which we can do that. If we raise income tax bands, we shall benefit the whole of the tax-paying community. That is desirable, but it is not crucial to those on above average earnings. The higher the earnings, the more senseless that becomes. We have no mechanism by which we can pinpoint taxpayers in the lower bands. That is because we have not related the social security system to the income tax system.

We must certainly use the thresholds and the fact that the employees' national insurance contribution has been increased by the Government, resulting in the absurdity of increases in tax for the lower paid. I support my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East in saying that we must adopt a mixture of increased thresholds and decreased national insurance contributions for employees.

I hope that we have an imaginative Budget. The Chancellor of the Exchequer wants to reform the tax system . I hope that his Green Paper shows how far he is prepared to adopt radical solutions. I hope that we can establish a mechanism that will allow us to take the low paid out of tax to make it worth their while to go to work and to use their brains and energy to expand the country's wealth so that we can afford social security benefits for those truly in need.

While my wife and I enjoy drawing child benefit and spending it without having to pay tax, we do not need it, yet there are men and women looking after children on their own who need double the child benefit amount to provide a decent standard for themselves and their children. It is absurd that we should still be giving child benefit free of tax to households such as mine — the same must apply to the majority of hon. Members — without giving adequate benefit to those who are truly in need.

We should make it our objective — an honourable objective that would attract the support of the vast majority of people — to produce an equitable tax and social security system that gave an amount of which we could be proud to those in need. We would, in the process, make it more profitable for people to go to work and provide for their families.

4.21 am

Mr. Lewis Stevens (Nuneaton): I join others in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) on choosing this important topic for debate. In addition, I congratulate the Minister and his Department on the social security review that has been conducted and the White Paper that has recently been produced.

That White Paper looked at the possibility of putting all types of benefit on the same basis. It also uses the net income for income support and family credit systems, rather than the gross wage, which has in the past caused distortions. That may conflict somewhat with the view that some of us have in relation to tax benefits for the low paid, in that they may lose benefit under the new system compared with the present gross wage.

That, however, is for the future—because the new system does not take effect until 1988—and it is now, or at least in the next Budget, that we seek benefits for the low paid. We urge the Chancellor to increase the thresholds and reduce national insurance contributions, particularly for the three low bands. That would achieve benefit for people on low pay, and we must concentrate on that section.

Reference was made to the nurse on £140 a week gaining by £5 through tax threshold changes, as against

[Mr. Lewis Stevens]

gaining £2 through a 2p standard rate reduction. It is more beneficial for those on £60 to £70 a week. The proportion that they gain is most important to them, remembering the total amount on which they must live.

People often become confused in that connection. Because people are in receipt of a low wage, it is thought that they automatically get family income supplement, but that is not the case. They may not qualify for that benefit. The position is that people who earn more and pay higher rates of tax all benefit by roughly the same, in cash terms, on the tax side, but not on the national insurance side. Because of that, we should be directing benefit to the low paid. We want people to be encouraged to work, especially the young, and it has been pointed out that, for various reasons, many youngsters have tended to price themselves out of work. The situation is changing for the better, but if that is true they will form quite a large part of the low paid. They will not receive benefits, and so young people need more encouragement.

Pensioners form another group that may be helped by altering thresholds. When they receive a state pension plus a small private pension, they may find themselves having to pay niggling little bits of tax. It is important to remove as many of those people as possible from the tax bracket.

According to the autumn statement, if my right hon. Friend the Chancellor goes along with an indexation of the thresholds in all cases, that will cost about £1·25 billion. The figure of £2·5 billion has been mentioned, which would be double. However, I would go further. It would not matter if we did not increase all the thresholds and increased only those of the personal allowances; in other words, the bottom threshold for the single person and the married person's allowance.

Why should the married person's allowance go up automatically? There may be a case, although perhaps not in this Budget, for looking more closely at the benefits of the married man's allowance and considering whether it should not be an allowance for those who work. Perhaps non-working dependent wives could have some special tax concession. At the moment, some people have a double advantage. I am not suggesting that it should go back to the Exchequer, but it should be distributed across the thresholds. Again, that would have the benefit of pushing the threshold as high as possible. It is still very low.

A single person starts to pay tax on earnings of about £40 a week. Below that figure such a person is already paying national insurance contributions. When earnings reach half the average, at about £90 a week, there is a lot of taxable income in that chunk. By pushing up the tax threshold we improve the situation of that group.

A large number of low earners are in jobs where they are likely to remain low paid. People can move through the different strata, and many of the Government training initiatives have given great encouragement to people to retrain to move out of those lower brackets, but it is still a relatively low wage for such a large proportion. For a single person on half average earnings the figure is about 25 per cent. That is a substantial amount of tax to pay, with national insurance included. The more we can move our tax position away from that £40 level, the more will people be encouraged into lower paid jobs.

The self-employed will also be encouraged. It is easy to think of the self-employed as well off. The enterprise allowance lasts only 12 months. It is not an indefinite subsidy and they are not necessarily earning a lot of money. In those early years they would benefit from such an increased threshold. We sometimes forget how important the self-employed are. That might encourage people to have a go. They might think that it is worth while to work for themselves if there is a lower tax penalty.

Many years ago, when the west midlands was a very prosperous area, it was not uncommon for people to say that overtime was not worth doing because the taxman took all the money. I am sure that the same could be said about some jobs today. It is discouraging, and anything that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor can do in the Budget to improve the lot of the low paid—to give them better opportunities and some extra money to achieve a real improvement in their standard of living—will be well worth while. Moreover, because the money will go to the lowest paid it will almost inevitably be transmitted directly into goods and services, thus increasing the demand for products, with consequent effects on employment. I believe that that is what we ought to do and I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East on raising the subject today.

4.30 am

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Despite the lateness of the hour, I welcome this opportunity to debate incentives for the low paid. I am sorry to break the mood of mutual self-congratulation among the Conservatives, but I am surprised at the narrow attitude that they have taken, isolating the taxation aspect only and not considering the cumulative effect of Government policies on the low paid which has been to drive many more workers into poverty since 1979.

Even on the narrow tax point, the House should appreciate that, despite the 1985 Budget being heralded as a Budget for jobs, there has been only a marginal impact on the large increase in tax burdens faced by low-paid workers since 1979 and a negligible effect on the poverty trap. Despite increasing the tax threshold beyond the rate of inflation for the second consecutive year, the overall tax burden for those on low and average earnings remains significantly higher than it was before the Government took office in 1979.

Because increases in tax thresholds are worth much more to higher rate taxpayers, the 1985 Budget continued the trend of earlier Conservative Budgets in concentrating the benefit of tax concessions on those with already high incomes. The average cut in income tax since 1979 has been £246 per week for a person earning more than £50,000 per year, but for low wage earners it has been little more than £1 per week, which is immediately wiped out by the increases in indirect taxation in the 1985 Budget alone. Therefore, we have a very long way to go before we even get back to where we were in 1979 in terms of the effect of taxation on the low paid. The situation is actually very much worse than that, and concentrating on the narrow point of taxation will not cater for the needs of the low paid in Britain today.

As I said in my intervention, Labour Members welcome the chance to discuss low pay and I discussed with some of my comrades whether it was worth their while to stay up late to put our view. Ever since I was a civil servant and had to run around waking Ministers to reply to debates on the Consolidated Fund, I have taken the view that this is one of our sillier ways of organising our business and, as Labour Members all agree, in our view on the subject

of low pay I believe that it is better for other Labour Members to go home to bed so as to work more efficiently for their constituents or do their Christmas shopping rather than sitting here debating at great length and repeating one another. I should therefore make it absolutely clear to Conservative Members that lack of attendance on the part of Labour Members implies no lack of commitment to the low paid.

Mr. Norris: I hope that the hon. Lady is not suggesting that those Conservative Members who are present are in some way in dereliction of their duty to their constituents.

Ms. Short: Indeed not. I would not wish to suggest that for a minute. I am aware that a healthy argument is going on within the Conservative party, and I respect those within that party who are willing to give up their sleep to press the case for the low paid upon their uncaring Government. I do not for a minute suggest that those Conservative Members who are present are neglecting their duties in any way.

The Opposition want to put on record the fact that we are aware that the increase in poverty wages in Britain since 1979 is no accident. It has been a deliberate part of the Government's philosophy to increase the disparity in incomes between the rich and the poor, and they have been enormously successful in achieving that aim.

One of their methods has been to increase massively the rate of unemployment, which has made workers in secure trade unions weak, as a result of which they have accepted lower pay. From 1979 to the present time, unemployment has increased from 1·2 million to 4 million, and that has caused enormous hurt to individuals and incredible economic waste.

During this period, the rich have got richer and the poor have got poorer. The figures are startling. The proportion of adult men working in manual jobs for low pay—defined as two thirds of average income, which is the internationally recognised definition of low pay—has more than doubled since 1979 from one in 10 to one in five. For full-time women in manual jobs, the proportion on low pay has increased from 66 per cent. to more than 75 per cent. In total, the proportion of all adult workers, including part-timers, earning poverty pay has increased from 36 per cent. to 41 per cent.

The pay of young workers has fallen by almost a third, while youth unemployment has doubled. The poorest tenth of male workers have seen their real pay fall by 5 per cent. while unemployment has trebled to well over 3 million. Low-paid workers are worse off now in real terms than they were in 1886.

As for the high paid, the best paid tenth have received real pay increases of 13 per cent. In 1984, the pay of the top 100 company directors rose by 25 per cent. following an increase of 61 per cent. between 1981 and 1983. The chairman of ICI was given a 68 per cent. pay rise in March 1985, taking his salary from £171,000 to £287,000 a year—and increase of £2,200 a week.

According to the *Financial Times* on 20 July 1985,

"the pay of chief executives in industry has recently gone up very fast and in a good many cases bears little relation to performance".

The top directors of former nationalised industries which the Government have privatised have given themselves average pay rises of more than 85 per cent. in two years, In British Telecom, top pay has gone up from £68,000 to £160,000; and in Amersham International, from £30,000 to £130,000. On top of this pay windfall the Government have given the high paid generous income tax cuts amounting on average to £246 a year compared with a mere £1·06 a week for the low paid.

That is a pattern of an enormous increase in income and cuts in tax for the very highly paid, but the very reverse for the low paid. This redistribution is quite deliberate, and the Government have taken a series of measures to bring it about.

Mr. Lewis Stevens: Is not the hon. Lady aware that during the time of the last Labour Government the real pay of many industrial workers dropped very rapidly, particularly in the car industry in the west midlands, where relative pay dropped rapidly during the early 1970s.

Ms. Short: I am aware that there were some difficulties under the last Labour Government in the west midlands, but the people there who used to work in the car industry do not work at all now. All the figures that I have quoted of relative movements in pay since 1979 stand absolutely. It is no good the hon. Member referring back to the previous Labour Government. Under the two successive Tory Governments since 1979 there has been a massive redistribution in favour of the rich and away from the poor. Inequality in Britain for those in work, let alone the unemployed, has increased massively. It has been deliberate and is part of the Government's philosophy and ideology. They have gone to enormous trouble to try to drive down the wages of the lowest paid.

The Government have abolished the fair wages resolution which existed in Britain since Victorian times to ensure that contractors bidding for Government contracts would not bid each other down by offering lower wages. It has had bipartisan support until recently, when the Government got rid of it.

The Government introduced the young workers' scheme. It is now to be abolished because it has been so unsuccessful. The Government have been paying a huge subsidy of £15 a week to anyone who would employ a young worker at less than £50 a week. The scheme has been heavily criticised by the Public Accounts Committee because it is so wasteful and because 80 per cent. of the jobs so subsidised would have existed anyway. Its whole purpose has been to drive down young people's wages.

The youth training scheme has been used in exactly the same way. In some of our arguments across the Chamber about the youth training scheme, Conservative Members have deliberately misunderstood our criticism. We all share the aim of improving the training system, but we do not share the aim of using schemes for the young unemployed to drive down the wages of young workers.

If the old youth opportunities programme allowance had been uprated in line with inflation, it would now be about £40 a week. The youth training scheme currently pays £27·50. The community programme for the long-term unemployed has been used in exactly the same way.

Mr. Norris: One matter that the hon. Lady raised which has always concerned me greatly is the idea that young workers—those serving their apprenticeship or just out of it—can realistically expect pay which is very closely related, as my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) will confirm, in engineering at least, to the pay of a fully skilled man with 10 or 15 years' experience.

[Mr. Norris]

I hope that the hon. Lady will recognise the genuine difficulty that an employer who is faced with the prospect of either paying 90 per cent. of the skilled rate to a lad who has only just finished his apprenticeship, or paying 100 per cent. of the skilled rate to someone who has 10 or 15 years' experience is almost certain to say that it is not worth his while to go through the apprenticeship process, because he is much better off, in terms of sheer productivity, in taking the fully skilled person.

Is it not in the interests of young people in the long term that we should recognise that experience after qualification and after apprenticeship or training scheme counts for a good deal, and that there has to be a realistic differentiation between the wage rates paid at qualification and after considerable industrial experience?

Ms. Short: I agree absolutely with the hon. Gentleman that there has to be a difference between the wage rate paid to the trainee and that paid to the fully qualified and experienced worker, but I do not agree that we have that problem. It is another of the myths that have been propagated so assiduously by the Government. All the studies of levels of youth unemployment and its relationship to wage levels show that movements in wages levels are not the explanation of the great rise in youth unemployment. The rise in youth unemployment parallels absolutely but rises faster than the general rise in unemployment. Indeed, when unemployment is falling, youth unemployment falls more rapidly.

There is no way in which the movement of wage levels for young people in Britain can explain the ups and downs from the 1950s onwards of youth unemployment in Britain. That myth has been put about and the Government went to a lot of trouble to commission research to try to prove their case — they were unsuccessful — and to undermine the famous Makeham study, which is the authoritative study in this area. I agree with the broad principle but not with the implication that the movement in youth wage levels explains high levels of youth unemployment.

Just as the Government have used the youth training scheme to work on the degradation of young people so that they take work, accept low allowances and receive a general rate for a job—they are levering young people down — the community programme has been used to work on the desperation of the long-term unemployed to try to lever down acceptable rates for the adult unemployed. Recently, yet another scheme was announced. It parallels the young workers' scheme and is to be called the job start scheme. It will be piloted in January in six areas. The new scheme will pay £20 a week to an adult worker who has been out of work for 12 months or more if he accepts a wage of less then £80 a week. One million workers work for less than £80 a week. It is a myth that reducing wages will generate jobs.

The Government's proposals on wage councils will exempt young people from their protection and weaken the protection afforded to adults. Recently, the regional low pay units conducted a competition to discover which unit had the lowest paid worker on its books. The west midlands won the competition with an Asian female machinist working in a factory for 15p an hour. That is how bad conditions are getting in Britain generally and in the west midlands in particular.

Another measure that has been adopted to bring about more low pay is the cut in the wages inspectorate. This is an incentive to employers not to pay the minimum legally required rates. The number of people who are not paid the legal rates has increased. Privatisation is part of the process. It saves money if it is used to get workers to do the same job for much lower wages. That is the pattern throughout Britain.

It has been suggested that there is a problem in providing incentives to work and that benefits are so high that large numbers of people are not willing to work. That does not stand up to scrutiny. For example, when the Department of Health and Social Security, the Treasury and the Department of Employment were giving evidence to the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service in 1982, they all agreed that the vast majority of people were better off in work than out of work. Large numbers of people work for wages lower than the amounts that they would receive in benefits because of the sense of commitment to the dignity of work.

Another excuse is the argument that cutting wages will create jobs. The Government have made an enormous effort to prove that thesis but have been unsuccessful. In a consultative paper on wages council abolition or reform —"reform" should be read as meaning "weakening"— the Government referred to a Treasury paper on the relationship between employment and wages and suggested that it provided proof that a cut in wages would increase employment. That whole document is entirely disreputable. In "Pay and Jobs", Treasury Economic Progress Report, No. 174, January 1985, the Treasury suggested

"as a rule of thumb that if money wages were to grow less rapidly so that real wages were one per cent. less than otherwise, the gain in jobs might ultimately be between ½ per cent. and 1 per cent., that is between 110,000 and 220,000 jobs".

The Select Committee on Employment was sceptical of those estimates, and said:

"The results of the econometric exercises underlying the argument used in the evidence submitted are not of themselves sufficiently convincing without strongly supporting evidence."

Treasury officials admitted that

"the simulation results depend critically on a system of adjustments which is entirely arbitrary and has no empirical basis. Without this system of adjustments the model would have produced a smaller rise in company sector expenditure on stock building and employment, and on dividend payments, and hence a smaller rise in employment."

I realise that it is late in the night to quote such a serious document, but that document, which is so flawed, is the theoretical basis for the Government's case that cuts in wages will create more jobs. That case does not stand up to scrutiny.

Nevertheless, the Government continue to pursue that policy. Conservative Members have referred to the 1985 Budget with approval. The new lower national insurance rates are thought to be encouraging employment but, instead, they have brought in a series of new poverty traps for low-paid workers. When they move up slightly from one wage level to another, they move into a higher band of national insurance. The system provides new poverty traps and I am sure that it was designed to do so. It is designed to hold workers down in lower bands of pay, and it will do that successfully. The move from family income supplement to family credit, which is proposed in the White Paper on social security, will undoubtedly

encourage more low pay by paying the benefit to the worker through the employer instead of direct through the DHSS.

Mr. Yeo: When the Labour Government were in office they had an employers' rate of national insurance contributions running at over 13 per cent., including the surcharge, compared with the 5 per cent. to which the Government have reduced the rate for the lowest paid. Was the Labour Government's policy likely to encourage employers to pay higher or lower wages?

Ms. Short: I can tell the hon. Gentleman that when the Labour Government left office in 1979 unemployment stood at 1·2 million. That is when the Conservative party fought an election under the slogan "Labour isn't working". If we calculate unemployment on the same basis now, 4 million are unemployed. His argument does not stand up to scrutiny.

I was saying that the new family credit that will replace FIS is likely to be an incentive to even more low pay. It will be paid by employers to workers, and as employers become familiar with the scheme they will realise that if they bring workers into a low-paid category their wages will be subsidised through the state. Experience will tell us whether that happens, but it seems enormously likely that it will.

The Government have set out deliberately—it is part of their ideology—to increase inequality in Britain. They argue that this will create incentives and increase efficiency. It is a strange argument and it has been said frequently that it rests on the assumption that to get the rich to work harder they have to be paid more, and to get the poor to work harder they have to be paid less.

The position is serious for many working people. It should be understood that 35 per cent. of Britain's poor are working poor. The percentage has increased under the Government. The small issue to which Conservative Members have drawn attention is only a small part of the problem and will not solve the problem of low pay. We need to consider a series of measures to deal with it. We need to develop a strategy that seeks seriously to bring us back to full employment. We need to move towards a national minimum wage. We must increase child benefit rather than cut it. That was the call of Conservative Members.

The road that we are on is leading us to a low-paid, divided and inefficient sweat-shop economy. The one small improvement that Conservative Members called for will not succeed in reversing that trend.

4.59 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. John Major): Before I take up some of the contentious matters raised by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short), I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) on raising an important subject and on the manner in which he did so. Perhaps his only failure was to come fourth in the ballot rather than first. I wish him slightly better luck next year, so that we may conduct the debate at a slightly earlier hour of the morning.

My hon. Friend, and my hon. Friends the Members for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo), for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris), for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) and for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens), together with the hon. Member for Ladywood, touched on a number of issues with clarity and conviction.

The hon. Lady at the beginning of her remarks referred to what she called a mood of mutual self-congratulation among my hon. Friends. I must tell her, with the best of good will, that it was not mutual self-congratulation, but unanimity that she perceived among my hon. Friends. I can understand why she, as a member of the Labour party, does not recognise unanimity. However, for the Conservative party it is a fairly familiar sensation. She may have noticed that this evening, both in their concern about the issue and in some of the solutions that they proposed.

The Government share the concern that my hon. Friends expressed about the importance of incentives for the low paid. Our concern is reflected not just in words but across a wide range of Government policies, all of which indicate clearly that we respect what the hon. Lady called the dignity of work, and wish, so far as we can, to price people into it.

My hon. Friends spoke of tax and national insurance changes. They know that a considerable amount has been done in those respects in recent years. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has diminished the burden of income tax both by cutting the basic and higher rates and by substantially raising personal allowances. Indeed, the last Budget—which was referred to on a number of occasions—included the fourth successive real increase in tax thresholds. As a result, personal allowances are now above 20 per cent. higher in purchasing power than they were in 1978-79. I suggest that that is welcome easement that has been of particular help to the low paid, and which has taken 1·25 million of the lower paid entirely out of tax—with, I hope, the support of every hon. Member, from whatever party.

I rather regret that the hon. Lady neglected to mention those matters in her lamentable catalogue, which lasted for more than 20 minutes, of the Government's alleged sins. Much of what she said was highly contentious. She certainly included some quite extraordinary assertions. If I understood her correctly, she said that low-paid workers were worse off today than in 1886. I can only say that if she really believes that, she has entered a fantasy world from which no words of mine will rescue her.

Ms. Clare Short: I wish to correct the Minister. I began my speech by referring to the 1985 Budget and the changes that it made, and said that it still failed to bring low-paid workers back to as good a position as they were in 1979, and that they are still more highly taxed than they were in 1979. Those were the remarks with which I began my speech.

Mr. Major: I shall regard that as something rather less than a wholehearted endorsement of the Government's taking 1·25 million people out of tax. I have nothing to add on that point.

I hope that the hon. Lady will understand that many of her contentious remarks at this late hour are matters which I do not wish to pursue as, quite frankly, they do not enter the real world of politics which any party in government must face. I understand the hon. Lady's difficulties in dealing with many of the matters that she must face to keep her position within her party. Frankly, she should not make the sort of assertions that she made this evening

[Mr. Major]

without producing more practical evidence. When and if she can produce evidence to back her assertion that workers in 1886 were better off than workers today, I shall take more seriously some of her other remarks.

My hon. Friends will know that this autumn the Government introduced a new graduated structure of national insurance contributions which, again, are designed especially to help the low paid. They have been a matter of some comment during our debate this evening. Those tax and national insurance incentives, which have particularly concerned my hon. Friends, raise the opportunity for employers to take more people into employment and for people in employment to keep a larger share of the salary that they earn.

My hon. Friends will know also of the enterprise allowance scheme, giving new incentives for the unemployed to set up in business for themselves, and of the job start initiative, which will commence on a pilot basis next month, with the intention of giving a new incentive to the long-term unemployed to get back into employment. They will also know that earlier this week my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services introduced the White Paper on social security reform, which incorporates the new family credit scheme, designed both to improve work incentives and to make the connection between work and the family's overall oncome in work more visible than hitherto. All those measures, in their separate ways, are part of a clear thrust of policy to improve incentives and ensure that we diminish, and if possible entirely remove, barriers to employment.

National insurance contributions, which have been the subject of some discussion, are of great importance. I share the view of my hon. Friends that the new contribution structure is one of the most imaginative initiatives taken in recent years. It was announced in last year's Budget. It should assist dramatically in pricing people back into jobs. I am pleased at the warm welcome that has been given to the measures — and I acknowledge that the hon. Member for Ladywood welcomed them as well — as I share the view of my hon. Friends that they represent a substantial, cost-effective and well-targeted boost for the low paid.

My hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South called them historic measures, and I am inclined to agree. They will improve employment prospects, increase net take-home pay and sharpen incentives. I suspect that they will be particularly helpful for the young looking for their first full-time job. In total, those measures for low-paid employees are worth about £1,150 million in a full year.

In addition, we have made a considerable reduction in the contribution rate for self-employed people, which is worth a further £100 million a year. My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton referred to that. I hope that he will be pleased that we have also allowed tax relief on half the class 4 profit-related contributions payable by the self-employed. It is pertinent to remind the House that self-employment often lifts people out of unemployment. The national insurance measures that I have listed represent a considerable incentive to people to start up in business on their own account.

The effect of the proposed changes in employers' contributions is to reduce by up to £3 per week the cost of employing over 8·5 million low-paid workers. For the lowest paid the reduction in employers' national insurance contributions is almost 5·5 per cent., which is a considerable incentive to the creation of employment. Estimates made, not by the Government, but by private industry, are that between 140,000 and 400,000 jobs may be created as a result of that initiative. I hope that that proves to be the case, although I emphasise that that is not a Government estimate. In any event, there is little doubt that those measures will make a substantial difference to the employment prospects of many people.

The effect of the parallel changes to employees' contributions is to give increases to net income ranging from £1·10 a week to £2·18 a week to nearly 3·5 million workers earning less than £90 a week. As hon. Members will know, only last week we debated the Social Security (Contributions, Re-rating) Order, which further increased the bands of earnings over which the reduced rate national insurance contributions will be paid. Therefore, only six months after the new reduced rates were announced, the draft order will extend further up the earnings scale the advantages that they offer to both employers and employees. That is further evidence—if it is needed—of our wish to produce a more responsive and better targeted national insurance system and provide positive incentives for people to take up low-paid work and for employers to offer jobs to those who at present, unfortunately, do not have them.

Another beneficial effect of the graduated rates of contribution is that it reduces the much criticised "cliff edge" effect of the lower earnings limit. There is now a much more gradual increase in contribution liability as someone progresses up the earnings scale. I hope that that principle will earn the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East, who touched on that point in his remarks.

It is worth considering who will gain from our measures. Just under 1 million families with children gain at least £1 a week, and some gain more than £2 a week. Nearly 1·25 million single people aged between 16 and 25 gain between £1·10 and £2·18 a week. About 30 per cent. of gains go to families with children, and just under half go to low-paid single people, who are predominantly under 25. One third of gains go to working wives. Those figures show how wide ranging and beneficial the measures are. They should be further enhanced when the new contribution limits and earnings brackets come into effect next April.

It is clear that there is fairly wide agreement that take-home pay is what matters to many employees. My hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East is aware that the Government have taken, and are taking, important steps to minimise deductions, especially from the pay of those on lower earnings. Despite that clear direction in our policy, I know that my hon. Friends will not be surprised if I decline to speculate on what steps my right hon. Friend the Chancellor might take in the Budget. Such matters are for him, and contributions are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

I suspect that my hon. Friends are too wise to expect a detailed response to their advocacy of Budgetary and tax matters. I believe that they were anxious to put their views on the record. The fact that they have done so at such an unappealing hour of the morning illustrates, perhaps more clearly than their words, the depth of their concern. I assure them that I shall draw what they have said to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, but I

must mention the cautionary words of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. It might well be wise not to assume tax reductions of any sort until they are delivered.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford mentioned tax and social security integration. He has passed me a note explaining why he had to leave the House and go home.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): He is tired.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman might well be right, but that is not the explanation that my hon. Friend gave in his most courteous note.

Mr. Corbyn: Tell all.

Mr. Major: Discretion is occasionally by far the better part of valour. Perhaps that is true on this occasion.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford will know that we have announced steps that will lead to closer co-ordination between the tax and social security systems. The move to an April benefit uprating is clearly important in that context. At a practical level, we are ensuring compatibility between the computer systems being developed for tax and benefit offices.

The plan announced in the social security White Paper to pay the new family credit with wages represents a small but important step towards closer co-operation between the two systems. If we are ever to have closer integration, payment through the pay packet is an essential first step. Consideration of what further steps to take will have to await the Green Paper on personal taxation, which will appear in the next few months.

I have so far talked of only one side of the incentives equation. We are not trying to improve the incentive of the low paid only through improvements in tax and contributions, desirable though they may be. We are taking important new initiatives to provide help in other ways. Perhaps the most important example is the new social security structure, including the family credit scheme for low-paid working families with children, which we announced in the White Paper earlier this week.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South for his warm welcome of the scheme. We believe that family credit will be a significantly more generous and better targeted benefit than the family income supplement which it will replace. We estimate that it will reach about 415,000 families—rather more than twice as many as those which receive FIS.

The levels of benefit will also be significantly more generous than the levels of benefit for FIS. A couple with two young children, and gross earnings of £110 a week, receive £4·50 a week FIS, plus free school meals or milk. Under the family credit proposals they would receive £17·40 a week — a substantial improvement. That illustrates that working families with children emerge from the reform package announced earlier this week as clear gainers, even when the changes in housing costs are taken into account.

I shall make that clearer with two brief examples. First, a couple with two young children who rent their home and earn £110 a week, would gain £10·45 a week net from the changes, even when their housing costs are taken into account. Secondly, a couple on the same gross earnings who own their home and have two older children would end up £8·15 a week better off overall. It is beyond dispute that those are substantial gains.

The social security reforms will be seen in due course to do a great deal to improve work incentives, especially by minimising the unemployment and poverty traps, and maximising the advantages of work, even work at relatively low pay. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton for his kind words about the White Paper.

One attractive aspect of the reform proposals is that they significantly ease the unemployment trap by creating a better balance between the help available to familis in and out of work. One element of the reform of housing benefit, for example, is designed to ensure that the same level of help goes to recipients at a given income level, whether in or out of work. As hon. Members will be aware, at present unemployed people on supplementary benefit generally have their rent and rates paid in full. However, the assessment of housing benefit payable to employed people with precisely the same level of income is based on only 60 per cent. of their rent and rates. That is clearly a curious and unfair anomaly, which will be corrected under the new proposals, under which assistance will be given with up to 100 per cent. of rent and 80 per cent. of rates, whether in or out of work.

The major element, however, is ending FIS and replacing it with family credit. The merits are clearly illustrated by the examples that I gave about the net disposable income of families under the two schemes. My hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East spoke with feeling about high marginal tax rates. He will be pleased to know that the White Paper reforms also end the worst aspect of the poverty trap—that absurd circumstance where reduced benefits, together with higher tax and national insurance contributions, can leave a family worse off overall when it increases its gross earnings.

This major improvement in work incentives will be achieved by assessing entitlement to both family credit and housing benefit on income after tax and national insurance contributions have been taken into account. Similarly, by replacing benefits in kind with cash we will not only enable working families on low earnings to provide for their families in the same way as their more highly paid colleagues, but we will end the particularly acute poverty trap problems which now arise when earnings reach the point at which entitlement to passported benefits ceases.

I recognise that by eliminating marginal tax rates of 100 per cent. or more, which are absurd and have been widely criticised, not least this evening, and which the reforms will achieve, and by providing help to a wider range of families, more families will face marginal tax rates below 100 per cent. but still, alas, at relatively high levels. As I think most commentators and every hon. Member will recognise, that is probably unavoidable if we are to target more of our available resources on those most in need.

I should add a brief cautionary word about some of the estimates that we have seen in the press about the numbers likely to be affected. The number of families with children on marginal tax rates of 100 per cent. or more would decrease from about 70,000 to nil, while the number with rates of 90 per cent. or more would fall from about 130,000 to about 40,000. The number with a rate of 70 per cent. or more would not surprisingly, increase from about 240,000 to about 490,000.

The White Paper proposals will also significantly improve the climate in which decisions on whether to work, and how hard to work, are taken. In place of the present complex range of benefits, the reforms will

[Mr. Major]

establish a simpler structure in which the advantages of work will be self-evident. Few families would have any advantage in remaining unemployed. Once in work, it would always pay a family to increase its effort and its earnings.

Paying the family credit with wages will not only take a significant step towards the closer harmonisation of tax and social security but will make more visible the relationship between work and the total income, including the credit, which can be derived from work. It will end the absurd position where a family on relatively low earnings is paying substantial sums to the state in tax and contributions with one hand, while receiving family income supplement from the state with the other. We estimate that about 60 per cent. of family credit recipients will have their tax and contribution payments offset in whole or in part; the rest would have them offset and receive a net payment on top.

The prize of this reform is considerable: a simpler structure in which present disincentives are removed and in which enterprise and effort will be fostered and encouraged. Whatever differences we may have on some other aspects of policy, that must be the way forward. I hope that my remarks show that the Government are deeply aware of the need to improve incentives for the low paid. More important, I hope that I have shown that the Government have taken, are taking and will take across-the-board action to achieve that end. I hope that in that action we shall have the broadest possible support from the Opposition, where they can obtain it, and from my hon. Friends without exception.

Ports of Entry

5.16 am

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I was about to say that a debate on the treatment of visitors at ports of entry and the rights of Members in this matter is timely, but I can think of nothing that is timely at 5.16 am, except perhaps for breakfast in bed. But the public anxiety that has been increasingly expressed about the way in which the ports of entry system operates, the operation of immigration controls, and what I believe to be a scandalous letter sent by the Minister of State, Home Office, to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), who is the shadow Home Secretary, must be answered. It is an indictment of this place that it has taken an Adjournment debate for the matter to be raised and for the Minister to have the opportunity to answer directly in the House the charges that he levelled against hon. Members in that letter.

It is worth recording that the background to this is a continuing process, since at least the 1950s, of increasingly tight immigration controls, increasingly overt racist reasons for those controls being introduced, and increasingly racist pressure in the media to introduce those controls. I am thinking of the atmosphere surrounding the Immigration Act 1962, and the disgrace surrounding the Immigration Act 1968, when the unlamented former right hon. Member for South Down made his notorious speech. Perhaps the most racist of Immigration Acts was the one passed in 1971, which introduced the concept of patriality or non-patriality.

The system of entry clearance for people arriving in Britain, mainly from the subcontinent, was introduced in 1969. It is clear from a briefing paper that was presented to Ministers in 1983, and was leaked and subsequently published in the April 1985 bulletin of the Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants, that the horrendous queues for interviews in Dacca, Delhi and Islamabad is a deliberate act of immigration policy. It states:

> "The system of queues operates to regulate the flow of immigrants . . . the number of entry clearance officers . . . is the primary regulator of the number of husbands, wives, and children, and male fiances admitted from the sub-continent in any one year . . . Provided the queues do not become too long this form of administrative regulation can continue, but an acknowledged policy of deliberate delay without legislation giving power to impose quotas would run risks in the domestic courts and under the European Convention on Human Rights."

That was the secret advice to the Government in 1983, and it has proved to be correct.

It would be helpful if, in his reply to the debate, the Minister gave a clear answer as to what he intends to do about the Commission for Racial Equality report into immigration control. When it came out in February this year, he rushed into print to say:

> "The detailed recommendations in the CRE Report will receive careful study, but it is fundamentally flawed in that throughout it fails to face up to the fact that there is more pressure to emigrate from some countries than from others. To deny this flies in the face of common sense. It is inevitable that more people from some countries will try to enter Britain when not entitled to do so than from others and more will be refused admission. The fact that nationals of Ghana, Morocco and Turkey are more likely to be refused than people from Canada and New Zealand reflects the reality of pressure to emigrate, not a biased system of control. In getting this wrong the Report misrepresents the way the control has to operate."

He went on to claim that many of the report's conclusions were unrealistic, and that little attention had been paid to the potential cost in it.

The Minister is clearly speaking for the Government in that quote, and shows clearly that he believes that the problems of immigration should work for the administrative convenience of the Home Office and of politicians such as himself rather than face up to the awful problems that divided families suffer in Bangladesh and many other countries. That should be at the heart of the debate. Within this context, there must be discussion about the number of passengers refused leave to enter the United Kingdom. In 1984, 18,096 were refused, an increase of 23 per cent. over 1983. The Home Office states in the Immigration and Nationality Department report in July this year that that was

"0·14 per cent. of the total subject to control."

However, if European Community nationals, returning residents, work permit holders and those coming for settlement with entry clearance are excluded, the figure of those excluded nearly doubles, to 0·27 per cent., which is three in every 1,000. For passengers from the sub-continent, the figure is significantly higher — 3,891 refused leave to enter in 1984 out of 278,340 arriving for purely temporary purposes, or 14 in every 1,000.

For citizens of Bangladesh coming in at terminal 3, 684 were refused entry in July, August and September this year compared with 72 in the equivalent months in 1984. However, it is difficult to know the accuracy of these figures without knowing the total number admitted through terminal 3 in the equivalent period. The reason for the sharp increase in the number of visitors from Bangladesh appears to be linked to the changes in immigration rules, to which the Government's attitude is disgraceful. They do not appear to have accepted the spirit of the European Court judgment, despite it having been handed down in a clear way after a fair hearing given to the British Government.

The role of Members of Parliament in immigration matters is important, particularly for those who represent constituencies in which a large number of people have their origins in the sub-continent, west Africa or the Caribbean, areas such as those that I represent, or my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) and many others of us who represent inner city areas. We represent communities that have origins far from here, and inevitably many people wish to visit. The heartache and despair that the system of controls at ports of entry causes them should not be underestimated, although it is seldom reported in the newspapers.

In 1984 the proportion of passengers from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan who were refused entry was higher than ever. There has always been a significant difference between the proportion of passengers who are nationals of third world countries who are refused entry and the proportion of those from the rich, predominately white countries who are refused entry. For example, in 1984 a passenger from Ghana had a one in 22 chance of being refused, but only one in 8,980 passengers from Canada were refused entry. Between 1979 and 1983, 71 passengers in every thousand who were travelling with New Commonwealth or Pakistan passports were refused entry. In 1984 there was a 32 per cent. increase: 94 in every thousand passengers were refused entry. The figures for the first quarter of 1985 suggest that the increasing trend of refusals has continued.

The role of hon. Members is quite important. An hon. Member has the right to intervene if somebody has been refused admission. He can place a stop upon removal. After discussion with the private office or with the immigration officials he can secure temporary admission so that a particular person may enter the country. In many cases people want to come to this country only for brief holidays as tourists or to attend weddings. Those are perfectly reasonable, right and proper things to do. I have lost count of the number of times that very respectable, middle aged people have telephoned me in absolute desperation because a long expected brother or sister was being held at the airport, for no apparent reason, and in some cases being treated with no courtesy whatsoever.

In that sense, the role of hon. Members is particularly important. However, hon. Members also have a role to play in supporting asylum and refuge seekers. The reaction of the Government earlier this year — a reaction that continues — to Tamil asylum seekers has caused and is still causing considerable concern. I refer the Minister of State, Home Office to Mr. Poul Hartling's lengthy statement and report that was made earlier this year on behalf of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. It compares the attitude of Europe towards refugees with the attitude of very much poorer third world countries.

One of the underlying issues in this debate is the famous letter that was sent to my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton on 28 October 1985. It is a six-point letter and in it the Minister of State sets out what he considers to be the problem about the involvement of individual Members of Parliament in immigration cases. First, he wonders whether it is right for hon. Members to ask for a stop to be placed upon the removal of passengers without any inquiries being made into the merits of the case. That is a remarkable statement for any Minister to make. If somebody is to be removed from this country — sometimes with less than six hours notice having been given to the Member of Parliament — there is insufficient time in which to make detailed inquiries. One has to form a judgment on the spur of the moment. There is no other way to do it, otherwise that person may, quite wrongly, be removed. What is wrong about it is that only Members of Parliament are able to intervene in such cases. There ought to be an appeals procedure in this country to deal with that problem—if, indeed, it is a problem.

The Minister's second objection to the involvement of hon. Members in immigration cases is that they may put a stop on a case and then not turn up to make representations. I do not think that this is a particularly common practice. I am certain that there have been occasions when Members of Parliament have placed stops on people to prevent them from being removed from this country but have then been unable to make representations because they have not received the necessary details. I am certain that in most of those cases the individual Member of Parliament informs the Home Office that he no longer wishes to pursue the case. What is particularly scandalous about this letter is that it deliberately raises the ogre of the involvement of Members of Parliament in immigration cases.

The Minister's third objection relates to the allegation that Members of Parliament take up the cases of constituents other than their own. The fourth allegation is that they are involved in the "poaching" of particular cases from other Members of Parliament. There are two answers

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

to those allegations. First, Members of this House are Members of Parliament as a whole. They are dealing with the Executive as a whole. Therefore, they have the right to take up those cases and intervene. Secondly, and of equal importance, it is known that a number of hon. Members refuse to take up immigration cases because they are not prepared to support people who have problems with the immigration authorities.

Some hon. Members refuse to take up immigration cases and some are not prepared to support people who have problems with the immigration authorities. What are constituents supposed to do if their Member of Parliament holds extreme views about the ethnic minorities?

The fifth allegation by the Minister is that hon. Members communicate with people abroad telling them that if they are refused entry they should contact an hon. Member who will take up their case. Since the decision by immigration officers and the Home Office in many cases is so arbitrary, why on earth should not people try to contact an hon. Member? If they do not, they will be sent wrongly and unfairly out of the country. It is essential that we retain that right.

The sixth allegation is that hon. Members have been inviting people to bypass the immigration system. The Minister makes that allegation because he knows what the gutter press will pick up, but he knows that the allegation is incorrect. He knows the work which hon. Members do and he must also know the pressure on hon. Members to deal with immigration matters. I do not know how many staff he has to deal with all his responsibilities, but I am sure that he has many more, in proportion to the number of cases than any hon. Member. I have one full-time assistant and one part-time assistant. Independent advice is given to me by lawyers and the local law centre. Without their support, many cases would not be dealt with. It is disgraceful that when dealing with the Tamil asylum-seekers earlier this year the Minister insisted on the 24-hour representation rule. If he plans the same for people from Bangladesh or anywhere else, he should tell us now, in public, rather than wait for the Christmas recess.

We want an explanation of the Minister's incredible request that the details of cases in which some hon. Members have been involved should be released by him to the public. I have thought about the matter, as have many other hon. Members. It is incredible that the Minister should say that private correspondence concerning intimate details about constituents and other people's family lives should be released for public consumption. That is wrong, and I am totally opposed to it. Such a step would break the confidence between an hon. Member and the people who go to see him.

The visa requirement for people from Sri Lanka is important. Communal problems in Sri Lanka go back many years. They culminated in serious violence in 1983 and enormous fear among the Tamil community between 1983 and early this year. For some extraordinary reason the Government started saying early this year that the situation in Sri Lanka had improved and that some Tamil asylum-seekers wishing to come here were economic, not political, refugees. The Government then said that representations about Tamil arrivals had to be made in 24 hours and imposed visa restrictions on anyone arriving from Sri Lanka. That happened during a bank holiday weekend. The issue was finally debated in the House a couple of months later.

We require to know two things of the Minister. First, will he lift the visa requirement on people leaving Sri Lanka? It is unprecedented to require visas for travel from a Commonwealth country to the United Kingdom. Secondly, are there any plans to introduce visa requirements for people travelling from Bangladesh to this country? We need an answer to that quickly because many people are extremely worried.

Presumably the Minister's concern stems from the fact that the number of representations made by hon. Members about citizens from Bangladesh arriving at terminal 3 was 360 during July, August and September of this year compared with 16 in 1984. That increase is indicative of the way in which many people in Bangladesh—people who have every right to come here under our existing immigration laws to join families—are worried about the present position. The Minister is simply seeking to augment the disgraceful queue in Dacca of people trying to get an interview with the high commission staff, and hence the visa requirements that he is imposing.

I must comment on the way in which the press report immigration matters, and especially their handling of the so-called "immigrant loophole" concerning Bangladesh. *The Times* on 27 November last, under the headline "MPs move to close immigrant loophole", stated:

> "A legal loophole is allowing Bangladeshi husbands settled in Britain to be joined permanently by two or more wives and all their children from abroad, a Commons inquiry has revealed. Up to 25 per cent. of married women now applying in Bangladesh to be united with their husbands in Britain are, in fact, the men's second wives. MPs were told during a recent fact-finding tour of the Indian subcontinent. The Commons Select Committee which is carrying out an investigation into immigration procedures is almost certain to recommend that the loophole be closed immediately, and the Home Office is likely to agree. Conservative MPs who visited Bangladesh were horrified by what they discovered, and believe, if left unchecked, it will result in a substantial increase in immigration. They alerted Home Office ministers immediately they returned home."

A few days later, *The Times* reported on 3 December a story under the headline "MPs scale down claims on immigrant wives." The story, written by a different reporter, read:

> "'We have now received the most recent figures, and between January and August 1985, 15 per cent. of applications fell into the "other wives" category, and this would include marriages where the first marriage has ceased through divorce or death,' the chairman of the committee said".

The more appalling newspapers in Britain played up a huge story about alleged vast numbers of second wives arriving from Bangladesh as a means of encouraging the Minister to introduce visa requirements for people arriving here from that country. The way in which newspapers report immigration matters is a serious aspect of this whole issue.

If the newspapers and others want to be fair, they should make it clear that the number of refusals of applicants wishing to come here within the existing law is much higher from the Indian subcontinent than from any other part of the world. Hon. Members' rights in this matter are vital. If those rights were curtailed, what resources would those turned back at the airport—often by arbitrary decisions and frequently in conditions of insufficient translation facilities for people whose first language is not English—have?

It is essential for the Minister to withdraw the disgraceful letter that he sent to my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton and to make it clear that he has no proposals to interfere with the rights of hon. Members to take up immigration cases. Visa requirements applying to people wishing to come here from Sri Lanka must be withdrawn and he must assure us that he has no plans to impose visa requirements on people arriving from Bangladesh or elsewhere.

Newspapers often report immigration matters in an extremely racist way. They give the impression that we should have tight controls, with the atmosphere being difficult for people arriving here from west Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent.

The same does not apply to arrivals from Australia, New Zealand, the United States or anywhere else. If visitors from those countries were treated in the way that Bangladeshi arrivals in Britain are treated, there would be an almighty uproar and it would stop immediately. But because those people come from the subcontinent, often poor people coming from poor countries, it is apparently fair game for them to be treated in that way. I hope that the Minister will be able to give us some comfort on the matter, although I fear that that is a faint hope.

Those of us who represent inner-city multi-cultural communities are proud to do so and we feel that the way in which those communities live in fear of the immigration rules and the problems that they suffer because of the way in which those rules operate are disgraceful. It is discriminatory in our society and it is a blot on any form of civilisation. I hope that in his reply the Minister will at least say that the situation will not get worse, although I fear that it might well.

5.40 am

Mr. Alfred Dubs (Battersea): I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has managed to secure this debate, because it gives us a chance to raise some of the issues which have been bothering hon. Members for some time. I only regret that at this hour of the morning we do not have the benefit of the presence of as many hon. Members as at a more sensible and civilised hour.

Britain benefits enormously from visitors, and most of us feel that they should be made welcome. In 1984 Britain had nearly 6 million visitors, and of those some 17,300 were refused entry. That represents one in every 446. But we all know that the proportion of refusals is much higher for visitors from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan.

Between 1979 and 1983 there was a refusal rate of 71 in every 1,000. Last year, 1984, that went up by about 32 per cent. So the refusal rate from those countries reached 94 in every 1,000. I visited Heathrow airport to look at these matters a few months ago and every person who was stopped there that morning for further questioning, possibly to be refused—I did not stay long enough to discover that—was non-white.

The report of the Commission for Racial Equality referred to by my hon. Friend a few moments ago gave a lot of evidence as to the nature of the discretion exercised by immigration officers and contained a number of alarming suggestions and evidence that discrimination was taking place at the point of entry to Britain. That is something that many people have known for a long time, but the commission made it pretty clear in its report. I repeat the question asked by my hon. Friend: does the Minister intend to take any action on the many recommendations in that report, or will it be allowed to collect dust on the shelves?

It has long been accepted that hon. Members may seek to prevent the departure of a visitor while representations are made to the Minister. In 1979, of all those who were refused entry 23 per cent. were granted temporary admission, not always by Members of Parliament. We do not know what proportion of temporary admissions were secured by Members of Parliament. Some are granted by officials. But by 1984 the figure had increased to 49 per cent. Again, we do not know how many of those were granted as a result of representations by Members of Parliament.

I managed some time ago to have a discussion with some immigration officers and we were talking about the practice of Members of Parliament making representations on behalf of visitors refused admission. The immigration officer said something which I found rather disturbing, particularly in the context of the letter which the Minister then wrote to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). The immigration officer said, "Ah well, we refuse. We know that MPs will make reps. The visitor gets a few weeks while the Minister decides. The Minister then supports our refusal to allow entry, so our position is upheld. The MP has made an impact, the visitor has got here and everybody's satisfied." There is a strong implication that more people are refused because immigration officers know that Members of Parliament are likely to make representations and, as the immigration officer put it, honour is satisfied all round.

Honour is not satisfied all round, because the situation becomes absurd. Of course Members of Parliament will be involved because we believe that some of the refusals are wrong and we want to give our constituents and their families the chance to make visits. If immigration officers act as was suggested to me, there are bound to be even more refusals and Members of Parliament are bound to be involved even more. If immigration officers were more objective in their assessments at Heathrow airport and elsewhere, as the CRE report suggests they should be, Members of Parliament might not be involved so often.

I should like to take this opportunity to express thanks to the staff of the Minister's office, who are not responsible for the policy but have been unfailingly helpful and diligent whenever I have phoned them. I exonerate them entirely from blame for the policies that they are asked to administer and for which, as civil servants, they have no responsibility. Many of my colleagues have had the same experience and we should like to put that tribute to the staff on record.

The Minister of State caused great alarm and consternation when he wrote the letter about the 23 Members of Parliament—the "Waddington 23" as they have come to be known. I wish to ask some questions about that. First, where did he get the list from? The Home Office has said several times that it cannot file individual immigration cases by the name of the Member who raises them. The Minister looks puzzled, but I believe that that is right. How, then, did the Minister obtain that list? Did he simply say, "Dig out some instances so that I can have a go at them," or did the list come from somewhere and, if so, over what period was it compiled?

As the Minister knows, the immigration service union made representations to him, or certainly went public, objecting to the system whereby Members of Parliament

[Mr. Alfred Dubs]

made representations and saying that it should be ended. That report from the union executive came out just before the Minister raised the whole matter of Members allegedly abusing the system.

Earlier today the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) received a written answer from the Home Secretary in reply to a question relating to this issue. The question was:

"what response has been received from those hon. Members referred to in his statement of Tuesday 29 October about representations made by right hon. and hon. Members in immigration cases; and if he will make a statement."

I shall not read out the whole answer as it is rather long, but I will refer to some of the points in it because I find it quite disturbing.

The reply mentions that there were 23 Members and then states:

"Individual replies have been received from 12 hon. Members out of the 23."

That related to the possibility of their names being made public.

Many of us discussed some time ago our attitude to publication. We had no objection to publication provided that one condition was met—that there should be a full debate in the House to give all Members whose names would be made public the opportunity to put their side of the case. If we simply agree to the Minister publishing our names, he can make all his criticisms and many of the hon. Members concerned will never have an equal opportunity to reply to the allegations. They are fairly serious allegations and any fair-minded observer will see that it is reasonable to agree to publication only on condition that we can have our say. That is perfectly clear, fair and reasonable.

The Home Secretary then talks about holding discussions about the way in which Members of Parliament can make representations in such cases, but he does not say with whom. Is he talking about all 23 hon. Members or about some of them, or is he suggesting a full debate in the House on a Government motion?

The point that alarms me most of all is that the answer states:

"The aim of these discussions should be to agree upon a Code of Practice which can be applied to the general run of immigration cases and which achieves a sensible balance between the rights and privileges of hon. Members to make representations on behalf of their constituents"

and so on. That is an extraordinary suggestion—that there should be a code of practice governing the way in which Members of this House act on behalf of their constituents. If the Minister does not have a copy of the answer, I have a spare copy which I shall be happy to give him.

Are we to be told how to act as Members of Parliament on behalf of our constituents? Are we to be told how we shall do our jobs? Will there be codes of practice on how we raise matters relating to housing, social security and so on, or will this code of practice be confined simply to making representations in this area on behalf of our constituents and their families? I hope that there will be an early withdrawal of that suggestion. It is quite objectionable and comes near to being a breach of privilege. As it stands, and following discussions with persons unknown, we shall have foisted upon us a code of practice on how we should do our jobs.

Mr. Corbyn: So far as I am aware, in no other area of a Member of Parliament's work, either at national or local level, is there a code of practice on how that Member of Parliament should represent constituents. Does my hon. Friend agree that, if such a code of practice were introduced, it would be a serious infringment of the right of Members of Parliament to take up the problems of any constituents in future?

Mr. Dubs: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. Had this matter been raised at Question Time, when the House is normally full, there would have been widespread consternation. The Home Secretary is saved from that anger only by the fact that we are discussing the issue at a ridiculous hour of the morning when the House is virtually empty. If the Government wish to limit the rights of Members of Parliament, they are embarking on a serious course, and I advise them not to do so.

The answer also talks about achieving

"a sensible balance between the rights and privileges of hon. Members to make representations on behalf of their constituents and the need to maintain an efficient and effective immigration control in accordance with the Immigration Act 1971 and the immigration rules which have been endorsed by Parliament".

That again seems to be a new concept. We are talking about achieving a balance between our rights as Members of Parliament and the wishes of the Executive in dealing with a particular piece of legislation. It is right that such a balance should be achieved as a result of debate in the House, but it is quite wrong for the Home Secretary to suggest that he will foist this type of balance upon us. This is an attempt to deny hon. Members the traditional rights which for many years they have used on behalf of their constituents. I hope that the Government will abandon that silly idea.

Some wider underlying issues were referred to by my hon. Friend. Why is it that the Minister of State and the Home Secretary do not wish us to proceed as we have done before? We have said on countless occasions that we object to many aspects of the rules under the Immigration Act 1971. We have also said that we object to the way in which discretion is exercised at points of entry to the United Kingdom, as regards those who require entry certificates or visas, where discretion is exercised at High Commissions and other posts abroad.

There was considerable consternation when the Minister imposed visa requirements on people coming from Sri Lanka, mainly as refugees, earlier this year. That was provoked because about 1,200 people arrived in May, and visa requirements were established.

Even more alarming is the clear hint from Ministers that they are considering the imposition of visa requirements on people from other countries, of which Bangladesh is the most obvious. I know that nothing positive has been said, but many of us fear—the question has been raised in the House in the past few days—that a visa requirement will be imposed on people possibly from Bangladesh and other countries and that the decision will be made after the House rises on Friday. If the Minister were to embark on that course, it would have horrific implications for the posts abroad and for people wishing to come here. The Minister knows that people coming here for settlement have to wait two years for their first interview in Dacca and about one year for a first interview in Delhi. It would require an enormous increase in staff at those posts to deal with the large number of visitors from those countries.

Many of us would welcome an increase in staff to reduce the great waiting time that is keeping families divided, but the thought that thousands of normal visitors would have to be processed in that way is not one that anyone can be happy about. It is liable to cause great upset and to prevent many visitors from coming to the United Kingdom. I hope that the Minister will have none of it and that he will not seek to extend the visa requirements to any other Commonwealth country.

As I said earlier, if the Minister wants us to allow our names to be used in relation to the serious allegations that he made about abuse of our position, I hope that he will arrange with the Leader of the House for a full and frank debate. Then our names can be publicised. But all those who have been concerned will go on acting for our constituents in the best way possible. We shall not be deterred by threats or intimidation from the Treasury Bench as to how we should do our job.

We are far more concerned about the rights of our constituents than we are about the niceties of whether the Minister finds the way in which we make our representations somewhat inconvenient for him. I do not want to go into the details of all the so-called abuses, but he is going the wrong path. I hope he will stop this silly nonsense and allow us to continue to make representations on behalf of our constituents in the way that we have always done.

5.58 am

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington): Despite the hour, I am grateful to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) for raising this matter, because it gives me the opportunity to clear the air a little.

The vast majority of people arriving at our ports of entry pass through immigration control with the minimum of fuss and bother. On average, it takes about a minute to examine a passenger who needs formal leave to enter endorsed in his passport. The vast majority of people are granted leave, as was made clear by the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs). I repeat the key figures: in 1984, only 0·14 per cent. of all passengers in the United Kingdom were refused entry. That means that 99·86 per cent. were admitted.

The refusal rates in the case of some nationals were higher than for others, for the obvious reasons that I set out in my reply to the report produced by the Commission for Racial Equality. I do not resile at all from my criticisms of that report, because I think that it is absurd to deny that there is far more pressure to emigrate from some countries than others. It would be amazing if one found the same refusal rates in the case of all nationals and people living in countries where there were very much lower standards of living than in the West. It would be surprising if one found that there was not a greater desire in those countries to beat immigration control than in more prosperous countries than ours.

In 1984 the refusal rate for Ghanaians was 4·3 per cent., which was far higher than any refusal rate for the Indian sub-continent. For Indian nationals, it was 0·9 per cent., for Bangladeshis, 1·7 per cent. and for Pakistanis, 1·3 per cent. That means that, taking the Indian sub-continent as a whole, 99 per cent. of passengers were admitted and 1 per cent. were refused.

Mr. Corbyn: Is the hon. and learned Gentleman talking about all the arrivals from those countries, or about people seeking to settle here to join their families, and so on?

Mr. Waddington: I am talking about all arrivals from those countries.

I am often asked to review refusals as a result of the intervention of hon. Members. When I am asked to review refusals, I write to the Members of Parliament concerned, setting out, if I am upholding the refusal, the reasons for the refusal. I do not think that any impartial observer would say that such letters do not clearly set out why the immigration officer has refused entry and provide evidence that refusals are made lightly and without suspicious circumstances coming to the notice of the immigration officer.

Of those refused entry, a high percentage are granted temporary admission — more than twice as many as during the years of the Labour Government. In 1977—I take that year because the figures are cited in the report by our immigration and nationality department — 2,868 passengers were granted temporary admission; in 1984, the figure was 8,527. There was an increase in the number of people granted temporary admission, from 22 per cent. to 47 per cent.

This year we have had problems at Heathrow. At certain times, people arriving at terminal 3 have had to wait far longer than we would have liked before reaching the control. People who have had to go through more than the normal routine check have had to wait much longer than we would have wished for that further examination. There have been a number of reasons for that. There has been, year on year, a considerable increase in traffic—an increase of 10 per cent. this year on 1984. There has been a continuing tendency for the vast majority of flights to arrive between 6 o'clock and 10 o'clock in the morning, which makes life difficult for our staff. From July this year, there was an unprecedented increase in the number of Bangladeshis arriving who clearly were not qualified to enter under the rules. That resulted in 1,003 refusals in July, August, September and October, compared with 109 during the same months in 1984.

No one will say that that increase is due to new criteria being applied by the immigration officers, and no one will say that it is due to nefarious instructions given by myself. There must have been a dramatic change in the character of the traffic. The immigration officers were applying exactly the same rules and the same criteria and finding themselves obliged during those months to refuse entry to 1,003 passengers compared with 109 the previous year.

The increase in refusals, and Members making representations on behalf of those refused entry, has meant that immigration officers have had to be removed from the initial control to do other work which follows the initial refusal of an application by a passenger to enter. I ask hon. Members to bear that in mind. I am not saying that it is the most important factor of all, but we would be foolish if we did not recognise that an increased number of Members' representations as a result of refusals has an effect on the burden of work, and means that immigration officers who could be standing at the desks speeding up the process of clearing passengers through the control are doing other work.

[Mr. Waddington]

We hope that things will be better this coming year. There is reason to think that the opening of terminal 4 next spring and the new staff provided for the new terminal will bring about an improvement.

I am greatly concerned about the irresponsible statements which are made from time to time about our immigration officers. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Battersea for what he said about the staff in my private office, but I wish that sometimes Labour Members would hand out similar bouquets to immigration officers, who have an extremely difficult job to carry out and who, in my experience, undertake it with great skill and courtesy.

I am not talking only about the allegation of the hon. Member for Islington, North that people are treated with no courtesy whatsoever, although I think that the officers are entitled to resent that sort of comment. I am thinking especially of a disgusting cartoon which appeared in *The Guardian* the other day, in which an immigration officer was depicted as a Hitler-like bully, complete with toothbrush moustache, about to dish out physical punishment to an Asian couple waiting to be admitted. That cartoon accompanied a letter giving an entirely distorted account of what had happened when two elderly people had arrived at Heathrow. If I were an immigration officer, I would find such attacks on the service, made by what is supposed to be a responsible newspaper, grossly offensive. I know from my own experience that these attacks are unfair.

An entirely false picture has been painted by those who apparently resent immigration control. The speech of the hon. Member for Islington, North suggested that he and those who think like him come close to resenting any immigration control. When I was at Gatwick the other day, one of the things which struck me was how many young girls we have in the service. They do not have toothbrush moustaches like the man depicted in *The Guardian* cartoon. They are the sort of young people that we are fortunate to have in the public service. The one that I saw the other night would be well known to hon. Members as she was in my private office until recently. Her parents came from Pakistan.

When complaints are made, they are investigated thoroughly, but we do not receive that many. When hon. Members and others take the trouble to go to Heathrow to see what happens, they almost invariably return pleased with what they have seen and ready to admit that standards are high. I hope that we shall lend no support to those who shower abuse on the service, and will tell our constituents that the immigration officers are doing their best to apply rules approved by Parliament, which have not changed towards visitors since a Labour Government were in power.

I also hope that there will be a readier recognition by thinking people that, as an island, we would be very foolish if we did not have firm control at our ports of entry. We can concentrate the control at our ports of entry because we are an island. The alternative of pervasive after-entry control, perhaps with identity cards, is far less attractive.

The comments of the hon. Member for Islington, North about heartache and despair caused by the system of control at the ports of entry should be considered against that background. I repeat that we are fortunate to be an island people and therefore able to concentrate our control at the ports of entry and not have pervasive after-entry control.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has already answered a quesion about representations by Members of Parliament. He said that we should proceed with discussions to work out a better system. I do not believe that it would be sensible to dwell too long on what has been happening up to now and to debate whether particular practices have been very bad, not so bad or all right. Almost eveyone would agree that the system has not been working as it should. Indeed, in an unguarded moment, the hon. Member for Battersea described as absurd the way in which it worked in one regard. Surely the point is to discuss the arrangements for the future.

A number of helpful suggestions have been made, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will also make some. There is no reason why we should not bring about an improvement that will achieve the right balance between the rights and privileges of hon. Members to make representations and the need to maintain an effective and efficient immigration control in accordance with the Act and the rules.

Mr. Dubs: The Minister said that I had said that the system was absurd, and that I did so in an unguarded moment. It was not that way. He quoted me a little out of context. I said that an immigration officer had once told me that, knowing that Members of Parliament will make representations, immigration officers make refusals, the Members of Parliament make the representations, the visitor is allowed to come into the country and the Minister then upholds the immigration officer's refusal. It is that aspect of the system that I described as absurd.

Mr. Waddington: I am sorry if I misunderstood the hon. Gentleman. However, it is now clear that he thinks that there is a connection between the number of representations made by hon. Members and the number of cases in which immigration officers grant temporary admission. I do not make that connection, but as he is making it we should look at the whole matter to judge whether the system is working properly.

I was asked two questions by the hon. Member for Islington, North that go wide of the debate, but I would not dream of ducking them. He asked about the possibility of visas being imposed on people from Bangladesh. The Government have no immediate plans for changes in the operation of immigration control, but they keep those arrangements, including visa requirements, under continuous examination and would not hesitate to take appropriate action if necessry. In saying that, I say no more than what Governments have said over the years —we should keep the operation of visa control under continuous review so as to meet changing circumstances.

The hon. Gentleman asked when we would lift the visa requirements on Sri Lankans. I am keeping the visa requirement under review, but I have no plans to withdraw it at present.

The hon. Member for Battersea asked me where I had obtained the list of 23 cases. I was aware of some cases where I thought that things had gone seriously wrong and I asked my officials to look through other correspondence and show me other illustrations of what had been occurring.

I hope that I have given some assistance to the House tonight. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Islington,

North for enabling me to clear the air on these matters. I hope now that we can soon proceed to useful consultation so that we can make some sense of the system of representations, by Members of Parliament which I freely acknowledge is an admirable institution.

Mr. Corbyn: I asked my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) whether he thought that a code of practice would be an infringement of the traditional relationship between Members of Parliament and any public department. Does the Minister accept that discussions of the nature that he is proposing would inevitably lead to the idea of a code of practice, which would inevitably lead to a quantified relationship between Members of Parliament and public Departments, which has never happened in this country and which I hope never will?

Mr. Waddington: Let us see where our discussions lead us. I do not want to be drawn into that at this time because it is sensible for us all to sit down and think about it. I hope that when we come back after Christmas, everyone who has a useful contribution to make will do so, so that we can improve the system to the advantage of all hon. Members.

Drunken Driving

6.16 am

Mr. Keith Best (Ynys Môn): I am pleased that we are having this debate, albeit at this time of the morning. It is therefore incumbent upon me immediately to say to my hon. Friend the Minister of State and to my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry), who sits behind her so loyally, that I apologise for giving them such an early start. I hope that they will feel at the end of the debate that it has been fruitful and, indeed, necessary.

There is a ritual about raising the subject of drinking and driving just before Christmas. I make no apology for having sought to do so again, although we had a debate about the same time last year on the same subject. With Mr. Speaker's indulgence, I intend to continue to seek to raise the matter before Christmas every year, just as the Government feel that it is necessary to launch a campaign every year. It is sad and it should not be necessary to have a campaign every year or for an hon. Member to have to seek to raise the matter to give it greater prominence, but it is necessary because the weak, foolish, unwise and unwary and the ignorant still drink and drive.

One clear message that should go from the Chamber is, "If you drive, don't drink, and if you drink, don't drive." There can be no fetter on that simple message.

The number of drink drive offences over the past decade has gone up dramatically. In 1975 there were 65,000 cases, but by 1980 the number had risen to 78,000. By 1983 the figure was 98,000 and by 1984 it had gone over the 100,000 mark, to 101,000. Nearly half of all injuries to and deaths of drivers, passengers and pedestrians are attributable in part to alcohol, and drink is involved in 45 per cent. of fatal road accidents to young people. Nearly 100,000 people are convicted for drink drive offences each year in England and Wales alone, and the numbers are rising rapidly.

Many people think that there is a legal limit. There is no such thing. It is true that there are offences under section 6(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1972, amended by the Transport Act 1981—offences of driving or attempting to drive or being in charge of a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration above the prescribed limit. Currently that limit is 35 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of breath, 80 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of blood or 107 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of urine. That should not be regarded as the entire law on the matter. That point will be well known to my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury.

There is still the old offence of driving or attempting to drive while unfit to drive through drink or drugs, or to be in charge while unfit. Any amount of alcohol impairs driving ability, and ability definitely deteriorates with more than 50 mg of alcohol. Unfit to drive in law means that the ability to drive is impaired for the time being. It does not mean incapable of driving. People concentrate far too often on the idea of a legal limit below which they are safe and not subject to any prosecution. That is wrong. It should be clear that people with alcohol concentrations far less than the prescribed limit can be prosecuted and convicted of being unfit to drive.

The impairment depends on the concentration of alcohol in the body, not on the amount taken. A person with high natural alcohol concentration is vulnerable. An 11-stone male is put over the 50 mg limit by one and a half pints of ordinary beer or three single whiskies. Driving

[Mr. Keith Best]

ability will be impaired. Even at the so-called legal limit under section 6, a person is five times as likely to have an accident than if he had not had a drink. A person could be arrested, charged and convicted under section 5, which is concerned with unfitness to drive, when well below the limit set out in section 6.

It is no good trying to do calculations. Indeed, it is extremely dangerous, because there are so many variables. The 1965 report of the British Medical Association's special committee said:

"It takes between 15 and 90 minutes for the peak concentration in blood to be reached following a drink of alcohol, and in most cases little more than 30 minutes . . . In fact, the rate of elimination of alcohol both between different individuals and in the same individuals at different times varies to some extent and an exercise of this kind cannot, in our opinion, be justified."

The mean elimination rate appears to be between 11 and 21 mg per hour, but numerous recent studies have confirmed the extreme variability of the blood clearance rate. Significant numbers of clearance rates exceed or trail the average by factors of two or four and, in extreme cases, eight.

The law is much tougher after the Transport Act 1981. There is an automatic refusal to issue a driving licence to high-risk offenders or problem drinkers — that means drivers who are convicted twice in 10 years of drink driving offences when, in both cases, the blood alcohol level has been more than two and a half times the prescribed limit or a specimen has been refused, or a combination of the two.

It must be concluded that the public can feel safe only if such people are never allowed to drive again. That might be a hard judgment, especially if driving is necessary for employment or if employment depends on the ability to drive, but we must protect the innocent people who lose their lives or suffer terrible injuries as a result of others taking the risk of drinking and driving.

My hon. Friend has now launched a new campaign. We can but hope that it will be more successful than the disastrous "stay low" campaign last Christmas. Statistics to which I shall refer show it to have been disastrous. I believe that in retrospect, and I say "in retrospect" because my hon. Friend the Minister could say that I welcomed the campaign in the debate on 21 December 1984, as, indeed, I did. She will recall, however, that I also entered some caveats then. "Stay low" was a dangerous slogan which was taken out of context. As I said in that debate, it was wrong to consider the slogan without considering the whole press release of the Department of Transport. I read it in full then and I shall do so again. It stated:

"Don't drink any alcohol at all if you are going to drive. That's the only way to be sure you won't be affected by drink and liable to be convicted of a drink-drive offence.

And it's the best safeguard you can give yourself that you won't be involved in an accident.

Although the 'breathalyser law' puts a limit of 35 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres on drivers' breath, you can still be prosecuted below that limit if a policeman thinks your driving ability is impaired by alcohol.

So the only way to be certain is not to drink. That's what the Department of Transport means by its advice to drivers this Christmas to stay low—very low."

If that press release had been reiterated, the campaign would not have been misunderstood. My hon. Friend the Minister, who is an experienced politician, knows only too well that politics is about slogans, and that many comments made by hon. Members are often taken out of context. Indeed, our political history is riddled with slogans and statements taken out of context, which achieve a mythology of reality all of their own. I am thinking of cutting prices at a stroke and getting on bicycles. Many of them are entirely inaccurate as a representation of what was said, and are taken entirely out of context.

My hon. Friend and the Department must realise that with such a campaign people will pick out one aspect as theslogan and refer to it. That is why the slogan "stay low" was dangerous. It conveyed the impression that people could drink and drive, notwithstanding the full press release which said clearly that people should not drink and drive.

Why were there no consultations with the alcohol agencies before this present campaign was launched? Many organisations, particularly Alcohol Concern, feel that they can contribute to the formulation of these campaigns. Why was it felt inappropriate for those agencies to be consulted?

I hope that my hon. Friend will again say unequivocally that there is no legal limit below which a person can be regarded as safe to drive. Under section 5, the test of impairment of driving ability is not linked to any limit. The "stay low" campaign created a misunderstanding of the law because of the slogan rather than the full explanation. I hope that my hon. Friend will say that the only message that must be fully comprehended is that if one drives, one must not drink. That must be stated unequivocally.

The "stay low" campaign cost £1·5 million. How much will this year's campaign cost? The cost to the nation of drink-drive accidents is estimated to be £100 million a year, so £1·5 million is a small contribution to make to a campaign to try to overcome that tremendous cost. Will my hon. Friend explain to whom the campaign is directed? She said when the campaign was launched that it was especially directed towards the young, but perhaps she would use this opportunity to amplify that statement.

I greatly appreciate the excellent initiative that is taken by some organisations to try to increase public awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving. I am especially mindful of the new campaign by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, aimed at the licensed trade, employers, employees, young people, voluntary groups and operators of coaches, minibuses and taxis. I commend to the House and to the general public the excellent booklets that have been produced to increase public awareness, and especially to the various groups, to each of which is directed a separate booklet produced by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, which is a comprehensive and useful guide.

I am also especially impressed with the society's pamphlet, which is easily read and very short. It is entitled, "How to beat the Breath Test." It is one of the interesting leaflets which invites someone to read more, just as the leaflet that was produced by Conservative central office, which stated that "Conservatives admit to cuts", invited people to read more. That is shrewd advertising material, because it invites people to look more into the contents.

The booklet from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents states:

"Why shouldn't I drive after I've been drinking"?

The reply is:

"Alcohol affects your own judgment of whether you are fit to drive or not—you may genuinely believe yourself to be driving better than you are. Alcohol is a depressant, not a stimulant. It lessens the co-ordination, lengthens reaction time, blurs vision and affects ability to judge speed and distance: all vital skills when it comes to driving. The ability to judge distance between moving objects is lessened when you are only one quarter of the way to the legal limit."

Another question asked is:

"How quickly does it wear off?"

The answer given is this:

"Rates of absorption vary so much, the only sure way is to allow one hour per half pint of beer (or equivalent)—this can take several hours. Someone who has had a heavy drinking session the night before may still be over the limit going to work at 7 am the next morning!"

All of us in the House know the sort of feeling of going to work at that time. Indeed, we have gone to work half an hour earlier than that this morning.

The pamphlet continues:

"There are no tricks for sobering up more quickly—coffee and fresh air may help you feel better, but they don't reduce the alcohol level."

Another section asks,

"But I won't be stopped if I drive carefully, will I?"

To that, the answer is:

"The police can ask you to take a breath test if they suspect you of committing a moving traffic offence, or if you're involved in an accident, but they can also stop you if they suspect you of having alcohol in your blood. If you're stopped for any reason, like a broken rear light, and they think you've been drinking, they can ask you to take a breath test then as well. You might even be prosecuted if you're not over the limit if you're clearly unfit to drive. The 'legal limit' just means prosecution is automatic."

I welcome the hon. Members for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) and for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg). It is especially commendable that hon. Members should come to the House at this time of the morning, and it manifests their belief in the importance of this debate, especially before Christmas. I appreciate that the new campaign that has been launched by my hon. Friend is much tougher and that the get-tough policy of the police will be supported, as I understand it, strongly by my hon. Friend and her Department.

I also appreciate the steps that my hon. Friend's Department has taken over another matter that I have raised during the year—the sale of alcohol through petrol stations. The steps that my hon. Friend has taken in the past year have been welcome. The fact that her Department is collecting statistics to establish the number of petrol station licences in existence is a positive step. This has been reinforced by the fact that the Home Office will, from next year, record such licences as a separate entry on the official statistics. I thank my Friend for what she is doing.

Stopping people from drinking and driving is not just a question of informing the public; there has to be an element of deterrence as well. I feel that still the message has not got across to people that if they drink and drive and are prosecuted and convicted for having an alcohol level beyond what is prescribed, they will lose their licence automatically. However persuasive, even as persuasive as my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury, an advocate can do nothing in those circumstances to save a person's licence. It does not matter whether his job depends on being able to drive—the licence will be lost for 12 months as a minimum. I hope and pray that that message gets across, because it is all part of the concept of deterrence.

I believe, and I suspect and hope that all agree, that the only real deterrence is the certainty of being caught, and at the moment the likelihood of being caught in the United Kingdom is low. The Home Office has stated that only one in 250 drinking drivers has a risk of being caught. That is an appalling statistic, and it must be changed. I accept that I should not be addressing my remarks principally to my hon. Friend the Minister, but I hope that she will convey them to the appropriate quarters, because that needs to be looked at carefully.

I know that my hon. Friend has heard this question before, not least from Mr. Don Steele, of Action on Alcohol Abuse, but I ask her to look again at this suggestion. Bearing in mind that those with provisional driving licences or those who have received their driving licences within the past two years are those most frequently involved in accidents, should there not be an even stronger requirement imposed on those drivers that come within those categories. Perhaps she will say something about that.

I have already referred in parenthesis to the fact that on 21 December last year I initiated a debate similar to this one about drinking and driving. I shall remind the House of what I said on that occasion. Every year 1,200 people die as a result of road traffic accidents in which drink is a contributory factor. During that debate, I asked whether something could be done to include a statement to that effect in the highway code so that at least we could be satisfied that at one point in a driver's lifetime the message would be brought home clearly in a manner in which he had to learn it before passing the driving test. I appreciate that that is not the answer, but to bring it home to somebody who is learning to drive and having to learn what drink and drive involves, as a matter of its being included in the highway code, would be a useful addition to that document.

I know that my hon. Friend the Minister keeps several copies of the code at home, because she told me so in last year's debate. She said:

"My Department is reviewing the highway code, as it does from time to time and I shall see what entry in that might be useful in persuading people to do the sensible thing."

Perhaps she could give me an answer this year to the statement that she made so helpfully in replying to the debate that I initiated last year.

My hon. Friend the Minister of State said something else that I should like her to look at again. At the beginning of her reply to me last year she said:

"In due course my Department is planning to give even wider information than has already been given out in the facts leaflet on drinking and driving from the road research laboratory because it needs to be much more widely available and influential."

When she replies, I hope that my hon. Friend will say what has been done about that.

I referred also in that debate to a fruit drink called "Alcaway." It purports to speed up the absorption of alcohol by the body—in simple terms, an antidote. But it cannot be said strongly enough that there is no such thing as an antidote. I pointed out that on 19 November 1984 my hon. Friend, in answer to an inquiry from me, had said:

"'The rate at which alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream is affected by a variety of factors. While some products can slow down this process, I am not aware of any evidence which suggests that the elimination of alcohol from the body can be significantly speeded up. My general policy is to warn drivers of

[Mr. Keith Best]

the risk involved in driving after drinking under any circumstances.'"—[*Official Report*, 21 December 1984; Vol. 70, c. 713, 716 and 717.]

It is grossly irresponsible, morally indefensible and commercial exploitation of the most obscene kind, resulting in death, injury and misery, to market any such substance. Those who do so should remember that the Christmas present that they will give to families is the death of a father, the mutilation of a mother and the bereavement of loved ones. It was therefore very distressing to me to learn, when listening a few days ago to that excellent radio programme "You and Yours", of a new substance called "Stay Low". It is the usual kind of unpleasant tasting, high calorific fruit drink that contains a large amount of glucose syrup.

I learnt yesterday that 500 dozen bottles have been produced by a company in Nottingham. I spoke to a representative of that company on the telephone. I was given the name of the principal company, Stay Low Ltd., which has the manufacturing rights of this substance. I was given the name of a Mr. Hurley. Stay Low Ltd. is registered in Jersey. However, when I telephoned him I was told that he was busy. Furthermore, I was told that he would telephone me, but I received no call from him. The registered office is, I believe, a solicitors' office. It is merely an address for the registration of that company.

The trail of that company is interesting. Yesterday I tried to track down what this product purports to achieve. I understand that the first reference to it appeared in *The Morning Advertiser* on 18 December. The claim on behalf of this substance was that

"anyone who drinks 10 whiskies can pass the breathalyser test after drinking two 85p bottles of 'Stay Low.,"

That claim cannot be attributed to anybody and it may be inaccurate, but it appeared in *The Morning Advertiser*.

The office is registered in Jersey and is just a holding office, but I was able to contact a company called Crane Barnden that had been engaged by Stay Low Ltd. to produce promotional material. It is a firm of printers. I do not want any opprobrium that might attach to this product in general to attach to this company. It was very helpful to me over the telephone and explained what had been done.

Crane Barnden had received instructions to produce promotional material, but it had been unable to secure detailed information about certain aspects of the product. The firm was told that it was not entitled to disclose the name of the client. It received its original instructions from an individual rather than from a company. The result was that the firm felt obliged to do no more than produce the initial amount of promotional material. That was interesting because the firm clearly believed that insufficient information was available for it to carry on doing any more work for that client.

The firm produced only information. The bottling and mixing was done by a Nottingham company which confirmed to me over the telephone the constituent elements of the drink. It is lime-flavoured with large amounts of glucose and fructose syrups. The initial run was 500 dozen bottles which were marketed by a company called Innserve, a wholesaler to public houses in the south Devon area. The bottlers have no instructions to bottle any more.

I hope that the Minister will use her Department's resources to look into the product if it is anything like Alcaway. It is extremely dangerous for such a product to be marketed if it purports even indirectly to enable people to drink and drive. That is a cruel deception.

I make it clear now, as I did a year ago in respect of the other product which fortunately we stopped in its tracks, first, that no tests substantiate any claims for the new product. Secondly, increasing the rate at which alcohol is broken down by the body can cause poor judgment. Thirdly, fructose can cause painful side effects.

I do not propose to go into the details of those side effects, but I have a sheet of papers containing medical opinions from learned journals which describe the inadequacy of fructose in speeding up the dissipation of alcohol in the blood, the side effects and the danger of the intake of fructose in such large quantities. Such a product might require a licence under the Medicines Act if it were designed to interfere with the normal operation of a physiological function.

I understand that the label on the product states "Don't drink and drive." That is a small concession to it being marketed just before Christmas with the name "Stay Low". Why is it being marketed now? It has all the hallmarks of a cynical, unprincipled exploitation of people's fond but foolish desire to find a magic potion which will enable them to drink and drive. There is no such potion, nor can there be. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to investigate the product fully.

If this debate has publicised the criminal negligence of drinking and driving; if it has brought home to people that the only safe way to drive is not to drink, or if one is drinking not to drive, however short the distance; if it has the effect of saving lives this Christmas, children will still have fathers and mothers and parents will still have children at the end of the festive season and we can say to the people whom we have the privilege to represent —as I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to my hon. Friend the Minister and my colleagues—have a very happy Christmas, and a safe one, and we shall all meet again in the new year.

6.50 am

The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Best) for reopening this issue just a week or so after we launched the 1985 campaign. I have done everything I know to get home to people the message that there is no safe way to be on the roads except never to drink and drive.

I thank the police, particularly this year, for their co-operation throughout the planning of the campaign, for it will be through their enforcement that we shall remain safe on the roads. Their intention is that we shall have a safe and happy Christmas. Their intention is not to go after every motorist, as some newspapers might have us believe; I shall return to that point later.

To indulge in the sort of statistical analysis with which my hon. Friend began his remarks might be considered at this hour rather grave, although I shall join him in giving a few figures. Within the whole context of the matters that my hon. Friend has raised are many issues that we must put clearly and squarely before the motoring public and pedestrians, for a large number of accidents at party time —not just at Christmas—involve drunken pedestrians. We are dealing not only with drivers, although they have a lethal machine in their hands.

Drinking and driving is at the front of our minds just now, but please let us not forget that this problem is not confined to Christmas and the new year. It is true that alcohol consumption is at its peak at this time, but the stark truth is that the threat posed by the drinking driver exists on the roads every day of every year, and we must ensure that all our policies take account of that.

I detect a growing indignation, in Britain and elsewhere, by people who are against the irresponsibility and culpable negligence of the few, those drinking drivers. Many people are so concerned that this is a topic of conversation not just at Christmas time but generally. I am frequently asked, "What more can we do to make people behave responsibly with respect to drinking and driving?" Normally sensible people seem to adopt a thoughtless mode of behaviour, and they then easily slip into aggressive and selfish habits. Indeed, once the drinking has begun, that whole process seems to accelerate.

That is what we must stop. I have detected—I have seen it with my own eyes in country pubs and elsewhere—that many more people are seeing the sense of the campaigns. They enjoy their drinking and they enjoy their driving, but they enjoy them by keeping them well apart and by never mixing them.

As we continue to see more than 1,000 people killed each year in road accidents as a direct result of drinking and driving, we realise that we have a long way to go before we have got the message through to a wider number of people. I assure the House that there will be no letting up in the Government's attempts to tackle what is regrettably still our most serious single road safety problem. There are others, but this, like many accidents, is avoidable.

My hon. Friend was right to say that the number of convictions had risen, but he may not have read the small print, as it were, on one statistical matter. In the last year for which we have figures, 1984, about 93,000 people were convicted of drunk driving, out of a total of 101,000 involved in drug and drink-related driving offences.

The increases in convictions are the result of the new law which came into force on 6 May 1983. With the intoximeter now being used at all times throughout Britain I have no doubt that this year we shall have a larger number of convictions than last year. I have no doubt of that because everyone is determined to try to stop this awful savage fatality level on our roads.

Mr. Best: I am grateful to hear that, because it will put the figures in context. When I referred to last year's "stay low" campaign, I said that it had been a disaster. I said that because of the statistics of problems that had arisen. Perhaps my hon. Friend will confirm that the number killed last year was up by 8 per cent. compared with 1983; the failure rate of breath tests increased from 24 to 30 per cent., an increase of 25 per cent.; the failure rate among 16 to 19-year-olds increased by 23 per cent.; and 50 per cent. of all fatalities are in the 20 to 24 age group; casualties in accidents where at least one driver failed the breath test increased by 27 per cent. and casualties during drinking and driving hours—10 pm to 4 am—increased by 22 per cent. The number killed in that period is up by 13 per cent. even though the police conducted 21 per cent. fewer tests than the previous year due to the problems of the miners' strike.

Mrs. Chalker: The whole problem is whether people will police themselves responsibly, as well as the enforcement by the police.

My hon. Friend has given a number of statistics. I shall not counter with others, but if he looks in "Road accidents Great Britain 1984" he will find the latest statistics.

Rather than bemusing the House with statistics at this time of the morning, we should remember that the number of road users killed in accidents where alcohol was a factor in 1984 was equivalent to over three jumbo planeloads of people. If three jumbo planeloads of people had been killed in the air, there would have been a public outcry, yet the public seem ready to stand back when so many people are killed, avoidably, on the roads. That is the point that we have to get home to people who may not like statistics as much as my hon. Friend.

The other thing that hits home particularly hard when one looks at what happened last year—and other years—is that, of the 1,400 road users killed in those road accidents where alcohol was a factor, over 350 were innocent victims of drinking and driving. In other words, they were killed in an accident where one driver at least failed a breath test.

One road death in four last year occurred in accidents where one person had breath alcohol over the legal limit. The driver's impairment by alcohol is a major factor in about one tenth of all injury accidents. We know that it is related to the time of day and drinking. There is no question of that. We also know that the risk goes up the more alcohol is drunk. But, as my hon. Friend said, the point still remains that to have any impairment by alcohol of one's ability to drive means that there is a greater risk than necessary. It is at the point of 35 microgrammes of alcohol per hundred millilitres of breath that the risk of being involved in an accident increases sharply.

The point of a legal limit is to provide a guidance figure. As I said last year, and, as I have said every year in these campaigns while I have been in this job, it is perfectly true that if one's driving is impaired even with no alcohol in one's bloodstream, one is perfectly properly stopped by the police if they think that one's driving is so impaired. Therefore, it does not matter so much what the level is, except with those who drink so much to excess and are then so culpably negligent as to get behind the wheel of a vehicle or on to a motorbike or even a bicycle and who may cause the most terrible disasters perhaps to their own family, friends or workmates—and maiming and fatality are processes that can never be reversed.

With regard to high risk offenders, I know that the procedures that I introduced a couple of years ago to identify motorists with a possible drink problem are not thought sufficient in some quarters. I certainly believe that the concept of screening high risk offenders first—educating them and making them have medical treatment—is the right way to begin, but it is not a total solution. As we said in our response to the road safety report produced by the Select Committee on Transport, there may well be changes in the future. We shall at an early stage examine the threshold blood alcohol level and we shall then consider the case for extending the scheme to take in a wider category of offender. I think that that will go some way to meet the continuing concern about the very high risk levels and those just below.

My hon. Friend has referred to the campaign at Christmas last year. A full assessment of what happened over the Christmas period 1984 appears in "Road

[Mrs. Chalker]

Accidents Great Britain 1984." In brief, that assessment shows, that, compared with 1983, there was an increase in the number of drivers failing the roadside breath test and an increase in casualties during so-called drinking hours. I agree that the figures are disappointing but that was not simply because of the "stay low" message. As my hon. Friend knows, with as many thousand policemen on picket line duties as there were throughout the whole Christmas period last year, the campaign could not possibly have been enforced.

I am sure that the whole House will agree that nothing influences the public so much as the possibility of a flashing blue light. As those who have studied the campaign material this year will know, one poster has the heading "A sobering thought", a photograph of a police vehicle appearing in the rear driving mirror and a slogan at the bottom:

"Think you can drink and drive—think again."

Some people will always say that the campaign is no good, that it should have been stronger or weaker. We had a great deal of publicity about last year's campaign, probably even more because of the controversial slogan, but I wish now to concentrate on this year's campaign.

Mr. Best: The Government promised to take account of the evaluation of the "stay low" campaign before planning this year's campaign, but I understand that the evaluation was published after plans for this year's campaign were well under way.

Mrs. Chalker: There is a problem in getting the statistics through fast enough and linking hospital statistics, conviction statistics and all the rest. Statistics covering the previous Christmas period cannot be published before November, but the knowledge that we were beginning to gather statistics, although it was not complete, was made available to the chiefs of police and myself when we started to plan this year's campaign. It would, however, have been wrong to publish that information, because, as my hon. Friend knows, interim results can be very much affected by later results, as some of the results this year have shown. There is no question of our not releasing figures for last year's campaign. The information that we need comes from a wide variety of sources and we must do the job properly. The final casualty data often come in as late as October.

There is absolutely no doubt that this year's drinking and driving publicity has had more planning than ever before. It has enabled me to do something that I have wanted to do since taking up my job more than three and a half years ago—to plan it in close consultation with the police. Unless we can enforce the campaign, I do not believe that we shall get people to police their own drinking and driving, and that is what we are after.

The police have every intention of enforcing the law firmly throughout the year. The campaign reminds drivers of the serious penalties they face on conviction, including automatic disqualification for at least a year, a fine of up to £2,000 and even the possibility of a prison sentence.

After only 10 days of the campaign, my initial impression is that the message is coming over well, helped by the strong support from local police campaigns and other local campaigns. It is much more the sort of campaign that I am happy to run to try to prevent people from injuring themselves and others.

I was asked why we did not consult users, local road safety officers and Alcohol Concern. I am well known for consulting as widely as time and opportunities allow, but publicity campaigns have to be kept private until the very last moment. My hon. Friend may recall—I am sure that the hon. Member for West Bromwich, West (Mr. Snape) does—that in the road safety debate on 15 November, I declined to be drawn on this year's drink-driving campaign because I wanted the slogan "Think you can drink and drive—think again" to have the full force of the launch on 9 December.

If one consulted very widely, that impact would not be achieved, and it is necessary to have it to get off to a good start. But we listen carefully to all the outside views that are put to us, and we are well aware of the views of bodies such as Alcohol Concern and Mr. Don Steele.

The position with the police is different, and I know that my hon. Friend will understand. We have sought to take the views of local authorities informally, without revealing the publicity campaign during the planning period.

My hon. Friend's comments about the cost of drinking and driving and the cost of this campaign were relevant. The cost to the community is about £150 million, whereas the cost of this campaign is £1·4 million. Nevertheless, this campaign will roll on throughout the year and it will be reinforced during the light evenings in 1986, because we know from experience that there will then be an upsurge in the number of those convicted for drinking and driving.

My hon. Friend said that there must be stiff deterrents. I have already referred to the penalties available to magistrates. Magistrates make up their own minds, and it is not for me to tell them what to do, but I hope that they will not hesitate to hand out severe penalties where they are warranted. That applies to all periods of the year, not just to Christmas and the new year.

We shall look at the suggestion in the road traffic law review that driving licences should be confiscated immediately, but the effect would be to penalise a driver before trial—in other words, before any finding of guilt. I accept that the result of the breath test would be positive, but under present law that would be a real departure from the general principle of the presumption of innocence until proven otherwise.

Mr. Best: I certainly do not wish to see that.

Mrs. Chalker: I am glad that my hon. Friend does not wish to see that, although that has been suggested as a stiffer penalty.

Of all the efforts that we are making with this year's campaign, I believe that it will be the physical presence of police cars—and the help that is being given from a large number of quarters such as the Brewers Society and many publicans themselves—that will make people more and more aware of what is happening, and why it is crazy to drink and drive. We have to keep the two activities apart.

The latter part of my hon. Friend's speech was about the sale of products that are said—I say that positively—to clear away alcohol from or reduce alcohol in the bloodstream.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Would the hon. Lady like to comment on the current *Daily Express* campaign, which seems to be waged largely against her

personally, that this year the police are not enforcing the law but making it as they go along by insisting on random breath tests in various parts of the country? Secondly, would not a sensible alternative to drinking and driving be better public transport? Are not some of her Department's policies leading to worse public transport, particularly in the running of late night buses and trains?

Mrs. Chalker: I shall be dealing, at the end of my speech, with the campaigns that are being run by some newspapers.

Many efforts are being made, particularly on special nights during the Christmas period, by public transport authorities to run good public transport. But the message must still be within people's own minds that they cannot drink and drive and that they must think about what they are doing. If people think that they are going to have a few drinks, they should also think beforehand about how they will get home. If local authorities put on public transport, or private companies do so in the future, nobody will be more delighted than I.

There is a need for moderation in all things, and it is the responsibility of the individual, if he has to get home under his own steam, to ensure that he is capable of doing so. One can also be summoned for being a drunken pedestrian; one does not have to be in charge of a motor vehicle. The point about public transport is not lost on me. I am well aware of what the hon. Gentleman says. The campaign is intended to get people to think about their driving and their drinking separately. In that way there may be fewer people who are unable to get themselves home.

My hon. Friend spoke of the fructose-based drink which claims to reduce blood alcohol levels. While the rate at which alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream is affected by many factors—the type of drink, the rate at which it is consumed, whether the person has eaten before drinking, the person's weight, and so on—there is no evidence, as far as I am aware, that its elimination from the bloodstream can be artificially speeded up by any means whatever. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the research that he has done into this misnamed product and the claims that it is making. I shall be grateful if he will make available to my office any papers that he has.

As I said in the debate on 21 December last year, we need to look with some care at any products which could mislead the public into thinking that they could get protection by using them. I fear that this may not be the end of the story. Alkaway, thank goodness, went away last year. Perhaps Staylow will go very dead very quickly. It is a cruel deception, as my hon. Friend rightly said. I hope that anybody who sees the product will tell us where it is being marketed, because it would be helpful to see the extent of it. If production is limited to 500 dozen bottles, I hope that they will go down the drain quickly, because that is all they are worth.

Mr. Best: It tastes very nasty.

Mrs. Chalker: If it does, a drunken driver probably would not drink it anyway. We shall do all we can in my Department through all our links and the information of my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn will help us.

I said that we would again consider the Highway Code, and we are doing so. This is a long and complicated job. It is even more important to get better education at an early age on drinking and driving. We shall use the Transport and Road Research Laboratory's information to produce a factual leaflet. In the next phase of the drinking and driving campaign, we shall put greater emphasis on understanding the facts. That has been needed for some time. I hope that that helps my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn in his campaign to make people wiser.

As I said at the launch of the campaign and subsequently, there has been no change in the law on random breath testing. The police have a duty, if they see a defect, to stop the vehicle. If a policeman notes that the driver smells of alcohol and acts strangely, he is within his rights to ask the driver to take a breathalyser test. I speak for the chief constable of Sussex, the chairman of the traffic committee of the Association of Chief Police Officers, when I say that there is no random breath testing and that no chief constable has authorised it.

Mr. Snape: It is not for the police to authorise it.

Mrs. Chalker: I know that, and my point is that no one has authorised it.

The police campaign seeks to keep drivers safe on the road. If the police see a faulty mechanism on a car, they will often warn the driver to put it right. If, in so warning, the police come across a person who should not be at the wheel of the car, for obvious reasons, they must carry out the law as agreed by the House. That is what the police will be doing this Christmas and during the campaign on into the new year.

Mr. Snape: Why is there an enormous discrepancy between the number of motorists breathalysed in a certain police area and the number of motorists breathalysed in an adjacent police area? The hon. Lady has made the point, which we all accept, that chief constables are not authorised to institute random breath testing in their area. She should say something about the *Daily Express* campaign, which is attempting to produce evidence that random breath testing is occurring, in certain parts of the country.

Mrs. Chalker: I have known many newspapers attempt to produce all sorts of campaigns.

Mr. Snape: They are all in favour of the Tory party.

Mrs. Chalker: This is not a matter of party politics, as the hon. Gentleman well knows.

Last year, police officers could not, because they had to police picket lines, enforce the law as they wished, so the fact that they are now enforcing the law properly has come as a surprise to people in certain parts of the country. I have no evidence that there is any variation between areas. I shall ask the chief constables about this.

At present, it is far better to have a campaign that is strictly enforced and warns people, and therefore may prevent loss of life in the future, than to go about this matter in the way in which some Opposition Members have. The Opposition seem to be divided in their opinion. We have asked for a tough campaign, and we have one, but it will be useful only if it is properly enforced. It can be properly enforced only if police officers are present to carry out the law. They are doing that, but that is not random breath testing. I shall take up the matter, but I can say no more than that.

The campaign spells out that a driver can be safe on the roads only if he or she does not drink and drive. As the campaign states, alongside a photograph of a driving licence and a glass of beer,

"You can't hold on to both."

[Mrs. Chalker]

That may seem a truism to some, but it is a sobering thought that we may lose many people this Christmas, and that if the drivers concerned had had more care for other road users they could have saved lives and injuries. I ask the House and everyone concerned to take home the message to everyone they meet that, if they have driven a car and they find that they cannot drive, or should not be driving, they should leave the car and collect it the next day, or arrange for someone else to drive. If someone thinks that he can drink and drive, he should think again.

Copyright Infringement

7.20 am

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): I welcome the presence of my hon. Friend the Minister for Information Technology. I apologise for causing him to rise from his slumbers at such an hour, but I know that his concern about the subject of the debate is such that he will not begrudge the hour. The title of the debate is "Copyright infringement", which is a rather bland title for what is often regarded as an unexciting subject. There are many who have thought that a little piracy and a little copyright infringement does no harm. It has been thought that a little stealing from those who already have enough, who already earn enough and who are employed is all right. It is considered that they are greedy if they want to stop any form of copyright infringement and that they can afford to bear it. That is the sort of attitude that so often pervades our society.

Recent events have changed all that. The public are now well aware of the depths to which the pirates can sink. With the recent cases of piracy involving the Live Aid concert, the title of the debate would perhaps be more appropriate if it were "Stealing from the Starving".

The piracy of intellectual property is a world-wide industry. It has been estimated that between £800 million and £1,000 million worth of sales of audiotape worldwide are affected. It is probable that sales of videotapes and films to the value of £2 billion are affected. Books are pirated to the tune of £300 million worldwide on the best current estimate, and there is also piracy worldwide of computer software, textiles and other designs, motor parts, industrial and commercial products, and even of brand-name pills and medicines which are pirated and manufactured out of salts and sugars. The pirated pills and medicines do no good but at worst they can cause death because of their substitution.

I am sure that many hon. Members will have read and discussed the recent cynical attempt to cash in on the suffering of the starving millions in Africa by the Indonesian pirates, who have produced bootlegged tapes of the Live Aid concert which took place in July.

The British people have a good record of providing bilateral and multilateral aid, both through Governments and through private individuals giving generously. No doubt the House will remember that the Live Aid concert galvanised the world. It produced an international inspiration to give, and an international recognition of the fact that so many people, through no fault of their own, were starving and in need of help. We recall that 140 artistes gave of their services for no fee and performed live. Mr. Bob Geldof, in his unique and abrasive manner, cut through the niceties and red tape, put the show on the road and tapped the hearts and consciences of millions.

Perhaps I should explain the difference between bootlegged and pirated tapes. A pirated tape is when the manufacturer takes an existing tape, copies it, sells it—thus breaking copyright—and keeps the proceeds. A bootleg tape is when a manufacturer records something that does not exist on tape — perhaps a concert on television, or even a live concert. He manufactures and then sells the tape.

There are no original tapes of the Live Aid concert. There has never been a genuine, original tape of that concert. Many people may have recorded it in their homes,

many people may even have recorded it on video machines, but there is not a single commercial tape that is legitimate. People may question why it was not recorded, and feel that an opportunity may have been lost. They may ask whether Mr. Geldof is causing piracy by creating an unfulfilled demand. The truth is that 140 artistes have 140 lawyers, and to get 140 lawyers to sanction recorded music for sale is a devil of a job. Mr. Geldof gave guarantees that there would be no tapes until such time as the lawyers reached agreement.

After all, the concert was live and some of the performances were fairly instant and unrehearsed. Some of the artistes might not have wanted their contribution on a live platform preserved for posterity and sold on tape. Many of the performances were quite brilliant and inspired, yet they were not in any way performances designed to be recorded and sold to the world. They were an attempt to encourage people to give of their generosity as the artistes were giving of theirs.

The tapes that are being pirated throughout the world are labelled, "Original". The bootleg tapes of the Live Aid concert even state on them, "For African famine relief" in an attempt to convince consumers that they are not only buying good music, but are contributing to a worthy cause. Not a penny of the proceeds of those tapes that are selling in vast quantities throughtout the far and middle east, even in Italy—and, who knows, even here—reaches the Band Aid Trust. The proceeds are pocketed by the pirates as private gain.

The International Federation of Phonogram and Videogram Producers has estimated that more than 1·5 million cassettes have now been sold. The figure might even be nearer 2 million. According to Kevin Jenden of the Band Aid Trust, those proceeds would be enough to feed 2 million people for a month. Who has benefited? It is a few Indonesian millionaires.

The Live Aid recordings are currently on sale all over the middle east, especially in Saudi Arabia. As I said, they have even reached Italy. Boxed set LPs have been uncovered in italy, but they were also made in Indonesia. Those buying the cassettes are being led to believe that their money is going towards helping the starving in Africa, whereas in reality it is going into the pockets of the unscrupulous. At least four bootleg editions of the Live aid concert are on the market in the middle east, all manufactured in Indonesia. Some of the cassettes bear Indonesian Government sales tax stickers, which give a unique production number to each recording. The boxed sets of LPs found in Italy also carry those tax stickers.

In Saudi Arabia there are reports that at least 1 million copies of the Live Aid cassettes have been sold directly to that country because of demand. There was a story yesterday of a new tape cassette factory being opened in Indonesia with a production line capability of 6 million cassettes a month. The tax stickers that appear on the Indonesian cassettes show that the Indonesian Government have taken 15 US cents every time one is sold or exported. That means that the Indonesian Government have collected US $300,000 in money which should have gone to Live Aid. That is just a fraction of the money that has been made by the manufacturers of those bootleg tapes. On the other hand, the starving in Africa have received nothing from this industry.

Legal action can be taken in some countries. In Italy the industry is now carrying out nationwide raids on retailers of those bootleg tapes. To date 10,000 bootleg LPs manufactured in Indonesia have been seized in Italy. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, virtually nothing happens. The copyright law protects only local recordings, and an estimated 30 million pirated cassettes are exported every year. The Indonesian Government claim that all exports of cassettes to Saudi Arabia are, according to a letter that I have, either recitals of the holy Koran or Indonesian Arabic music recordings. However, the facts speak for themselves. How can the Indonesian Government claim that the exports are only of the holy Koran when the stickers show that they know very well what they are collecting tax upon? The Live Aid bootleg is not a recital of holy works; it is a deliberate rip-off.

The message of international anger at the Live Aid piracy is beginning to embarrass the Indonesians. Mr. Mochtar Kusamaatmandja, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, has announced that he has asked the Justice Ministry to take action against the pirates. That may sound fine, but the problem is how. In response to previous complaints by the record industry, the Indonesians have always replied that piracy is not illegal under Indonesian law as no foreign records are covered by Indonesian copyright, as I explained. Only yesterday it was announced in Indonesia that the bootleggers were donating £22,000 out of the kindness of their hearts to Live Aid. That was meant to be compensation for the millions of profit that they have made. I do not believe that that is a generous gesture at this Christmas time. It is a penny in a bucket, and one of the most cynical Christmas presents that I have ever heard of.

Live Aid is only one example, albeit perhaps the most despicable of late, of a much wider problem. The American charity record "We are the world" has been widely pirated, and many others, too. In fact, any successful record, whether for charity or not, is likely to be copied by the Indonesians and others within weeks of release.

That is costing the legitimate industry over US $1 billion per year in lost sales. The British music industry alone is losing almost £100 million per year from only six countries—there is more from others. Those countries are Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Nigeria and Malaysia. In Singapore, tape piracy accounts for 85 per cent. of the market. An estimated 10 million pirate cassettes will be sold on the local market and 50 million produced for export in 1985. However, I must give credit to Singapore. Although it has the worst record for copyright infringement of any country in the world, the Government have, as a result of pressure from the USA, announced their intention to enact a new copyright law before July next year. The level of piracy in Singapore is already declining, and if the legislation is enacted it should be down to under 10 per cent. by the end of next year. It is important that the pressure exerted upon Singapore by the USA should be maintained by foreign Governments until that happens.

In Taiwan, tape piracy accounts for 55 per cent. of the market. In Korea, it accounts for 10 per cent. of LPs and 90 per cent. of cassettes. In Malaysia, 85 per cent. of all cassette sales are pirated. There is very little piracy of LPs in Malaysia. In Nigeria, piracy accounts for 27·5 per cent. of LP sales and 83 per cent. of cassette sales. In Saudi Arabia there is little piracy of LPs but 95 per cent. of all cassettes sold are pirated. The only legitimate product available tends to be educational material. It is estimated that in Saudi Arabia 50 million pre-recorded pirate

[Mr. Jeremy Hanley]

cassettes will be sold in 1985. In addition, an estimated 100 million blank tapes will be sold, 40 per cent. of which will be used by shops for in-store pirate taping. In Indonesia, virtually 100 per cent. of recordings of international repertoires sold are pirated. The lost sales to the United Kingdom music industry are estimated to be as follows: Singapore more than £51 million; Taiwan £1·5 million; Korea £1·5 million; Malaysia £9·3 million; Nigeria £8·8 million; and Indonesia £14·8 million.

In Indonesia alone, record pirates are costing British companies some 15 million unit sales a year. It is time that the Government made a strong call for justice. The copyright law in Indonesia covers only local works. No protection is given to foreign works, whether they be books, sound recordings or films. Throughout Indonesia, foreign sound recordings are pirated extensively and about 30 million international recordings, as well as an Arab repertoire, are exported to Saudi Arabia. The matter has been raised with the Indonesian Government, and the International Intellectual Property Alliance, representing all of the major copyright interests in the United States, recently submitted a report to the United States trade representative on piracy including Indonesia. The report is a staggering indictment of the pirates and a staggering record of the extent of the piracy worldwide.

Like any other, the record business deserves a return on its investment. Only one record in 10 becomes successful and the profits from that 10 per cent. are needed to fund development and rising artistes and to pay for less profitable but culturally valuable recordings such as jazz and classical music. It is not generally known, though it is obvious with a little thought, that there is no other industry in Britain in which young people, perhaps with little education or hope of great success, can succeed in a manner which is beyond most people's dreams. No other industry enables groups of young people to succeed financially and to rise to popular acclaim so quickly, knowing that their talents will be used for many years to come. The investment in new groups and new recording artistes is one of the most valuable contributions of the record business. It is the marginal profits which help to create extra investment. If the record industry gets the correct return for its services, more groups and more young people will be given a start to see whether the public approve of their musical tastes.

The pirates put nothing into the industry. They discover no talents and take no risks. They copy only the top 10 per cent. and siphon off the money needed to invest in the future. Without that money, fewer artistes are recorded, fewer classical records appear and our culture is weakened. We have institutionalised piracy in the United Kingdom. How many people can honestly say that they do not record records or programmes from the radio or television? It is regrettable that the Government are no longer considering a royalty on blank cassette tapes. I believe that the public would prefer their taping of records and programmes to be legitimised. If, in exchange for that, a royalty of 10p or 20p per blank tape were paid, I am sure that everyone would understand the benefits which would flow from a better funded record business. I am told that that is not to be, and I have registered my regret.

Records are not alone in being attacked. The copiers attack any successful industry—the book trade, software houses and film producers. Counterfeiting strikes at well-known British trade marks, and often with dangerous results. We have all heard of the fake Ferodo brake linings sold in Africa which take six times as long to stop a vehicle as genuine linings and the useless drugs that are sold under well-known names. Fakers are costing the industry millions of pounds and thousands of jobs. When will it end?

The Live Aid piracy puts not only the Government but all of us under a moral obligation to take a firm stand. British works are not protected in Indonesia, yet the Indonesians get the sixth highest amount of British foreign aid in the world. In 1984 we gave them £28 million in trade loans and aid. Is it not time that we imposed a few more conditions when we are so generous? I am not asking that we take money from the starving, or that we withdraw genuine money aid which will be used for those less fortunate than ourselves, but if we are lending money for industrial purposes and bilateral trade arrangements, the conditions should be much stronger.

The old cautious arguments that we must do nothing to upset existing trade are not good enough. The Americans do not think so. Section 301 of their Trade Act allows them to impose sanctions in countries that do not protect United States copyrights, trade marks and patents. Moreover, they have shown that they are prepared to use it. There is even a danger that countries such as Indonesia will seek bilateral deals with the United States to protect only American products. That will allow the pirates to turn their full attention to copying the goods of more cautious countries that will not act to protect themselves.

We know what can be achieved by a strong line. Secretary of State Shultz, during a recent visit to Singapore, laid down the law. When the public in Singapore discovered that they had not bought genuine Live Aid cassettes and that the money had not gone to the starving in Africa, they were livid. The Singapore Government asked the public to seek out the bootleggers. They were discovered within a few days, and are now serving 10 to 15 years imprisonment for what I regard as theft.

Exactly five years ago there was an Adjournment debate about counterfeiting of United Kingdom trade marks in Taiwan, especially in the textile and motor industries. The then Minister for Trade, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson), made a robust reply. He said:

"The hon. Member said that the way forward is for us to ban the import of products from Taiwan. I must tell the Taiwanese authorities that our patience is wearing extremely thin. We are considering the evidence at our disposal. They have the opportunity to avoid a major incident by taking the strong action that Hong Kong has taken. Unless they do, the Taiwanese authorities must be prepared to accept the consequences".—[*Official Report*, 19 December 1980; Vol. 996, c. 730.]

The result was not a trade war, as some timorous souls forecasted, but strong new Taiwanese legislation within months. It can have been no accident that a delegation from the European motor industry shortly afterwards saw that the Taiwanese Trade Minister had a copy of the relevant *Hansard* on his desk.

In reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory), the Government have said that they will make representations to the Indonesian Government about Live Aid piracy. That is a start, but it is not enough. The Government should make it abundantly clear to the Indonesian Government that piracy of any

British work will no longer be tolerated, and that unless reciprocal copyright protection is granted to United Kingdom works they must face the consequences.

In a letter of 30 November to the Confederation of Information Communication Industries, my hon. Friend the Minister said that we must have proof of the illegal act. I have proof, which he can see later today—bootlegged cassettes with Indonesian sales tax stamps and individual numbers on them. That is the extent to which the pirates will go.

The anti-counterfeiting unit of the Department of Trade and Industry was doing valuable work which I should like to continue. I am pleased to announce that the copyright industries — the Publishers Association, the record industry, and video and software producers — are now coming together in a new coalition to present to the Government evidence of the damage caused to British companies, and to spell out the case for protection. At this time of Christmas, I call on the Government to heed their call.

7.44 am

The Minister for Information Technology (Mr. Geoffrey Pattie): My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) has done the House a service in raising this important matter at a very important time. I make it clear to him and to the House that the increasing problem of copyright pirating and bootlegging in export markets is taken seriously by the Government. Recently, I had the opportunity to make our attitude clear when my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) brought Lord Macmillan and members of the Publishers Association to discuss problems with the printed word. We had a constructive meeting.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for defining, for the benefit of the House and of the *Official Report*, exactly what bootlegging is in this context. It means that I need not do so again.

The House will recall that the problem of video and audio piracy within the United Kingdom has been largely brought under control by the Copyright Act 1956 (Amendment) Act 1982 and the Copyright (Amendment) Act 1983, and we hope that the Copyright (Computer Software) Amendment Act 1985 will do the same for the emerging problem of computer software piracy. But those measures are of little help to British exporters of books, videos, sound recordings and software, who must rely on the copyright laws of the importing country to fight any piracy of their material occurring locally.

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): Before the Minister leaves the domestic scene and moves to the main theme of the speech of the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley), will he comment on the hon. Gentleman's remarks about the pirating of audio recordings at home and on the reports that we have both heard to the effect that the Government are having second thoughts on whether to place a levy on blank tapes? Will he comment on the accuracy of those reports, and perhaps suggest what other thoughts the Government have had on the subject?

Mr. Pattie: I was intending to do so, and will do so gladly.

Such piracy is unquestionably losing our exporters a substantial volume of business in some parts of the world. One main area of concern is the far east, where piracy flourishes not merely for local consumption but for export — as my hon. Friend described — and where local copyright law frequently fails to protect foreign works. The middle east is also a problem area, since it is an important customer for much of the pirates' output.

Reliable estimates are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain, since pirates do not publish statistics. But the United Kingdom sound recording industry estimates that worldwide it could be losing as much as £300 million of export sales through piracy and bootlegging. The United Kingdom publishing industry puts the figure for lost book sales at about £100 million.

It is sometimes argued that unauthorised reproduction of copyright material by developing countries is justified in the cause of education, or because the price of educational material is unreasonably high and beyond the purchasing power of Third world students. This argument fails to recognise that destroying the market for the legitimate producer itself contributes to raising his costs, but in any case a large proportion of the material pirated throughout the world—the Live Aid bootleg is a case in point — is not for the educational market at all. It is reproduction of straightforward entertainment works of one sort or another — popular music on record or cassette, feature films and popular novels. No country can reasonably defend the pirating or bootlegging of intellectual property of this sort in the name of educational advancement or anything else. It is, on any analysis, a form of theft, and the absence in some countries of legal rights protecting foreign works or performers does not make it any less so.

The Government, in common with our Community partners, take seriously the problem of copyright piracy, as we do the allied problem of counterfeiting, which overlaps it. The first essential is to encourage the adoption of comprehensive and enforceable copyright law in those countries which lack it, and improvement of the law in countries where, as is too often the case, rights are inadequate, enforcement procedures cumbersome and penalties for piracy too low to deter.

We must also encourage these countries to extend their copyright protection to the works of foreign nationals. The Government will continue to support industry's efforts to combat piracy by pressing these objectives on the Governments concerned, as we have in the past where evidence of a problem has been presented to us. I stress the need for evidence because, hard as it may be to obtain —I do not under-estimate the difficulty—one can hardly expect another Government to take seriously a charge that they are permitting or encouraging copyright piracy, if no concrete evidence is produced in support. Here we must inevitably look to the copyright industries to keep us as fully informed as possible about the nature and scale of the problem. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the proof that he has in his hand. Let the *Official Report* show that that is the case.

I refer again to the recent meeting that I had with my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch, following which I am aware that significant details of further evidence of that particular part of the counterfeiting problem were made available to my officials, and that is extremely helpful.

Secondly, the Government will continue to participate in international initiatives to combat piracy and counterfeiting. Piracy is currently a concern of the World

[Mr. Pattie]

Intellectual Property Organisation, which administers the Berne copyright convention, of the Council of Europe, and of the European Community. The Community's Ministers of Culture adopted a resolution in July 1984 on measures to combat audio-visual piracy, and the Commission's forthcoming Green Paper on copyright is also expected to address the issue of copyright piracy.

Counterfeit goods do not necessarily infringe a copyright, but they will often do so. The Government are concerned about the growing trade in counterfeit goods and we are particularly keen to bring current work in GATT on counterfeiting to a speedy and successful conclusion. We want to see a GATT code that would give national customs authorities powers to tackle imports of counterfeits at their borders.

We hope to achieve this objective in the forthcoming GATT round, although this will not be easy. The United Kingdom, through the Community, has been trying for over 10 years to secure the agreement of developing countries to such a GATT code. At the moment, of course, "counterfeit" in this context means goods bearing an unauthorised trade mark, but even on this narrow front we have encountered strong resistance, and many developing countries argue that GATT is not competent to address the subject. Against this background, the Community is shortly to begin detailed consideration of the link between intellectual property and trade policy, in preparation for the new GATT round.

My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes has raised a number of specific piracy issues—first and foremost, the alleged production in Indonesia of bootleg cassettes of the Live Aid concert. I say "alleged" almost from the legal point of view. I am persuaded by what my hon. Friend has told the House. I am aware of the allegations, and I am looking forward to receiving the cassettes from my hon. Friend.

Clearly, these cassettes, whatever their place of origin, must be bootleg, since, as my hon. Friend has said, no official recording of the Live Aid concert has yet been issued. The cassettes carry a legend calculated to mislead the purchaser into believing that the proceeds will go towards African famine relief, even though this is not explicitly stated. I have to share my hon. Friend's contempt for this despicable series of actions. I share his encouragement that the Indonesian Minister, Dr. Mochtar, has recently called for action to be taken against the bootleggers. My hon. Friend and the House may be interested to know that my hon. Friend's debate is particularly timely, because officials are discussing this issue and making representations on the matter to the Indonesian high commission in London today.

My hon. Friend asked what, if any, conditions should be imposed upon our relationship with Indonesia, which is across many fronts. I have considerable sympathy for the position that he has expressed. I have never believed that the Government's position on any issue is weakened by a firm statement of belief by the United Kingdom Government, or by saying that we find the present situation unsatisfactory and that we shall not tolerate its indefinite continuation.

We have noted the effect of the United States action, particularly in places such as Singapore. Although the United States can bring considerably more clout to the international market place than we can, we must not under-estimate our position in the world market or our position over intellectual property rights. My hon. Friend knows that trade policy is not a matter for me but for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. However, we consult one another closely about these matters. I should not like my hon. Friend automatically to assume that we wish to adopt the feather duster approach. We do not.

My hon. Friend referred to the fact that there are alleged centres of piracy elsewhere in the Far East. We are encouraged by recent moves to improve the protection for foreign copyright owners in two places in particular which have given cause for concern—Singapore and Taiwan. Singapore has recently completed a new draft copyright law, with a view to its adoption during the next year or so. We should like to be told more precisely when that is likely to be. The United Kingdom hopes soon to be in a position to furnish comments on this draft law to the Singapore authorities.

In July of this year, Taiwan also introduced a new copyright law, which provides for the protection of foreign works on a reciprocal basis. The United Kingdom has already taken the necessary steps to meet this criterion of the new law. My hon. Friend may like to be reminded that the United Kingdom has made an Order in Council that applies the protection of the Copyright Act 1956 to such works in Taiwan, with effect from yesterday. My hon. Friend's debate is therefore timely on both those counts. Who knows?—Taiwan's position could be linked to the earlier debate to which my hon. Friend referred.

Both my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) referred to a blank tape levy. A White Paper on intellectual property and innovation is expected to be published early in the new year. No matter what the newspapers may say, no final decision has been taken on this issue. It would not be the first time that the newspapers, while speculating—and having every right to speculate—have not necessarily been accurate. The House will not expect me to speculate about the contents of that White Paper. I think that when my hon. Friend looks at some of his arguments on this subject he will agree with me that they were a little unfair. The Government's Green Paper that was published at the beginning of this year considered audio tapes and video tapes. With video tapes there is a significant element of time shifting, as it is known. My hon. Friend is, I know, aware that many people record off television for viewing on another occasion, either later in the evening or at the weekend.

As for audio taping, it is agreed that there is copyright infringement. However, many people put records that they have bought on to audio tapes because they wish to use them either in their motor cars or elsewhere in the house. That does not invalidate the case, but the copyright fee is often paid in the original purchase price.

The issue is difficult and complicated, and final decisions have not yet been taken. However, the issue will be discussed in the White Paper to be published in the new year.

I thank my hon. Friend very much indeed. I know that it is something of a cliché for Ministers to say that during the night through clenched teeth, but whatever the time —this time is not particularly inclement—I should have been happy to respond to comments on this extremely important subject.

Industrial Tribunals

8 am

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): The Minister will not be surprised to hear that I have chosen to speak about industrial tribunals and to explain to the House how industrial tribunals work today compared with how they worked under the legislation which established them. I first spoke on this topic on 15 May, since when my views have been formally reinforced by recent experiences at Ebury street.

The idea of some form of industrial relations court was first mooted as long ago as 1919. Not until the passing of the Industrial Training Act 1964 to determine appeals for people assessed for levy were industrial tribunals as we know them set up. Their functions have gradually been extended by the Redundancy Payments Act 1965, the Docks and Harbours Act 1966, the Equal Pay Act 1970, and other measures. Today unfair dismissal and sex discrimination cases are no longer dealt with in the informal tribunal manner.

The idea of a tribunal is to provide a place where people can place their grievances fairly before an impartial panel. If an injury or injustice has been done, they can seek to have it put right. If the finding is in their favour a financial settlement will be made in compensation. It is right that there should be a court of last resort.

The concept of tribunals has changed. Originally the idea was that there should be an informal atmosphere unburdened by legalistic practices, prejudices and all the panoply of a court. Today, if one presents oneself at an industrial tribunal, one is in a court of law just as one would be if one was at the Old Bailey on a serious charge.

Employees should not be put in that position. Unless one is legally represented at an industrial tribunal, one's chances of success will not necessarily be measured by the merit or otherwise of the case. It will be measured by some obscure precedent of which one has no detailed knowledge, other than that which is read in the law reports and reviews.

This subject was raised a long time ago in the House by a number of distinguished former members. Mr. Charles Pannell, speaking in this Chamber in December 1970, said:

"Yet these are courts, and one of the prime objections I find to this Bill is that it will lift industrial relations into the purely legal atmosphere, where precedent will be added to precedent and very few things will be discussed on their merits."

What a far-sighted statement that was. He also said:

"I think this whole thing will be a lawyers' paradise. I came across this quotation which was used by Philip Snowden on the Trade Disputes Bill in 1927. I only use it because he quotes Winston Churchill in an earlier incantation". — [*Official Report*, 14 December 1970; Vol. 808, c. 1031-2.]

As we see, for a long time the lawyers have gradually been getting matters to go their way. Markers have been put down. Charles Pannell put down a marker when he used the words that I quoted. Lord Carr, as he now is, also spoke in that debate in 1970. Mr. Pannell having made the comment that I quoted, Mr. Carr, as he then was, apologised for not quite catching Mr. Pannell's remark. Perhaps the ball was a little too fast as it came off the face of the bat.

The idea of these courts was that they should not be terribly legalistic places. The idea was to have a friendly atmosphere, perhaps discussing matters over a cup of tea or coffee; I would not suggest anything stronger. Let us do away with all the trappings of a court of law. That was why the House decided to call them tribunals, not courts.

My hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) was the Minister at the time of the debate in 1970. He said then that people would be put at their ease. He said:

"As I was saying, deliberate efforts will be made to put people at their ease. Generally in civil cases the panoply of the law, even though there will not be the full criminal court procedure, can put people at a disadvantage". — [*Official Report*, 14 December 1970; Vol. 808, c. 1072.]

It was recognised by the Government at that time that the full panoply of the law and a legalistic framework would put people at a disadvantage, particularly if they were not used to the courts and the legal framework. In that same debate, the present Lord Wilson of Rievault said that he was interested in the word "informality" in the context of the new court, whatever it might be called.

There was concern then, and I am expressing concern today, because the drift has gone on and on, so that now we no longer have that which was intended by Parliament in the first place. The Government must tackle this problem because in industrial relations we are drifting into waters that are familiar to us all: one can get justice in many cases so long as one can afford it, and frequently the cost is such that one is denied the opportunity for justice.

Another telling point is that because industrial tribunals are not courts of law a person's right of appeal, as might apply if the offence had been murder or rape or some trivial offence, is not there. Once a person has been found guilty in the eyes of the tribunal, he has no right of appeal unless he can prove a point of law. That is wrong.

Let me dwell a little on the composition of the tribunal. I can find no justification whatever for the chairman of a tribunal being a barrister or a lawyer of a minimum of five to seven years' standing. They may never have been inside a place of commerce or industry—a shipyard, a mine or even a farm, although they may have that as a side interest. They have no depth of knowledge of the real world of industry and commerce, but they have knowledge of the law and they are there in a quasi-judicial capacity.

The other two members of the tribunal are nominated, one from the trade union's side and one from the employer's side. Does not that bespeak the fact that there is an intrinsic interest on both sides before a case comes before the tribunal? There has to be an idea of prejudice, otherwise there would have been no need to seek a balance. Why should there be one from either side? If people are to judge a case on its merits as it is presented by the appellant and/or the employer, surely, in the same way as the jury system takes virtually anybody and allows them to become jurors, we should have well thought of honest people of integrity, but not necessarily with a track record as employers or employers' hacks or trade union nominees. The view might then be expressed that they were a little more impartial in the way in which they looked at things.

Since I last spoke on this subject it has been brought to my attention that nominees from trade unions are liable not to be resubmitted by the trade union for consideration to remain on tribunal panels if too often they do not find in favour of the appellant. That is something new which has not been widely expressed previously.

One man came to see me, who, for obvious reasons, has to have anonymity, because he was concerned at the

[Mr. Richard Holt]

pressure being put upon him through the new militancy within his trade union which said that it would not support him any further as a so-called independent member of a tribunal if he kept on finding in favour of the employers. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry if I hear an interjection from the Opposition Front Bench that that cannot be true. I shall supply privately to that hon. Member the name and address of the man in question. I have already supplied it to my hon. Friend the Minister. Therefore, that helps to make my case that we should be re-examining tribunals and their composition——

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Will the hon. Gentleman make it clear that the intervention to which he referred did not come from the Opposition Front Bench?

Mr. Holt: I am happy to do that. It came from a sedentary position on the Conservative Benches.

I am worried that the integrity of the tribunals themselves is now being called into question.

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): The hon. Gentleman has referred to trade unions putting pressure on their nominees to industrial tribunals. If he took that claim to its logical conclusion, there would be no trade union nominees on the tribunals because in the vast majority of cases the tribunal finds in favour of the employer.

Mr. Holt: I accept what the hon. Gentleman says. He will see from *Hansard* that I said that this was something new, not something that has been going on since the courts were established in 1971. I am saying that it is a new phenomenon which emphasises my point that it is time for a full review of the tribunals their composition and their procedures.

Mr. Dixon: Just for the record, should not the hon. Gentleman refer to it as a new allegation rather than a new phenomenon?

Mr. Holt: Whether the hon. Gentleman takes it as an allegation or not, I will stick to the word "phenomenon". I do not think that bandying semantics will achieve very much. I am concerned about this because the impartiality of the tribunals is essential.

On the hon. Gentleman's point about the outcome of cases, I am approached fairly regularly and I talk to people quite a lot on this subject and I know that a vast number of cases do not come before the tribunals at all. Where compensation is paid one might reasonably assume that those cases might well have been won by the appellant if they had come to court. In those circumstances, the bare statistics do not tell the whole truth and it is hard for anyone to justify the argument one way or the other in that context.

With regard to the chairman—the lawyer or judicial person—I recently appeared at Ebury street in front of a Lady Mitchell. Everyone I speak to tells me that if a case comes before Lady Mitchell the employer's chance of winning it is nil. That seemed a very strong allegation, so I decided to investigate whether it was credible. I asked the Department to tell me how many cases had come before that lady as chairman and whether the outcome was for or against the employer, but I could not obtain the information. I then asked the industrial court, but again I could not obtain the information. There is more secrecy and difficulty over this than over criminal proceedings in the High Court. That is highly unsatisfactory. Very learned lawyers have told me that as soon as they know the outcome of the Russian roulette system of allocating cases to court rooms they know what the outcome of the case will be.

That takes us a long way from the orginal idea of informal courts to adjudicate on individual cases of dismissal. We now have 15 centres and a large number of people, costing £20 million or more. It is time for a reappraisal of the system by the Government. Now that we have 15 years of case history, with 16,000 cases per year, we can see that the tribunals are not working out as originally intended. They are not cheap and they are not speedy. The average time for a case to come to court is 13½ weeks. There is no incentive for the individual to find a job in that time because if he is then found to have been unfairly dismissed the compensation will be diminished. What we really need is a vast number of tribunals made up of the local great and good nominated and supplied from a wide variety of sources. If someone is dismissed, he can go very speedily—within 48 or 72 hours—before an informal tribunal. The test is not necessarily whether in law a person has been fairly or unfairly dismissed, but whether that is so in the eyes of the tribunal.

I know of one employer who was told, "You had another job of a lower grade which you did not offer to the appellant and therefore in law it was an unfair dismissal." On the next occasion, he offered a job in a lower grade but was told, "You cannot do that." and the case went against him. Therefore, the present structure is over-legalistic and costly.

Some employers are being forced to contemplate very high costs indeed for the legal profession in respect of cases brought by the Equal Opportunities Commission. The EOC has an unlimited fund of money from which it can pay lawyers. One furniture manufacturer will shortly face a five-day hearing as a result of the Ford decision. If the decision goes against him, he is liable to lose between £200,000 and £250,000 and could be faced with a legal fee of £20,000. That is not what industrial tribunals were intended for. That is what Mr. Charles Pannell said in 1970.

The informality does not exist by which there can be a free exchange of views. I challenge the Minister or any of his officials to go to Ebury street, to sit in on a hearing and to listen to the way in which it is conducted on a legal basis. One can present an opening statement, call witnesses, cross-examine, have re-examination and make closing submissions, but one should not necessarily look for truth or fairness. One should look for a case precedent during the last 15 years on which one can hang the case and outwit the other barrister who has not come across that loophole.

I attended a case in which there were 10 precedents. Let us imagine an employer with 25 or 30 employees. Let us suppose that he is living on the margin, and let us also suppose that the appellant turns up with a solicitor provided by one of the law societies or citizens advice bureaux who is armed with all the facts and figures and who takes cases on a regular basis. What chance does that employer have if it is purely a legal matter?

When I pressed the Government on this matter some time ago, the Minister's predecessor said that they were concerned that the tribunal courts were becoming over-judicial, over-legal, over-costly and not quick enough. But

18 months have gone by, and absolutely nothing has been done. It is almost as bad as trying to discover the boundaries of Cleveland. No one disputes that there ought to be some form of industrial tribunal at which those who feel they have been wrongly dismissed may have their cases assessed and heard. If there has been an injustice, there should be compensation; no one disputes that. But many people today — other than those with vested interests in the legal profession—would perhaps say that things have gone too far.

Can anyone seriously believe that the tribunals were intended to deal with cases such as that of the singing rabbi comedian which filled our papers, gave us all some amusement, but cost us all a lot of money? Can anyone seriously imagine that the tribunals were intended to deal with the case of a sacked football manager such as Malcolm Allison? The transcript shows how much he managed to smoke and drink in his short time at Middlesbrough football club at the expense of my constituents. Were the industrial tribunals set up for that sort of case? I accept that at the end of the debate on the Consolidated Fund a little lightheartedness comes in, without any harm, but it is a serious matter.

I urge the Minister to say that he will ask for a Select Committee of the House of Commons to be set up to examine the working of the tribunals today, as opposed to what they were intended to be, the drift into legalism, the drift into heavy cost and the drift towards the slowing down of the process of justice.

If the Government do not do something about the matter, I shall be as tenacious as any Opposition Member. I do not believe that any of the parties involved are being given a fair crack of the whip, other than the lawyers, and I do not want industrial tribunals ultimately to become the "Bleak House" of this century.

8.27 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) for raising the subject of industrial tribunals.

With regard to excessive legalism, both the Court of Appeal and the Employment Appeal Tribunal have made statements which demonstrate that they, too, are losing patience with legalistic tendencies. In particular, the president of the Employment Appeal Tribunal has on several occasions emphasised the need for industrial tribunals to look to the words of the statute for their authority in deciding cases. He said that they should not be too quick to draw comparisons with the facts of other cases and treat them as binding precedents, even those which have come to be widely known.

When my hon. Friend talks about excessive legalism, he describes it in exactly the right way. We need some degree of legalism. What we do not need is the excessive digging back into cases, with people thinking that they are being very clever in showing that they have done more research than anyone else. The important point, as my hon. Friend rightly emphasised, is to discover what happened, was it reasonable and was it fair.

My hon. Friend said that the only grounds for appeal against the findings of an industrial tribunal were legal. That is not a bad position to be in. If one were able to appeal on other than legal grounds, it would put the tribunal into great difficulty. Both claimants and respondents would be seen to be in an impossible position, because the tribunal exists to decide what happened and whether it was fair, reasonable and lawful. If people were able to appeal on matters other than points of law, it would tend to reopen matters and to duplicate everything that the tribunal is there to hear.

My hon. Friend mentioned a minority of my predecessors. He has shown that the half-life of a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment is not long. There may be times in the future when others will be able to refer to my hon. Friend in my position. I do not think that his approach as a Minister would be different from mine.

My hon. Friend invited me to go to Ebury Bridge road. I have been there twice, once as Minister, to observe and the other time when I was an employer who had been involved in the sad issue of redundancy and three of the people involved made a claim for unfair dismissal. I went along without legal representation. i did not consult a lawyer before I went. The work people were represented by their union representative. We managed to get three cases through in four hours, to the satisfaction of both sides. I do not think that it is relevant to say which way the case went, but the firm incurred no extra cost.

Before a case comes up for consideration by a tribunal —this applies not only to my case, but to all cases— there are opportunities for ACAS to work for individual conciliation. It is worth remembering that a minority of dismissal cases lead to claims for unfair dismissal. Of those cases that come forward, about a third are withdrawn, about a third are conciliated and about a third go before a tribunal. The claimant is successful in about a third of the cases that go before a tribunal. Taking the whole procedure together—the opportunity to withdraw, the opportunity to conciliate and the tribunal hearing— and even looking on the tribunals as legal instruments, I believe that the tribunals consider only a minority of a minority of cases. Looked at in the round, there are opportunities for people to come to an agreement on facts and to avoid putting their future and fate in the hands of three people.

My hon. Friend asked whether it should be necessary for the chairman of a tribunal to be legally qualified. I have not torn that proposal up by the roots to examine it. I doubt whether we can change the requirement. There is a split responsibility. The Department of Employment is responsible for administration and for proposing laws to Parliament, and appointments of chairmen are in the hands of the Lord Chancellor's Department. My hon. Friend will need to be persistent, as he has promised, in trying to get the two Departments to look at this matter together.

My hon. Friend asked whether I would refer the whole issue of industrial tribunal procedure and presumably, that procedure's part in industrial relations, to a Select Committee. It is not in Minister's hands to do that. No doubt, Select Committee members will read my hon. Friend's words.

My hon. Friend referred to excessive legalism, excessive cost and excessive time. I hope that my response will not be taken as diminishing my hon. Friend's legitimate concerns, but I believe that it is worth putting another perspective. This does not destroy my hon. Friend's argument, but it provides a separate perspective. In a way, that can be used as an explanation of the membership of the industrial tribunals.

My hon. Friend used what I would almost call "South Down logic" in saying that balance in the membership of

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

the tribunal implies prejudice. I would say that balance engenders confidence and that people, because of their work responsibilities, will have differing perspectives. In many cases the tribunal's membership are unanimous. That suggests confidence. If people have differing points of view, it is not normally because of different prejudices, but because of different views on the facts put forward by the tribunal. It is not the case that people who are brought up in the same way, or who have the same training or experience, normally agree with each other. My hon. Friend is not a lawyer; nor am I. We are both personnel people. One cannot get lawyers to agree, especially if they are on different sides in a court case or tribunal hearing. Presumably they have not had the experience of being employers or trade union representatives.

My hon. Friend referred to a union suggesting to a person who had been nominated to be a member of an industrial tribunal that his re-nomination might be at risk if he did not find in a particular way in a certain percentage of cases. That is a serious allegation, which we regard as unacceptable if it can be demonstrated to be general. If people feel that they are being victimised in that way by a trade union or the nominating employers' bodies, I hope they will feel that it is their responsibility to ensure that the information is drawn to the attention of Ministers and, in the case of the TUC and the CBI, to the attention of those organisations.

My hon. Friend spoke about cost. I am not sure whether his figure of £20 million makes allowance for costs outside the public expenditure remit. My information is that the cost of the tribunals is about £13 million at present. We look to those with responsibilities for organising industrial tribunals to try to ensure that we get value for money. We hope that in the courts and tribunals efforts are made to ensure that financial management is regarded as seriously as in the private sector and that equal importance is attached to it.

Mr. Dixon: When the Minister talks about costs, will he bear in mind that he is talking about men's jobs and men's futures? I shall give him an example of what happened to me prior to the establishment of tribunals. I was a member of a safety committee representing employees in a shipyard. I was asked to leave the committee because the foreman wanted to see me. I was sacked two hours later. I had no opportunity to go to an industrial tribunal to put my case. I was put out of the yard and I had no appeal. That is an example of what happened prior to the establishment of industrial tribunals.

Mr. Bottomley: The hon. Gentleman makes a very important point. My hon. Friend talks rightly of employers who are operating on a knife edge and who face being broken financially by going before a tribunal. The hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) rightly observes that employees have been exposed to arbitrary discipline, to injustice, and to unfair dismissal, including when they have been carrying out important work to try to provide physical protection for those working with them. I become upset occasionally when others assume that a Minister, even in the present Government, is automatically on one side or the other. There is a balance to be found, and where we bring the parties together before an industrial tribunal the balance is usually found.

My hon. Friend talked about time. With the built-in conciliation procedures, some time needs to be taken. One can argue that the conciliation service of ACAS, good though we expect it to be—we hope that it will become better, for there is always room for improvement—is a process that can be described as a talk around a table. Some parties, they are often employers, believe they require legal representation and try to get their legal representatives to talk to the ACAS conciliator. I hope that my hon. Friend and I would say, even if we were lawyers, that both the employee, or ex-employee, and the employer should consider carefully at what stage it is necessary, and whether it is necessary, to bring in legal representation, and whether it is not better to get the parties round the table.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): Will the Minister comment on industrial tribunals in the Scottish mining industry? The coal board directorate in Scotland and the rest of the country has refused to give any undertaking that it will reinstate ex-employees if the industrial tribunals find in favour of dismissed miners, and has said that it would probably not reinstate many of them. Will the Minister comment on the position of the coal board as a good employer?

Mr. Bottomley: No, Sir.

My hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh suggested that information should be available on individual chairmen. He will know that I cannot, will not and would not provide the information. If it were to be made available in one instance, the same information would be sought on every chairman. We would end up with research students obtaining PhDs and suggesting that there would be a 5 per cent. better chance by avoiding this court or that court. I do not think that my hon. Friend would want what he might regard as excessive statistics. He referred to excessive legalism, and both might go together.

Mr. Holt: I would not want that, but I think my hon. Friend will accept that his reply underlines my contention that every time there is an appearance before a tribunal, there is a game of Russian roulette, and not necessarily fair justice.

Mr. Bottomley: There is some element of truth in that, but that is to be found in any system that is created by man. One can look for experienced interventions and review. With the leading members of the industrial tribunal system, the Lord Chancellor's Department, my hon. Friend's constant presence and genuine concern for these issues and the views represented by the hon. Members for Jarrow and for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), I am sure that we can create a better system. We have a good one, and we can make it work better, and that requires our continued attention. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for initiating the debate. I hope that he regards my response as adequate and that we can continue our discussions.

Cornish Tin Industry

8.40 am

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): Even at the end of an all-night sitting, and with limited time available, I am grateful for the opportunity to raise what is undoubtedly the most important question facing the county of Cornwall today—indeed, the most important question that that county has faced for a long time—the deep crisis in the tin industry.

It is exactly eight weeks ago today that trading in tin on the London metal exchange was suspended with the price of tin at £8,140 per tonne, whereas at the beginning of the year the price of tin on the exchange had been more than £10,000 a tonne.

The suspension came about with the withdrawal of the buffer stock manager of the International Tin Council from the operation of that market. The price of tin was falling fast and the fear now is that if the market reopened with the buffer stock manager taking part, tin would go into what is colloquially called a free fall and would drop dramatically to an artificially low level. That is the background to the crisis.

Although I have raised this matter on about six occasions, and the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) has also done so—for example, earlier this parliamentary day, although it was a whole night ago—we have not yet had a statement from my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade. That is through no fault of his. I pay great tribute to him for the patience that he has exercised over this matter and the very hard work that he has put in behind the scenes to try to achieve a solution to an extremely complicated matter.

There are many ramifications to this crisis. There is the question of the international position, and the fact that the International Tin Council now represents only 60 per cent. of world production of tin. There is the European dimension, there are big questions for the City of London and its good name, and there is the question of the liability of Governments to stand behind their commitments under international agreements.

My main preoccupation must be—and I make no apology for this—the effect of this crisis on the tin industry in Cornwall. I am especially worried about the effect on the Geevor mine in my constituency, which has already been mentioned a number of times in the House. Just over a fortnight ago, the Geevor mine, a small public company, served redundancy notices on 340 of its 375 work force. It did so with the greatest reluctance but had to do so because of the crisis hanging over the whole industry. If nothing happens between now and the end of April, those men will be made redundant. That will have an absolutely disastrous effect on the economy of that part of Cornwall. Indeed, west Cornwall is now facing its biggest crisis for many a long year.

Geevor is in the village of Pendeen, some six miles from Land's End. It is beautiful country on the north coast of Cornwall. It is very remote—there is nothing else there other than some farming and some tourism. If, heaven forbid, anything happened to Geevor mine, the economy of Pendeen, the neighbouring town of St. Just—some say the most Cornish of all Cornish towns—and the whole of that area would be absolutely devastated economically. Male unemployment there is already more than 26 per cent. There is nothing else there to provide jobs.

My right hon. Friend the Minister has tried his hardest behind the scenes to bring about an agreement in the International Tin Council at least to start trading again on the London metal exchange in an orderly fashion. That must be the first priority. However, after the long meetings of the International Tin Council, the signs seem to me, as an outsider who is not privy to all that goes on in those meetings, to be not good. The talks seems to be dragging on and getting nowhere.

I hope that my right hon. Friend will throw some light on the matter. He has made valiant attempts to get a common position inside the European Community with his fellow Ministers, but so far they do not seem to have brought much success. That is not for want of trying by my right hon. Friend.

A few weeks ago, in the presence of the hon. Member for Truro, I took a delegation to see my right hon. Friend from the county council and the mining industry. At that important meeting, we said to my right hon. Friend that we believe that there is an overwhelming case for temporary assistance for the industry to get it through this deep crisis.

Before anybody says, "You did not argue that in the case of the coal industry," let me say that there are great differences between the situation facing tin mines in Cornwall and that facing some mines in the coal industry, although I accept that the social consequences are probably similar. However, we are not talking about mines that have come to the end of their life in the case of the Cornish tin mines. There are good reserves of ore there, and the problem is that if they close they will not open again. The history of the price of tin is one of fluctuation, although it has been ironed out by the International Tin Council in recent years. If those mines closed and the pumps were switched off, it would be like switching off a life support machine, and those mines would not reopen. That must not happen. I do not believe that it will.

There is an overwhelming case for the Government to give temporary assistance to those mines. I believe that the best way is to help them with their considerable development programmes in the same way as the Government rightly are helping the coal industry with its considerable development programme. That is what I am asking for today.

I do not expect my right hon. Friend to come up with an answer or, indeed, to reach for his cheque-book; life is not like that. However, I am saying, as the House prepares to adjourn for the Christmas recess, please do not sit back; please give urgent consideration to the case being made by the industry, the county councils and the district councils, particularly Penwith district, in which Geevor is situated, and St. Just town council.

We are united in Cornwall. I am delighted to say that the argument in support of the industry is solid, going right across the political boundaries. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Truro is here today. I pay full tribute to the role that he has played in the crisis. We are united, but we look to the Government to save the part of the industry that might be in danger, because the signs are not good. I hope that the Minister will be reassuring, but I do not think that they are good. Even if trading in tin is resumed fairly soon on the London metal exchange, parts of the industry will need special temporary assistance. The case for assistance

[Mr. David Harris]

is overwhelming. Aid can best be channelled through the development programme, which would make the industry more efficient, open up new reserves of ore and, I hope, enable it to compete with the rest of the world when we return to stability.

We look to my right hon. Friend to respond sympathetically to the case being made by Cornwall on behalf of perhaps its oldest industry, which is part of its heritage. The industry must not be allowed to die.

8.50 am

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): As the hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) said, there is no political disagreement on this issue. Our job is to ensure that London is aware of what faces our county.

We all recognise that the world's tin producers have operated a cartel and that the cartel has broken. One of the initial problems after a cartel is broken is that the commodity's price falls way below the marginal costs of production. That presents great difficulty for the industry. It requires much belt tightening and investment. If the price falls dramatically below the marginal cost of production, swathes of our industry are in the greatest difficulty. Indeed, I wonder whether there is any future for it.

I am aware of the international ramifications and of the European role, but the mines are in Cornwall, which is represented here, and we look to the British Government for some assistance. I hope that the Minister does not put off saying whether he will be able to help by saying that we are appealing to the EC, the United Nations or someone else. It is a British responsibility and there should be a British response. I do not expect the Minister to stand up with his cheque book and say exactly how assistance will be given, but he could give west Cornwall the most joy by saying that the Government recognise the problem and, come the crunch, will assist.

8.52 am

The Minister for Trade (Mr. Paul Channon): My hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) and the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) deserve the congratulations of the House and their constituents on the extreme assiduity and persistence with which they have pursued this important subject, the crisis in the tin market and the difficulties that have arisen with the international tin agreement.

The House will appreciate that, at this very minute, the International Tin Council is in session in London, so I hope that hon. Members will understand if I am cautious about what I say about what might or might not be the outcome of any talks. The United Kingdom has been a member of successive international tin agreements since 1956. The current agreement—the sixth—came into force in 1982. Like previous ones, it provided for the International Tin Council to engage in buffer stock operations—buying and selling tin—to keep tin prices within an agreed price range. It was a commodity agreement with full economic provisions and was due to expire in 1987, but it could be extended up to two years. Its purpose was to maintain the price within a given range. Buffer stock was therefore established and a buffer stock manager operated a system of intervention buying and selling to keep the price within that range. The agreement has had the difficulty from the start that the price range seems to have been always higher than that which might have been set by a free market. Therefore, production has been stimulated, consumption has fallen, and large stocks of tin have accumulated, despite export controls in some producer member countries. It is a case of over-supply.

On 24 October the International Tin Council announced that it no longer had sufficient funds to continue buffer stop operations. The London metal exchange later announced the suspension of dealing in tin, and since then it has remained closed. From the outset the Government have made it clear that our overwhelming priority is to secure agreement to a satisfactory resolution of the ITC's obligations, and to get a return to ordinary trading in tin. That must be in everyone's interests.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has repeatedly stated that the Government remain fully committed to meeting their share of any commitments of the council member countries. He has used every conceivable channel open to him, diplomatically, through the Community, and in every other way, to impress on other members of the ITC that that is the case, and that they should adopt the same position. His proposals are still under consideration in the ITC, and we are pressing other council members to follow his lead on financial obligations.

The present meeting, which began on 2 December, will remain in session until definitive decisions have been taken. I hope that the House will understand if I decline to comment on the progress of those discussions, as we do not wish to prejudice the chances of a successful outcome. The task is extremely difficult. The United Kingdom is one of 22 members of the international tin agreement. It has been suggested that the ITC should be enabled to recommence its buffer stop operations to protect the interests of poorer countries which are particularly dependent on sales of tin, and the Cornish tin mining industry. Our priority is to secure the agreement of the member countries on an equitable way of settling the council's obligations. It is premature to discuss any future arrangement until we have agreement on what should happen now, and until an agreement has been reached. However, it is difficult to envisage that it is likely that we shall find an agreed basis for the renegotiation of the agreement in future.

I agree with my hon. Friend and the hon. Gentleman that the matter is tremendously important to Cornwall and those who live and work there. There are only three main tin mines, as I understand it. My hon. Friend referred to Geevor and the hon. Gentleman has talked about Wheal Jane and South Crofty. About 1,520 people are directly employed in tin mining. The figure includes the three mines and smaller mining activities. Other people are indirectly employed. We are fully aware of their great anxiety.

I had the opportunity to meet members of Cornwall county council with my hon. Friend and the hon. Gentleman. It is too early to judge what impact recent developments will have on the commercial prospects of United Kingdom tin mining. The most important factor will be the price at which tin settles when orderly trading has been resumed. The hon. Gentleman is right in saying that if we have a hard landing, it is likely that the price of tin will fall lower than if there was a soft landing.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): Will the Minister respond to calls from companies and trade unions in the Cornwall area for a capital injection? Will he delay a decision on this beyond the point at which many people may be made redundant?

Mr. Channon: Of course, no decisions will be delayed beyond the point at which decisions would be too late. As my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives said, we have a little breathing space. We cannot foresee what the position will be when ordinary market trading resumes, but we are monitoring it extremely carefully, and we shall continue to listen to the views of all those with an interest in the well-being of the Cornish industry. I have taken full note of the views of hon. Members on both sides of the House, and the views of hon. Members who visited me recently with representatives of the Cornish industry. I hope that my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Truro will remain in touch with me. The position will be much clearer in a few weeks, if not days, when the International Tin Council concludes its deliberations. I shall take every care——

It being Nine o'clock am on Thursday, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Maternity Provision (Greater Glasgow)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Thompson.]*

9 am

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): We have reached the end of a long day and what seemed an even longer night. Throughout the Consolidated Fund debate, we were assisted by the Clerks and the staff of all the Departments of the House. It would be right to place on record the grateful thanks of Members for that help.

I am pleased to see with us this morning my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), and my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton), who has shadow responsibility for the Health Service. I am also pleased to see my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), who has a keen interest in Scottish affairs.

I am grateful for the opportunity to raise on the Adjournment the important issues surrounding the proposal of Greater Glasgow health board to close Stobhill hospital maternity unit. Ministers frequently refer to spending limits within the Health Service, and claim that more money in real terms is being spent. "Safe in our hands" is their favourite slogan. Why then do we keep hearing of hospital closures? Why then are hospital closures such a feature of Adjournment debates in this House? Why then is the Greater Glasgow health board having to slash its services by £13 million, and why is Stobhill maternity unit on skid row?

Last year, there were 2,000 births at Stobhill, but the board says that the unit is under-used. It is certainly not under-used by my constituents. That is amply demonstrated by the Minister's replies to two parliamentary questions that I tabled. He said that the number of patients from Cumbernauld who were discharged from Stobhill maternity unit during the past five years were 461, 620, 532, 518 and 510. The figures for Kilsyth were 181, 188, 172, 176 and 142. There can be no question of the unit not being used by my constituents. Kilsyth has a long tradition of using Stobhill maternity unit, and the community council in the town pointed this out most forcibly to Councillor Tom Barrie and myself. Cumbernauld new town is a young community with an average age of 31, which needs and uses the unit.

This unit enjoys a reputation for progressive and forward-looking maternity care. It fulfils all current NHS recommendations for modern obstetric practice. It is an integral part of a general hospital with full laboratory, anaesthetic and surgical facilities. It is a teaching unit giving a combined training for doctors of obstetrics and gynaecology in health centres. It deals with one quarter of all medical undergraduates at Glasgow university. All this, yet perhaps the high levels of efficiency achieved at the unit have contributed to it becoming a target for cuts. It was an 85-bed unit, which was reduced to 65 because of the excellent day care provided for expectant mothers, which reduced the necessity for 24-hour bed care. The latter has been of particular help to the mothers and families alike.

The economics of the proposed closure requires greater scrutiny. The board says that it will save £1 million on Stobhill hospital, yet the 2,000 patients will have to go somewhere—possibly Monklands general hospital will

[Mr. Norman Hogg]

cover Cumbernauld, and Kilsyth will be served by Stirling or Falkirk. Such provision would not be acceptable to my constituents. It would be extremely awkward in travel terms, involving costly journeys, and would be extremely inconvenient for the expectant mothers. To be plain, Kilsyth and Cumbernauld cannot do without the Stobhill unit, and I am sure that is equally true of northern Glasgow, Bishopbriggs and Kirkintilloch.

I have already pointed out that a large number of the patients come from Cumbernauld new town, and the unit has a direct relationship with Cumbernauld's central health centre, where a specialist ante-natal clinic is provided. Kilsyth has a similar service, provided twice a month. Were Stobhill to close, the service to my constituents would be drastically reduced. A hundred highly skilled people would either lose their jobs or be transferred. A highly efficient team would be broken up and lost to the Health Service in Glasgow. Cuts of the kind proposed reveal the awful consequences of Government policy. How far removed from reality is the easy rhetoric of Ministers. My constituency is at one in condemning this proposal. Kilsyth community council, Cumbernauld and Kilsyth district council and myself, are utterly opposed to the proposed closure, and we urge the Minister to ask the Secretary of State to withhold his consent from the board's proposals. Instead he should make further financial provision to the Greater Glasgow health board so that this facility can continue its excellent service to my constituents.

9.7 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. John MacKay): I have a distinct feeling of déjà vu about this debate. The hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) and I faced each other across the dispatch box in very similar circumstances and at the same hour of the night—or morning—in July of this year. On that occasion, the subject chosen by the hon. Gentleman related to the acute hospital services provided by the Greater Glasgow health board for residents of the towns of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth which the hon. Gentleman represents but which are situated within the area of Lanarkshire health board. If my memory serves me right, our previous debate rather concentrated on the service provided by the Glasgow royal infirmary.

Although the subject of today's debate is maternity services in Greater Glasgow, the hon. Gentleman's particular interest is the maternity service provided by Greater Glasgow health board to residents of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth. There are aspects of the debate which we had in July which are relevant to today's debate and to which I shall return later in my speech.

I would not, however, wish to draw too close a parallel with the debate in July since the subject of today's debate raises a number of separate and specific issues which, given the current widespread concern about the future provision of maternity services in Glasgow, it is only right that we should have the opportunity to debate and set out for the record.

To begin with, it might be helpful to describe briefly the current provision of maternity services in Greater Glasgow. Maternity services cover, of course, the primary care sector, the community care sector and the hospital service. While much of the current attention focuses on the last of these, it is important to recognise the substantial contribution made to the health and welfare of expectant mothers and their babies by general practitioners and by the community nursing service. There have been significant improvements in the perinatal mortality rates in Glasgow during the last few years. Everybody can be rightly proud of those improved rates. For example, in 1975 the perinatal mortality rate was 22·5 per 1,000 births. By 1984, it had been reduced to 10·2 per 1,000 births. This is a considerable achievement for the Greater Glasgow health board, and credit for the successful implementation of these measures must go to the doctors and nurses working in and with the community as well as in the hospitals.

The hospital maternity service does not, of course, operate separately from the community maternity service and it is self-evident that there must be close co-operation between the two, and, indeed, as full an integration of them as possible. Here again I would mention the practice of the Greater Glasgow health board of setting up ante-natal clinics in some of its more deprived peripheral housing estates staffed by hospital-based doctors and nurses. I think it is again worth our taking the time to recognise and applaud such service developments which have played their part in the reduction of perinatal mortality.

I turn to the hospital services in Greater Glasgow. There are five maternity units in the board's area — the Glasgow royal maternity hospital at Rottenrow in the east of the city; the Queen Mother's hospital at Yorkhill; Stobhill hospital to the north of the city; Rutherglen maternity hospital and the Southern general hospital, both serving the city's southern parts. Together, these units provide a total maternity bed complement of 557, and in 1984-85 the total average number of these beds, staffed and available for use, was 524. In the calendar year to 31 December 1984, there were 15,189 deliveries at these hospitals, with the largest number—4,000—being at the royal maternity hospital at Rottenrow and the smallest—2,100 — at the Stobhill maternity unit. These figures reflect to some extent the relative sizes of the units.

Of the 15,189 births in the Greater Glasgow hospitals in 1984, some 1,650, or 11 per cent., were to mothers resident in Lanarkshire. This reflects the general pattern of health care in that part of Scotland to which we referred in our July debate and to which the hon. Gentleman referred earlier—the historical and continuing practice of hospitals in Glasgow providing a service to nearby centres of population in immediately adjacent health boards, notably in Lanarkshire. Of the 1,650 births in 1984 to Lanarkshire mothers in Glasgow hospitals, 656 were at the Rutherglen maternity hospital; 440 at the Stobhill unit; 430 at the royal maternity hospital; 94 at the Queen Mother's hospital; and 30 at the Southern general hospital.

This cross-boundary flow of patients is of course a common feature of the Health Service and the receiving health board is suitably reimbursed for the additional work load created. Here, however, I should like to pick up a theme from the debate earlier this year to which I have referred: the importance of close co-operation between health boards in such matters so that as full and complete a service as possible is provided to all patients, irrespective of their place of residence, and in the way most cost-effective to both boards. So far as I am aware, there has been very good co-operation and understanding between the Greater Glasgow and Lanarkshire health boards in the

provision of maternity services across their administrative boundary and it is most important that this should continue. I am sure the hon. Gentleman would wish to acknowledge in particular the important and positive role which the Greater Glasgow health board has played in the provision of maternity services for his constituents in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth.

It is of course the future provision of these services that concerns the hon. Gentleman. Indeed, in a wider context it concerns a number of Opposition Members who represent Glasgow constituencies, and also my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst). They have indicated to me their concern about these services. It may be helpful at this point to explain some of the background to the current proposals by the Greater Glasgow health board to rationalise its hospital maternity services by the closure of the unit at Stobhill general hospital.

The Greater Glasgow health board's net revenue allocation for 1984-85 was £343·9 million and for 1985-86, £359·2 million. The board announced earlier this year that it was facing a £9 million budgetary deficit for the current financial year and a possible £13·5 million budgetary deficit for next year, 1986-87, although I have not yet announced the allocations to boards in 1986-87. It is most important to recognise that this arose not from any financial cuts imposed on the board but from the realisation by the board that if it continued its existing spending patterns it simply could not live within its means. Some hon. Members have commented that these budget deficits arose from the effect of the pay awards this year for doctors and nurses. This is not so because, as a result of the Government's deliberate staging of these awards, their net effect on Greater Glasgow's budget in each of the years in question is considerably less than the budget deficit figures that I have quoted.

The prospect of these budgetary deficits led Greater Glasgow to seek measures for generating savings through increased efficiency and through possible rationalisation of services. It was not simply this short-term crisis, however, that prompted the board to look at such measures. The board is well aware of the considerable improvements which are increasingly becoming necessary in its long-stay hospitals, for the elderly, whose numbers are as a proportion of the total population increasing, for the mentally ill, who for years have been accommodated in aging Victorian buildings which are more and more becoming substandard and for the mentally handicapped who, in Glasgow, are almost all accommodated in one single institution at Lennox castle.

To give credit to the board, it has in recent years been progressing a number of major projects in the psychiatric field—a 240-bed redevelopment at Lennox castle, a 120-bed development at Gartloch, a 120-bed development at Parkhead and most recently a prospective 240-bed development at Rutherglen. These are significant advances, but much remains to be done, particularly north of the river Clyde. All these developments require revenue resources to staff and operate them and the board is aware that while it can expect to continue to receive growth money in its annual allocations it will require to supplement this by finding resources from its existing allocations as a result of its very favourable funding position at present. Indeed, the board is the second best funded board in Scotland by reference to the objectively based assessment of relative need provided by the SHARE formula, introduced by the Labour Government. For the present year the board is about £16 million better off than it would be were the resources allocated purely according to this assessment. In the years to come, however, the board is aware that it will gradually lose this advantage as funds are increasingly directed to the relatively under-funded boards. Ayrshire and Arran and Lanarkshire are but two of them in close proximity to Greater Glasgow.

At the same time, it is also well known that Greater Glasgow has some of the highest cost acute hospitals in the country, even comparing teaching hospital with teaching hospital. This results in part from the higher level of doctors and nurses which the board has maintained despite the constant fall in the size of population which it serves. The board recognises that it is time that the running of these hospitals was examined to find out why they should be so much more costly comparable hospitals elsewhere in Scotland.

All these factors have contributed to move the board towards a programme of efficiency savings and rationalisation within its acute services sector which, for this purpose, includes its obstetric service. The package of savings that it has devised amounts to a maximum of £13 million, though there may well be further potential savings available within the board's operations which the board will have to continue seeking, both to secure maximum efficiency in the resources it uses and to redirect such savings into the areas of patient care which I have outlined and where improvements are very much required. Of the present package, however, most of the savings proposed are in the main acute hospitals where an analysis of staff costs, supplies costs, and total costs per patient has revealed significantly higher figures than in comparable hospitals elsewhere in Scotland.

A further element of the package, however, and the one which concerns hon. Members is the proposed closure of the Stobhill maternity unit, with a possible overall expenditure saving of about £1 million per annum. I will explain why the board is considering this possibility.

I mentioned earlier that during the financial year 1984-85 there were on average 524 maternity beds staffed and available for use. On average, however, only 368 of these beds, or some 70 per cent., were occupied, and the maximum occupancy achieved in that year was only 440 beds, or 84 per cent. In other words, even on the day of maximum occupancy, there were 84 additional beds available and fully staffed but not in use. Compared with the official bed complement of 557, the discrepancy is even greater.

Against those figures and against the general background that I have described as to Greater Glasgow's budgetary position, it must be entirely understandable to all concerned that the board has some scope for efficiency savings here. It is simply a waste of resources to staff beds which are not required, and particularly when the resources so used are desperately needed elsewhere in the board's services.

The board's specific proposal, as I understand it—and I have yet to see it formally—is to close the in-patient accommodation at the Stobhill maternity unit. This unit has a notional bed complement of 83 beds. In 1984-85, it had an average of 65 available staffed beds with an average occupancy of 40 beds. This represents 61 per cent. of staffed beds, and less than 50 per cent. of the notional bed complement.

[Mr. John MacKay]

On the basis of the current bed usage figures for the area as a whole which I quoted earlier, the board should be able to withstand such a closure and provide alternative accommodation on the 84 unused beds at the four other maternity units in its area, presumably at the Royal Maternity hospital if at all possible, as that is closest to the population in the north of the city which the present Stobhill unit serves.

If this closure went ahead, it would, as the hon. Gentleman explained, have a major effect on the maternity service provided by Greater Glasgow health board for the residents of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth. Clearly, this is a case where my right hon. Friend and I would expect the Greater Glasgow health board to consult closely with the Lanarkshire health board to find the most acceptable alternative service which can be provided. Indeed, I understand that preliminary discussions have already been held between officers of the two boards.

But such discussions will be only part of the much wider consultation which Greater Glasgow is obliged to undertake in consequence of the well-established procedures where a closure or major change of use is envisaged. The great merit of these consultation procedures is that they give all parties or individuals who may be affected by the proposed closure or change of use the formal opportunity to express their views on the proposal in the light of the consultative document which the board must issue.

That consultation document will have to set out clearly the reasons for the proposed closure and the alternative services which the board proposes to provide in place, in this case, of the Stobhill maternity unit. The Greater Glasgow health board has yet to issue its consultative document, and in many ways it is premature to discuss the issue in detail until the board has set out its case fully. I urge hon. Members, therefore, to wait until they have seen the consultation document before coming to a final view on the merits of the case. I urge hon. Members, having read the document, to take the opportunity provided by the consultation exercise to make their observations directly to the Greater Glasgow health board. The same applies to anybody else who feels affected by the proposed changes that the board will make in the consultative document. When the board has received all the responses to that document, it will again consider the matter, and if the board decides to proceed it must come to my right hon. Friend, and that is the other purpose behind the consultation exercise.

Before any board may proceed, it has to come for approval to my right hon. Friend and I. In making a decision, my right hon. Friend and I take fully into account the result of the board's consultation exercise so that the consultation process and the responses to it are not only useful for the board in coming to its decision but, if it decides to continue with its closure decision, the consultation exercise is useful to my right hon. Friend and I when we come to consider whether we should agree with the board.

The hon. Gentleman has raised a number of detailed points about the effect which possible closure of Stobhill would have on his constituents. I hope that he will accept, in the light of the formal position held on this matter by my right hon. Friend and I, that it would not be proper for me to comment on the merits of the board's proposals. In this speech I have sought to avoid comment on that for the very reason that eventually my right hon. Friend and I will have to decide. But I have tried to explain some of the factual background which has led up to the board's proposal.

Maternity provision throughout the country is facing the same sort of problem because with falling birth rates and improvements in maternity services leading to shorter stays in hospital by mothers after the birth we are seeing a lot of surplus capacity in maternity services in many health board areas. I do not think that there is one health board that does not have an imbalance in its maternity service, with more beds than its maternal population demands. There is spare capacity. It cannot be anything other than right for health boards to look at that spare capacity and to ask themselves whether they really need it because the resources which are going into those unused beds and facilities could be used for other patients who need services. I mentioned earlier the care of the elderly, the mentally handicapped and so on.

I should like to assure the hon. Gentleman and all other hon. Members concerned in the matter that my right hon. Friend and I will give close attention to their responses to the Greater Glasgow health board's formal consultation document before we reach any decision on the matter. In view of the considerable concern which the issue has aroused, I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving me the opportunity to explain some of the background to the board's proposal even if, as I say, I cannot comment on the proposal at present and at this early stage in the board's consultation process. But I can assure him that I am more than mindful that it is not just the patients of the Greater Glasgow health board area who are affected by the proposals, but also the patients in Lanarkshire health board area. All those matters will be taken into account by the board, in conjunction with Lanarkshire, and also by my right hon. Friend and I if the decision comes to us.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes past Nine o'clock on Thursday morning.

House of Commons

Thursday 19 December 1985

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Cereals

1. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has on the size of intervention stocks of cereals held in Britain.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): I am replying on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Minister, who is at a Council meeting in Brussels.

On 6 December, unsold stocks in intervention stores in Great Britain were 2·1 million tonnes of barley and 3·6 million tonnes of wheat.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Will my right hon. Friend explain how those quantities persist even after a poor harvest? Does he agree that those surplus stocks represent a standing indictment of the way in which the common agricultural policy is still being run and are doing great damage to the image of British farming? Will my right hon. Friend make proposals for reducing those surpluses?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is right to say that the surplus stocks are far too high and do no good to the image of agriculture. The Commission has presented its proposals and they are being discussed. It is obviously necessary to move the CAP away from being a means of ensuring that we do not have a shortage of food and towards becoming a system that enables us to control what are now surpluses.

Mr. Home Robertson: What is the cost of that storage exercise in a full year? What proportion of cereal stocks have been in store for more than 12 months?

Mr. Gummer: Detailed replies to those questions have been given to the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends recently, but the average cost of commercial storage is about £10·22 per tonne per year.

Sir Peter Hordern: Are not cereal farmers already getting far too much subsidy? When will something realistic be done to reduce those subsidies so that consumers pay a reasonable price for their bread?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is right to say that price must be the basis of the removal of the surpluses; there must be much greater price discipline. However, we must also ensure that there is a sufficient return for the farmer so that he is able to produce the goods. We have to balance those aspects. If we are to do that, we must ensure that the increasing ability of farmers to grow more on the same acreage results in a lower price per tonne.

Milk Quotas

2. **Dr. Marek** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a further statement on the impact of milk quotas in England and Wales.

Mr. Gummer: At the end of November total wholesale deliveries in England and Wales were about 2·5 per cent. below the Milk Marketing Board's quota projection. If this trend continues, no producer will be liable for levy on milk he supplies to the MMB. I hope that producers will take good note of this and make every effort to maximise uptake of our national quotas.

Dr. Marek: In spite of the temporary underproduction compared with the quota, does the Minister accept that a further 3 per cent. cut across the board throughout the Common Market would be unfair to this country and lead to a further loss of jobs in our creameries? Has the right hon. Gentleman any new proposals for action within the Common Market over the flouting of its rules by countries such as France and Ireland? We religiously stick to what has been agreed.

Mr. Gummer: That is not an accurate statement of what has happened in the rest of the Community. We are discussing a further Community outgoers' scheme. We have the details and the scheme is before the Council. We have to make a decision. We are still talking about a considerable surplus of milk throughout the Community and we must put that right.

Mr. Maclean: Does my right hon. Friend agree that Britain's milk output is as low as is desirable and that the only merit of the 3 per cent. reduction scheme is that it gives some rights to tenants? However, the amounts per cow are too generous and the knock-on effects in beef and other sectors would be disastrous.

Mr. Gummer: We have many real concerns about the proposals and my hon. Friend has mentioned some of his concerns. Clearly, we must argue those proposals out. However, it remains true that the Community does have a surplus of milk. If there is a surplus, the consumer pays through the tax system in the end.

Mr. Strang: Is the Minister aware that most of the dairy industry will be appalled by his answers? When will the Government face up to the disproportionate cuts in production and jobs that have taken place in Britain's dairy industry? Will the Government recognise that the proposed outgoers' scheme is likely to have a disproportionate effect in Britain? Many organisations, including the Dairy Trade Federation, have argued that case. When will the Government start saving jobs in the dairy industry?

Mr. Gummer: It seems that the hon. Gentleman, who represents a party which claims to be an internationalist party, has an odd view of the European Economic Community and the excellent way in which it seeks to solve the problems of agriculture across Europe.

Mr. Colin Shepherd: Will my right hon. Friend reaffirm that if at the end of the milk year British producers have not produced up to quota there will be no question of the national quota being reduced in ensuing years?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is right. We are concerned to fight for a fair deal for Britain within the Community. In that case, it would obviously be wrong for the quota to be changed because we did not meet it this year for what may well be temporary reasons. However, it is to the advantage of the industry if it does produce up to quota. That is why my right hon. Friend the Minister has drawn that to the industry's notice.

Mr. John: Why do the cheese manufacturers complain that they cannot obtain enough milk to manufacture Cheddar cheese in Britain if, as the hon. Gentleman says, we are running short of our quota?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman is right in that there have been complaints from some manufacturers. That is a matter for the Milk Marketing Board, which decides where the milk shall go. It is, in its view, the right way to do it. I am looking into this matter carefully because it would be quite wrong if there were any truth in that allegation.

Mr. Andy Stewart: In 1984 we had a shortfall in milk output targets and we shall also have a shortfall this year. Is that not an indictment? Is it not high time that we had a scheme for transferring quotas between farmers?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is right to say that the quota system will not work effectively unless there is a reasonable degree of transferability between farmers. Britain has always stood for that. We are fighting hard in the Council to see that we get a sensible transfer scheme.

Cereals

4. **Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will propose to the European Economic Community that surplus cereals in intervention should be released for use as feed by farmers who have been adversely affected by the severe weather crisis.

Mr. Gummer: Feed grain in intervention stores in Great Britain is available for sale on the home market at the intervention price. There is little demand at present, as supplies from the open market are cheaper. In addition, measures have already been adopted to make intervention feed wheat from stores in Great Britain available in Northern Ireland.

Mr. McQuarrie: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that reply. Does he accept that the feed grain which was given to Northern Ireland was given at a reduced price? In view of the information that he conveyed to my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) in an earlier question, does he agree that all farmers who suffer severely from the winter weather crisis should be entitled to the same consideration, whether in Scotland, England or Northern Ireland?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure my hon. Friend will agree that it is reasonable for people to be able to get the feed wheat at least at the same price in various parts of the country. We needed to transfer the wheat to Northern Ireland, and there were special reasons why it had to be done from the rest of the United Kingdom intervention stores. As for that being part of weather aid, it was considered, and I think in general the agricultural community agrees that it was right to provide that aid in other ways. A certain amount of money was available and we used it in other ways, but we do not believe that in Scotland that would have been the best way to help those worst hit by the bad weather.

Mr. Pike: At the end of November over 29 per cent. of the intervention stock of cereals had been held for over a year. Is it not time that we had action rather than words from the Government to deal with that problem in view of the cost that the Minister gave in reply to an earlier question.

Mr. Gummer: Of course it is time that we stopped over-production of cereals. That is why the Government have fought hard for a system that is based upon price restraint and ensures that in the future we do not produce too much. We have passed through a period in which shortage has been the main problem. We have moved into a period in which we are producing too much, and in those circumstances the whole system of agricultural support must be turned to deal with the new situation of plenty.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my right hon. Friend accept that there has been a warm welcome in Scotland and the north of England for the help that he has been able to give farmers who have been affected by the extremely bad weather? Nevertheless, referring to the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie), it would be of additional assistance if my right hon. Friend could give some intervention grain for feed mixtures until the spring. It could be helpful for livestock producers.

Mr. Gummer: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for making the point about the great welcome that has been given to that package. It has been widely accepted as especially good in view of Government restraint on expenditure. It is unlikely that that package will be extended, although, of course, I shall carefully consider what he said.

5. **Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what acreage of barley and wheat has been sown this winter.

Mr. Gummer: This information will not be available until about March, when the results of the December agricultural census will be published.

Mr. Home Robertson: Is the Minister aware that the substantial areas that have already been planted will add to the cereal mountain next summer? As 29 per cent. of the cereal in intervention stores has been there for more than 12 months, as my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) said, does the Minister recognise the complete inadequacy of his proposals and those of the European Commission to deal with the matter? What is his response to the Labour party's demand for incentives for alternative land uses coupled, if necessary, with a quota scheme for cereals?

Mr. Gummer: It is odd that the hon. Gentleman should suggest that his party has any answer to that problem, because we are now in a world in which technological advance has meant considerable increases in what we can produce. We should start by saying, thank God that we are in the business of dealing with plenty

rather than shortage. The answer must be a Community answer. The Commission has put before us proposals about which we have considerable doubts. We are seeking a price restraint system which will ensure that we do not produce too much. The hon. Gentleman may push his hand like that, but if we have too high a price we shall go on producing too much.

Mr. Ralph Howell: Does my right hon. Friend accept that he must find an answer to this problem? If he will not accept quotas, will he accept production control? Does he agree that every other industry has to accept such control? It is time that the Government recognised that cutting prices will not solve the problem; it will aggravate it. We must alter our stance and have production control in cereals.

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend and I have argued about this matter before. I am aware that we do not agree. Until we have a package in which price is the basic way in which we reduce production——

Mr. Howell: No. Nonsense.

Mr. Gummer: —we shall not have a package at all.

Mr. Skinner: Give it to him.

Mr. Gummer: It is all right for Labour Members to say, "Give it to him," to my hon. Friends, but at least my hon. Friends are arguing about something for which they care, which is more than the Opposition do.

Mr. Deakins: What estimates has the Minister made of the impact on British cereal production in the current year of the Commission's cut in cereal prices in that year?

Mr. Gummer: There has been a net cut of about 3·5 per cent. in the price of cereals. We cannot dissociate that from any other element which has affected production this year. I am sure that had the price continued to increase production would have increased even more than it has.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Does my right hon. Friend accept that many involved in the industry feel that if a prudent price policy is to be effective the cuts must be dramatic? That being so, there is a move within the industry to support acreage quotas. What is his view on that?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that my hon. Friend is correct and that the industry is moving towards a mixture of price and some kind of quota system. I hope that the industry considers carefully how such a system would be policed and organised and whether it would not, perhaps, result in a kind of sterilisation of the industry which neither he nor any of my other hon. Friends would like.

Food Labelling

7. **Mr. Alton** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will convene an inquiry to study and recommend methods of standard and informative food labelling.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mrs. Peggy Fenner): My right hon. Friend the Minister is advised on such matters by the Food Advisory Committee, which is composed of independent experts. Its reports, and any proposals for legislation, are subject to consultation with all interested parties.

Mr. Alton: How long will it be before the Ministry implements the findings of its research, carried out in conjunction with the National Consumer Council, into whether clearer labelling should be provided on canned food, and especially should show levels of added sugar and salt? If that does not happen, would not the Ministry be open to the charge that it is simply pandering and kowtowing to the interests of the canned food manufacturers?

Mrs. Fenner: No. My right hon. Friend made it very clear that we accepted the report of COMA. We have been holding consultations to find the most practical way to implement it. The hon. Gentleman was right to say that we also carried out a consumer survey to assess the needs of consumers in relation to labelling. We are considering all the comments made and hope to bring forward proposals shortly.

Mr. Coombs: Is my hon. Friend aware that 60 per cent. of those responsible for food shopping who were interviewed in a recent market research survey said that they considered the health aspect of food when deciding what to buy? Against that background, and also because many supermarkets, including Tesco, are now introducing this food labelelling, does she recognise that there is a need for the utmost dispatch in introducing labelling proposals?

Mrs. Fenner: I agree with my hon. Friend, which is why we are currently considering proposals for legislation that will provide a statutory requirement to indicate on labels the fat content in food. We are also looking at a format for nutrition labelling. We are aware that although COMA did not recommend that, a great deal of interest is being displayed both by consumers and manufacturers. If nutrition labelling is taken up, we want it to be in a form that will help rather than confuse the consumer.

Mr. Ashley: Is the Minister aware that even when additives are considered generally to be safe, some individuals suffer adverse reactions to them? Are those people not entitled to protection like everyone else? Therefore, should not all main additives be shown on the label?

Mrs. Fenner: Indeed, and the Food Act 1984 requires that. The lead-in time means that by 1 July 1986 all additives must be shown on labels, whether in number, description, or both.

There is no proof that there is a connection between allergenicity and food additives. My Department has commissioned research into connections between adverse reactions and food and food additives.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: Does my hon. Friend agree that it might be a sensible step, which would benefit housewives and other shoppers, if the major food stores explained the meaning of the E number on labels?

Mrs. Fenner: My Ministry produces a book which, if we were not giving it away, would be counted as its best seller. It is entitled "Look at the Label" and sets out all the E numbers. We are considering what other systems of educational information should be provided.

Mr. John: I hope the Minister accepts that people do not want to go shopping with a ready reckoner to discover what additives are in food. Will she confirm that when regulations are made they will not be two-tier—one, the statutory labelling of fat content, and the other an optional requirement to show added sugar, salt and fibre?

Mrs. Fenner: COMA recommended statutory labelling of fat content. We have responded to that and proposals will be put before the House. COMA did not recommend statutory nutrition labelling. If we introduced that, we might have some difficulty within the EEC because of distortion of trade.

Mr. Gregory: Will my hon. Friend confirm that we are fully behind the EEC Commission's proposal to include in the revision of the 1973 chocolate directive a vegetable content of up to 5 per cent.? Will she bear in mind that for almost half a century the United Kingdom confectionery trade has included that content and ensure that we do not follow the French and Belgian Members of the European Assembly in the spirit of the fruit-and-nut case in going along that line, which would reduce jobs, reduce choice and reduce United Kingdom confectionery in the EEC market?

Mrs. Fenner: Yes. I give my hon. Friend that assurance.

Cereals

8. **Mr. Deakins** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the European Economic Community Council will next consider the level of cereal prices for the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Council took no decisions earlier this year on cereals prices for the current marketing year, although discussions continue, and the Commission has now laid before the Council further proposals.

Mr. Deakins: When the Council comes to consider cereal prices for next year, will it take as its base figure the level of cereal prices for the current year as determined by the Council following the German veto, or the level of cereal prices as determined by the Commission?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman knows that the proposals before the Council will have to be considered by all the members of the Council. The Government have made it clear that we welcome the fall of 3·5 per cent. in real terms in the price given to cereals and that we intend to have that and to pull the price down still further.

Mr. Harris: Is my right hon. Friend aware of two pieces of evidence given to the Select Committee on Agriculture? The first piece is that the amount of grain in intervention stores is virtually bound to increase still further. The second piece is that farms have now reached the ridiculous point of growing purely for intervention rather than for the market. Although my right hon. Friend is right to put his faith in price restraint, if it can be achieved, the fact is that that will not be achieved because of the view of our partners in Europe. Will he be prepared for what I reckon will be the inevitable consequence of the introduction of quotas so that we do not get them introduced overnight?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure my hon. Friend is right in saying that we should be prepared for a package that will include a range of measures. That is always true and it would be wrong to think otherwise, but unless the Government stand firmly by the fact that we need to have a major part of the package based upon price discipline, price discipline will not be achieved, and it is essential for success.

Mr. Geraint Howells: Will the Minister agree with me and others that if we lower the price of grain by 5 per cent., production will increase by 10 per cent. within the next two years?

Mr. Gummer: I do not agree with that.

Mr. Bill Walker: My right hon. Friend will be aware that we had a drought last year and that this year has been particularly wet. Does he recommend to farmers in Scotland that in future they should go into warehousing? It is obvious that there is more money in that than in growing cereals or keeping livestock.

Mr. Gummer: No, Sir, I do not so recommend.

Mr. Strang: Will the Government oppose root and branch the proposal for a co-responsibility levy for cereals?

Mr. Gummer: For the many reasons that we have put forward previously we do not like the concept of the co-responsibility levy. We do not enter these discussions on the basis that we oppose root and branch any of the proposals put forward. We shall consider, discuss and argue them and try to come to a solution that fits the whole of Europe, for the Conservative party is an internationalist party.

Mr. Budgen: May I remind my right hon. Friend that when there were proposals to reduce the production of milk, our Government said that the quotas would be bureaucratic and impracticable? Is there any guarantee that when there are proposals in Europe to reduce the production of cereals the Government will not once again go along with a solution which they know to be wrong and against the interests of the British people?

Mr. Gummer: We do not believe that quotas are the way to solve the problem. We have said that clearly. We believe that the way to solve the problem is by price restraint. We shall continue to press that. That seems to be a solution that will be good for Britain and for the rest of the European Community, to which we belong.

Mr. Home Robertson: As the Minister keeps saying that price restraint is the right way to control surpluses, will he give an estimate of the percentage price cut that would be necessary to bring supply into line with demand? What would be the effect of such a cut on smaller producers? Will the right hon. Gentleman accept that such a solution would be intolerable? We need a comprehensive package, which must include quotas.

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman always asks for a comprehensive package without indicating what would be in it. Whatever the results we come to, and whatever the period during which cuts are obtained, it is necessary for cereal prices to come down.

Agricultural Land

9. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the annual loss of agricultural land to other forms of development.

Mrs. Fenner: For England, the average annual loss of agricultural land to other forms of development for the five-year period ending June 1984 is estimated to be 13,000 hectares, or 32,000 acres.

Mr. Chapman: The answer to that identical question last year was 35,000 acres. Will my hon. Friend confirm

that there is a welcome trend downwards in loss of agricultural land to other developments? Will she confirm that the proportion of agricultural land last year to building and other urban developments this year—about half—is also about the same proportion as last year?

Mrs. Fenner: I confirm that the net reduction in the rate of loss of agricultural land in recent years confirms that trend. In the preceding five-year period ending 1979, the average annual loss was approximately 21,000 hectares, or 52,000 acres. About 10,000 hectares of that were known to be for urban and industrial use. During the last five-year period, about 4,000 hectares, or 10,000 acres, per annum have been lost to urban development and industrial use.

Sir Dudley Smith: I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the fact that Warwickshire county council is hell bent on taking a large slice of superior agricultural land to develop a technology park when non-agricultural land is available for the purpose. Will my hon. Friend and her colleagues consult the Department of the Environment to ensure that such a difficulty does not arise in future?

Mrs. Fenner: I shall have to look into that matter. We are consulted at all stages in the preparation of structure and local plans and on all planning applications affecting more than 4 hectares of agricultural land that do not conform to an agreed development plan.

Ewes

10. **Mr. Colin Shepherd** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the future arrangements for the export of ewes to France.

Mr. Gummer: Under a European Commission regulation which came into effect on 9 December, we are required to charge clawback—at the rate of 50 per cent. of that applicable to lambs—on ewemeat exported to France. Though we remain opposed to this approach, we have introduced the necessary arrangements. The French have now removed the import restrictions they were operating on our exports of ewemeat.

Mr. Shepherd: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the concept of imposing what is, in effect, a tax on any form of export of agricultural produce from the United Kingdom to the Community is unacceptable? Will my right hon. Friend ensure that the practice is never allowed to stick and that it is never accepted in default? Will he take all the steps at his command to ensure that this kind of penalty is not accepted in future?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is absolutely right in saying that it is unacceptable to claw back that which one has given in the first place. That does not make sense and we have opposed it wholly. It is also wholly unacceptable and against any kind of international order when a country decides to take the law into its own hands and act in a way that we would consider to be entirely illegal.

Mr. Livsey: What will the right hon. Gentleman do to remove claw back by next spring, when a great number of cull ewes will come on to the market? It is essential to remove this claw back by then.

Mr. Gummer: I said clearly in answering the last question that we believe this to be entirely wrong. We have obeyed the law because it is our business to be law-abiding. We shall do everything in our power to change what is obviously nonsense.

Sir Hector Monro: Will my right hon. Friend accept that his endeavours on behalf of sheep farmers are highly commendable, but as this matter has been dragging on since last September we must try to get it resolved as soon as possible because it is having a very serious impact on the sheepmeat market between this country and the Continent?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I believe that it is necessary to stand up in the Community for the rights of British farmers, and it is not proper that their reasonable export demands should be stopped, first, illegally and, secondly, by a system that is clearly nonsense.

Mr. John: Will the Minister confirm the amount of disruption caused by French interference and the loss therefrom to the British farmer? Will he also confirm that the effect of the 50 per cent. levy will be a reduction in the variable premium by 30p a kilo?

Mr. Gummer: I think that the hon. Gentleman is right to say that there has been considerable disruption as a result of the action by the French. That is why we opposed it so strongly, apart from the principle concerned. At the same time, obviously it would be for the trade to take any course of action which it felt was available to it. As to the hon. Gentleman's assertions, I will give him a detailed table of what seem to me to be the direct effects.

Southall Horse Market

11. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to visit the Southall horse market; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Fenner: I have no plans at present to visit the market. My veterinary staff attend the market and are able to monitor and encourage compliance with the voluntary code of practice on horse markets.

Mr. Greenway: Does my hon. Friend accept that the voluntary code of practice does not seem to work at Southall, and that inspectors of the Horses and Ponies Protection Association, I and many other people regard the state of affairs there as wholly cruel? Horses and ponies are abused by being left unfed and unwatered for long periods of time. They are not properly presented for sale and they are not properly loaded into boxes when they are removed from Southall. Is it not now time to do something to stop such serious animal abuse?

Mrs. Fenner: There have been considerable improvements of facilities and conditions generally in that market, as my hon. Friend was good enough to acknowledge when he last raised the matter on 16 May. He will know that the Farm Animal Welfare Council is studying the whole question of horses' welfare in markets, and we believe that it is right to await its recommendations for any further action.

Milk Co-responsibility Levy

12. **Mr. Knox** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the Government's attitude towards the milk co-responsibility levy.

Mr. Gummer: Funds raised by the co-responsibility levy make an important contribution to the cost of supporting the milk sector, particularly to the cost of disposal of the milk surplus.

Mr. Knox: Does my right hon. Friend think there is any prospect of getting rid of this levy in the forthcoming negotiations, as it has achieved little or nothing, and has merely added to the cost of British dairy farming?

Mr. Gummer: It is clearly important that this is taken into account in discussing the price of milk. I understand my hon. Friend's concern, because what started as a levy to do something totally different has now been overtaken by the quota system.

Common Agricultural Policy

13. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the European Commission Green Paper on "Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy."

Mr. Gummer: The Government welcomed the Green Paper and the stress it laid on the importance of price policy in securing a better market balance. We now look to the Commission to make specific proposals adequate to deal with the problems identified.

Mr. Colvin: As a farmer, I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his continued belief in the price mechanism as the best way of controlling surplus output. Has he seen the package of proposals on cereals produced by the Commission since its Green Paper, which in my view discriminates against United Kingdom cereal producers? What changes to those proposals has he in mind to ensure greater equality?

Mr. Gummer: A large number of proposals are obviously not acceptable to us because they discriminate against the pattern of farming in this country and the nature of the cereals that we produce. There is a whole series of items that we would like to see changed. Moreover, we do not believe that the package is adequate to solve the problem, and that has to be done.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: Will the Minister accept that the Green Paper ought to have contained some reference to the problem of food additives, given the real dangers that some people claim are caused to consumers, and particularly to those working in the food sector, who may be exposed to very high levels of food additives?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That question is rather wide of the mark.

Mr. Gummer: If the hon. Gentleman had been present earlier he would have heard our particular discussion on food additives, which do not come under this question.

Mr. Jackson: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that if there were to be quotas in the cereal sector, it would still be necessary to maintain sharp price discipline?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is right, and only Britain is determined to see that price restraints play a major part in any package of measures. If we do not continue to press for that, we shall have a package that does not work.

Outgoers' Scheme

14. **Mr. Cockeram** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from interested organisations on European Economic Community proposals to set up a Community-wide outgoers' scheme.

Mr. Gummer: I have received representations on the proposed Community outgoers' scheme from hon. Members, interested organisations, and individual farmers. These have reflected a number of concerns, including the position of tenant farmers and landlords. The proposals are still being discussed at official level and are unlikely to come to the Council of Ministers before January.

Mr. Cockeram: Is my right hon. Friend aware that agriculture accepts the need for an outgoers' scheme for the milk industry, but nevertheless there is a legitimate complaint from the landlord and the tenant, each of whom has invested his resources in developing the industry to its present state?

Mr. Gummer: An outgoers' scheme should recognise that in most cases both the landlord and the tenant have contributed to the ability of the land to produce milk. Therefore, it would be wrong to ignore either side in the outgoers' scheme, and we shall ensure that that does not happen.

Mr. John: Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that if there is a voluntary outgoers' scheme on all agricultural products, that may lead to the withdrawal of the most efficient farmers in some counties and the perpetuation of high-cost inefficient farmers in others?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman is right, and we are concerned about this factor. To achieve our purpose we shall look carefully at the scheme and seek to ensure that it is fair as between countries and farmers and as between tenants and landlords.

Falkland Islands

15. **Dr. Godman** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what percentage of the total fish catch in a 200-mile zone around the Falkland Islands was made by British distant water vessels in the last year.

Mr. Gummer: I am not aware of any catches made by British distant water vessels in the last year in the waters around the Falklands Islands.

Dr. Godman: Is it not astounding that these rich fishing grounds should be subjected to such ruthless exploitation by the fishing vessels of foreign nations? Should we not be moving towards a more effective system of harvesting, with the direct involvement of British fishing interests and those of the Falklands'?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows that British fishing interests have every right to take part in fishing in this area if they so wish. Setting up a different regime there is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

Mr. McQuarrie: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is ridiculous that Britain has become the laughing-stock of the Community when £50 million worth of fish are being picked up within the 200-mile limit of the

Falklands? When do the Government propose to do something about the report by Dr. Beddington of Imperial College?

Mr. Gummer: The general response to the Beddington report is based on advice given by the Minstry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to the Foreign Office, in whose hands this matter continues to be. As to the first question, I am not aware of any British fishing interest that has been prevented from fishing around the Falklands. If it wishes so to do, it can.

Mr. Randall: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that an early agreement on the best way to exploit and manage this rich fishery is important to Britain and the fishing industry, especially if one takes into account the rumoured cuts in quotas, about which we expect to hear later this afternoon?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman need not be too concerned about that. We are pleased that the Food and Agriculture Organisation has launched its study. When we have the details we shall be able to make a sensible basis for the future fishery potential in this area.

Salmon

27. **Sir Hector Monro** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the probable increase in salmon entering British rivers following his announcement on drift netting off the English coast.

Mr. Gummer: The measures which I announced on 7 November will tighten the rules under which the English north-east coast salmon drift net fishery operates. They should produce a significant reduction in the catch of that fishery. Because various natural causes influence the level from season to season, I cannot give a specific forecast of the extent of the increase in salmon entering British rivers.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the resolution of the problem of drift netting off the north-east coast of England is crucial to the survival of salmon in the United Kingdom? Will he watch the matter closely and take further action if there are no significant improvements in salmon stocks in Scotland?

Mr. Gummer: I undertake to do that, but I remind my hon. Friend that the arrangements which we have made this year will restrict fishing there, in that there will be no weekend fishing, no night fishing, and licences will not be transferable. Major steps have been taken, but we shall continue to examine the matter.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Spencer asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Spencer: In view of the announcement by the board of Westland Helicopters that it intends to enter into an agreement with Sikorsky-Fiat, will my right hon. Friend confirm that the position of the Government is as set out in the statement of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on Monday?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. The future of Westland is a matter for the company to decide. The company's decision is a matter of commercial judgment for its directors and shareholders. That was the position set out by my right hon. and learned Friend, and that was the position reaffirmed by the Cabinet this morning.

Mr. Kinnock: It is something of a change for this matter to go before the Cabinet, or so it appears. Given the patently obvious views stated publicly by the Secretary of State for Defence and the Select Committee on Defence, does the Prime Minister really believe that the subjective preferences of a company are an adequate basis on which to determine important national defence interests?

The Prime Minister: Westland is a private sector public limited company. Its future is a matter for the company to decide, and the company's decision is a matter of commercial judgment for its directors and, ultimately, its shareholders. That is the position, and it was reaffirmed by the Cabinet this morning.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister said that the company was responsible to its shareholders. Is she not, as Prime Minister, responsible to the nation and for the proper welfare of the nation? Why is she not taking that into proper account, as the Secretary of State for Defence clearly believes she should? When the strategic, considered judgment of the Secretary of State for Defence is contrary to the view of a private company, why is she backing the company, not him?

The Prime Minister: I have informed the House of the position of the Cabinet this morning. The position of the Cabinet is the position of the whole Government.

Mr. Churchill: Has my right hon. Friend heard of a farce that is playing on the South Bank entitled "Robin Ratepayer and his Merry Ratepayers"? Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is entirely appropriate that the leader of the Greater London council should play the star role in this production, for he and the other Marxist city henchmen of the Leader of the Opposition have been robbing ratepayers for years? Will she accept that the ratepayers of the metropolitan counties will be delighted when she rings down the curtain on this over-expensive production next March?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I agree with his broad analysis. I believe that the GLC has taken in far more rates than it needs. There should therefore be a goodly amount to be returned to the district councils when the GLC is extinguished.

Mr. Tony Banks: At least there is still a sense of humour on the South Bank. Does the Prime Minister care that the Christmas present to 6,000 loyal GLC staff this Christmas will be their redundancy notices? In view of the misery and unhappiness that the right hon. Lady is causing to these people and to the 3.5 million people who are on the dole, does she think that she deserves a happy Christmas this year?

The Prime Minister: The decision to abolish the GLC was taken by Parliament. I did not hear the hon. Gentleman mention whether Labour councils will be

prepared to take on those extra people. The hon. Gentleman ought to remember that there were two years under a Labour Government when all pensioners received no Christmas bonus.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: During her busy day, will my right hon. Friend find time to consult the relevant Ministers about the disgraceful way in which the chief constable of Greater Manchester is being treated? Is she aware that yesterday the Labour party used its built-in majority on the police committee to censure this man for merely telling the truth? Is this not yet another example of the Fascist Left in this country pillorying decent public servants who refuse to kowtow to them?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend makes his point very cogently. I am sure he will understand that I cannot comment while that investigation is in progress.

Q4. **Mr. Madden** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Madden: Will the Prime Minister confirm that the city of Bradford has been earmarked to receive extra resources for urban renewal? Will she also confirm that the key to urban renewal lies in providing more money for new council housing and more money for home improvement grants? Finally, will she confirm that any new money will be given to the local councils concerned and not to a new range of unelected and unaccountable quangos?

The Prime Minister: I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman that the key to urban renewal lies solely with urban housing. The amount of money that has been spent on urban housing and the way in which it has been spent are two of the factors that have led to many of the problems.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: When Ulster is told that it may be rid of the Intergovernmental Conference when it accepts devolution, is legislative devolution and devolved government meant by devolution, or what is meant? Why do a Unionist Government pursue policies that tend to detach Northern Ireland from Great Britain?

The Prime Minister: I cannot accept the latter part of my hon. Friend's question. As he knows, I believe that Union will certainly continue under the Agreement, so long as there is a majority and the majority expresses that wish. Devolved government has to be in accordance with the agreement, which is one that is acceptable to the two traditions in Northern Ireland. As my hon. Friend is aware, there was, in legislation about the Assembly, a possible means of securing much more decision-taking through the Assembly, through the two communities, than is at present the case.

Dr. Owen: In view of the widespread disquiet in the country and in the City about the situation affecting Lloyd's, and in the light of what has happened to its chief executive, how do the Government justify not placing Lloyd's under the new market investing board? Will the Prime Minister consider this issue again and also the need for a full-time chairman of considerable independence and stature to supervise this aspect of the City's behaviour, which many people feel the present legislation is inadequate to cover?

The Prime Minister: I should have thought that the right hon. Gentleman would be aware that Lloyd's had its own regulatory system and Act of Parliament, the Lloyd's Act 1982. It is too early to pass judgment on the effectiveness of the new regime. We believe that events at Lloyd's to which publicity had been given originated before the Act was passed, but we are keeping a close watch on events there and if it becomes necessary to take action or to legislate we shall not hesitate to do so.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): Will my right hon. Friend make it clear to the chairman of ICI and others who are calling for a lower exchange rate that if industry insists on raising wages so that its products become uncompetitive, the Government will not bail them out by reducing the exchange rate?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I shall make that very clear. That way does not lie increased and improved competitiveness. The only way is to have efficiency in the company, in costs, in design and in quality. No company should look to the exchange rate to secure competitiveness which it cannot itself produce.

Q5. **Mr. Dobson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Dobson: The Prime Minister told the House on Tuesday that there had to be losers in the social security review. Will she now say how many there will be, who they will be and how much they will lose?

The Prime Minister: If we were to bring in what the Labour party has plans for—*[Interruption.]*—the burden on the working population would be colossal. We reckon that national insurance contributions for people on average earnings would rise by £9 a week, so that about 20 million people would lose under Labour's plans.

Q6. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Taylor: If the Sikorsky deal goes through, as I hope it does, will the Prime Minister ensure that there will be no question of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence discriminating against the Westland company or any of its excellent products?

Will she convey to my right hon. Friend the Secretaryof State for the Environment the thanks of Southend borough council for the most favourable rate support grant settlement — *[Interruption.]* — which its efficiency deserves?

The Prime Minister: In respect of both parts of my hon. Friend's supplementary question I indicated the Cabinet's decision this morning, and I wish to make it clear that major procurement decisions are a matter for the collective decision of the Government as a whole. I thank my hon. Friend for what he said about the rate support grant. Any authority that spends efficiently and keeps its budget in line with assessed need gets its full grant, and its ratepayers may be very grateful.

Q7. **Mr. Gould** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Gould: Will the Prime Minister now answer the question that was put by my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson)? How many losers will there be under the social security review, who will they be and how much will they lose?

The Prime Minister: This Government have protected those most in need—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."]—and have increased, over and above prices, the retirement pension, supplementary benefit rates and benefits for the sick and the disabled—*[Interruption.]* They have all risen by considerably more than prices. The social security review must be taken as a whole. It is fair both to beneficiaries and the working population. As I said earlier, under arrangements that have been proposed by the Opposition, about 20 million of the working population would stand to lose through national insurance contribution increases.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: Does my right hon. Friend agree that whatever decision may ultimately be taken by the shareholders of Westland, it has at least flushed out the Labour party Front Bench into appearing to support the defence of this country?

The Prime Minister: The Labour party is supporting NATO and the defence of Britain. That is worth while, and a change of policy for some.

Mr. John Morris: In view of the recent track record of the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of Transport in the courts, will the Prime Minister say whether the Attorney-General's Department was consulted? To save taxpayers' money in future, will she co-ordinate the activities of the legal officers of those Departments and the Attorney-General's office?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. and learned Gentleman is correct. Yes, the Government have been before the courts and have abided by the decisions of the courts. That is what the rule of law is all about.

Mr. Kinnock: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise this matter while the Prime Minister is still present. During Prime Minister's Question Time we heard that the Cabinet had taken a decision regarding Westlands. Since this is a vital matter, may we have a further statement from the Government? Can the Prime Minister tell us whether such a statement will be made by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, or by the Secretary of State for Defence?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot answer that.

Mr. Dykes: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point arises directly from Question Time, when you called hon. Members for agriculture questions, shortly before the change of subject. The old custom was that you would be notified if hon. Members were not to be present. I know that it is just before Christmas, but, in one go, an unprecedented list of 10 hon. Members were not present. Do you have any observations on that?

Mr. Speaker: Only that that is the present custom also.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order Mr. Speaker. You will have heard, with the rest of us, the Prime Minister's dismissive view of the importance of housing. Does that attitude explain why the Secretary of State is today issuing by written answer the details of the housing investment programme rather than coming to the Dispatch Box to make a statement?

Mr. Speaker: That is a continuation of Question Time. It is not a matter for me.

Cervical Cancer (Screening)

3.32 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras) *(by private notice)* asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the current state of the cervical cancer screening programme.

The Minister for Health (Mr. Barney Hayhoe): The Government's plans for further improvements to health authority arrangements for cervical cancer screening were announced by my right hon. and learned Friend the then Minister of Health on 29 April 1985. As I told the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), health authorities are being asked to give priority to improving their cervical cancer screening programme. I expect arrangements to be made with family practitioner committees to implement computerised call and recall systems with the necessary laboratory service to meet the related demand and to avoid backlog. We are consulting the medical profession on better follow-up arrangements. Those measures should help to increase the number of women at risk who are screened, to provide for the processing of cervical smears taken from them and the necessary follow up.

The number of deaths from cervical cancer has fallen by about 13 per cent. during the past decade. Provisional 1984 figures suggest a further 3 per cent. fall. More can be achieved and to do that we need more women, especially those who have never been screened, to join the programme. The most effective way to achieve that is by personal invitations from women's general practitioners. Computerised systems will aid the identification of the women who are due for screening. That is the right way forward.

Mr. Dobson: Does the Minister expect anyone to be satisfied with that statement? Does he recall that on 18 March the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke), the former Minister for Health, told the House that the Government were soon to issue a questionnaire asking all health authorities for full details of local screening services. Yesterday, nine months and 1,500 deaths later, the Minister could not tell me when the survey was sent out, when the replies were received or whether it would be published. I ask him those questions again today.

Perhaps I should ask whether the questionnaire has been sent out at all. In the statement on 29 April to which the Minister has referred, the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe told the House that the Government intended to improve the effectiveness of laboratory facilities for processing cervical smears and would be discussing with health authorities how best to achieve that.

On 9 December, the Minister said that he could not list the authorities which had asked clinics or doctors to suspend taking smears because of backlogs in laboratories. On 11 December he said that he did not know the average time taken to process a smear through a laboratory. Also on 11 December, rather astonishingly, the Minister told me that he would not expect health authorities to express concern to him about delays in processing cervical smears. I wondered what had happened to the discussions announced with much publicity in April. Yesterday, the Minister told me that no specific discussions on that issue are now proposed.

The statements made in March and April were intended to convince people, in particular women, that something was being done to improve on the earlier shambles. Last night's "Newsnight Special" and the recent parliamentary answers show that nothing much is happening. So in addition to the specific questions that I have already asked I now demand the answer to the fundamental question: when will the Government commit themselves to finding the resources to introduce and operate computerised call and recall schemes to cover every woman at risk in Britain as recommended to them by their expert advisers in 1981? Nothing less than that will satisfy the women of Britain.

Mr. Hayhoe: As I have explained, district health authorities are being asked to give priority to those programmes. More computerised call and recall systems are coming on stream the whole time. At the moment, 50 per cent. of the family practitioner committees have the computer capability to operate the call and recall system. As I have said, district health authorities are under instruction from the centre to give priority to that work.

I made it clear yesterday that the questionnaire to which the hon. Gentleman referred was a checklist which was intended to enable health authorities to review their cervical screening programmes and that was issued on 29 April. We asked to have results back by 14 June. As I explained to the hon. Gentleman, the results and answers have come back and the information that was received was not designed for summary and publication but to help the centre in its work in that area.

The health authorities are being asked to give, and are giving, priority to providing the appropriate back-up so as to remove the backlog that regrettably exists in some areas and also to improve facilities for the future.

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): Is it not a fact that the only effective method of tracing women in high risk categories is through the computerised systems operated by district health authorities? If that is so, does my right hon. Friend not share with me some concern that the rate of progress between one district health authority and another shows a considerable variation? Does he have any plans to intervene to try to expedite the progress among those health authorities who seem to have slipped far behind in their programme? Is he satisfied that the financing of the computerised systems and the financial division between his Department and district health authorities is satisfactory and leads most efficiently to the operation of the system to which I suspect most hon. Members would wish to subscribe?

Mr. Hayhoe: On the matter of finance, my hon. Friend will know that the health authorities have, on average, 6·7 per cent. more cash plus the resources made available by cost improvement programmes. That is £650 million extra cash, plus a considerable sum, certainly exceeding £150 million a year, of cost improvement. Out of those extra resources cervical cancer screening is one of the priority claims.

I share the concern expressed by my hon. Friend about the difference in the provision of service for one part of the country and another. I assure him that is one of the matters dealt with in the reviews that my colleagues and I carry out. On the matter of health authorities, I believe that we shall be making considerable progress in implementing the call and recall system which, I agree with my hon. Friend, is the best way to deal with the

problem. Regular screening every five years is highly desirable. Personal invitation from the women's general practitioner is much more likely to be effective than a national advertising campaign, which I know is advocated in other areas.

Mrs. Renée Short (Wolverhampton, North-East): I am sure that the Minister will appreciate that, if the necessary cervical cancer screening programme is intensified, it will inevitably produce more patients who need treatment by radiology, radiotherapy or surgery. How does the Minister expect those additional patients to be treated when hospital resources are being reduced all over the country and most of the London teaching hospitals, which are in the front line of research in this area, are having to close their beds? Will he look at that issue and find out what resources the London teaching hospitals need?

Mr. Hayhoe: I accept the hon. Lady's comment about the increase of patients coming forward for treatment if the coverage of the screening programme becomes more widespread and effective. I hope that it will lead to more patients coming forward for early treatment which requires fewer resources than if the condition is not found early enough by the screening programme that we are now trying to encourage women to use more extensively.

I repudiate the hon. Lady's suggestion that resources are being cut. Under this Government, the resources made available for the Health Service have increased in real terms by 20 per cent. There is no way in which that can be described as a cut.

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): Does my right hon. Friend agree that, contrary to the statement made by the hon. Lady, the pressure on the National Health Service is not caused by cuts in Government programmes but by the advances in medical science that make so much more possible for the population? Within that growing demand, does he recognise the need in the allied field of screening for breast cancer in women where there is an increasing awareness of the risk that women run and a need for the availability of screening that can save so many lives?

Mr. Hayhoe: I agree with my hon. Friend's remark about the pressures on the Health Service. As we all know, the demand for health care is practically unlimited, yet the resources that can be made available to it must, of their nature, be limited. We are seeking to have an increase in real terms in resources going to the Health Service and an increasing cost improvement programme so that more resources are available for patient care. The statistics show that that is being fulfilled as we compare one year with another. I agree with my hon. Friend about the need for screening and preventive action across the whole spectrum of medicine.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): In view of what the Minister has said about resources, will he tell the House how much it costs per person to carry out a cervical screening test? Will he also tell the House whether he has read the recent criticisms of the accuracy of the test so that he can give an assurance about how accurate it really is?

Mr. Hayhoe: I do not know the precise cost of the test, but I shall write to the hon. Gentleman. I know that it is relatively small. It is not the cost of the test that is at issue. We are seeking to persuade the women concerned, particularly the priority group, the over-35s, to come forward to have the test. As I said, by far the best way to do that is for the invitation to come from the GP. That is why the computerised system of call and recall operated by the family practitioner committees is the best and most effective way of achieving that result.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): The Minister plainly has greater faith in the efficiency of GPs' surgeries than the rest of us have. Can he say in which Welsh area health authority areas backlogs exist?

I note that the Secretary of State for Wales is not here this afternoon. As the Minister will be aware, the Health Service in Wales is less democratic than it is in England or Scotland because there are no regional health authorities to plan overall health services. Can he give us detailed answers of where in Wales the backlog exists? Will he support the well woman clinics and give the necessary resources so that we can have more of them. That would help if he genuinely wants to track down cervical cancer in women.

Mr. Hayhoe: I agree with the hon. Lady that GPs play a crucial role in the call and recall programme for those tests. GPs' co-operation and involvement in those programmes is of the highest importance. I am not competent to reply about the position in Wales, but I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales to the point made by the hon. Lady.

Business of the House

3.46 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): Will the Leader of the House state the business for the first week after the Christmas Adjournment?

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): Yes, Sir. The business for the first week after the Christmas Adjournment will be as follows:

MONDAY 13 JANUARY—Second Reading of the Public Order Bill.

There will be a debate on a motion on seat belt regulations.

TUESDAY 14 JANUARY — Second Reading of the Financial Services Bill.

There will be a debate on a motion to take note of EC document 7283/85 relating to vehicle gaseous emissions.

WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY — Opposition Day (Third Allotted day). There will be a debate on an Opposition motion, the subject for debate to be announced.

Motion on the Statutory Sick Pay Up-rating Order.

THURSDAY 16 JANUARY—Until about seven o'clock there will be a debate on a motion to take note of EC documents relating to European fisheries policy. Details of the documents concerned will be given in the *Official Report*.

There will be a debate on the draft Hong Kong Nationality Order in Council (Cmnd. 9367) on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

Afterwards, motions on the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Continuance) (No. 3) Order and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order.

FRIDAY 17 JANUARY—Private Members' Bills.

[Debate on Tuesday 14 December
Relevant Documents

(a) 7283/85	*Vehicle gaseous emissions*

Relevant Report of European Legislation Committee
(a) HC 5-xxx (1984-85) paragraph 6

Debate on Thursday 16 January
Relevant Documents

(b) 9284/85	*Fishing controls*
(c) 8662/85	*Allocation of certain fishing possibilities to Spain*
(d) 10047/85	*Fish Guide Prices 1986*
(e) 10015/84	*Reduction of Spanish fishing capacity*
(f) Unnumbered	*Fisheries: Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas 1986*
(g) Unnumbered	*Fisheries: amended TACs and quotas 1986*
(h) Unnumbered	*Fisheries agreement with Norway 1986*

Relevant Report of European Legislation Committee
(b) HC 5-xxxi (1984-85) paragraph 2
(c) HC 5-xxx (1984-85) paragraph 12
(d) HC 21-i (1985-86) paragraph 3
(e) HC 5-vii (1984-85) paragraph 1
(f) HC 21-v (1985-86) paragraph 2
(g) HC 21-v (1985-86) paragraph 3
(h) HC 21-v (1985-86) paragraph 4]

Mr. Kinnock: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. As the Prime Minister did not find herself able to respond to the point of order that I raised earlier——

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): It was not a point of order.

Mr. Kinnock: You, Mr. Speaker, will be the judge of that. [HON. MEMBERS: "He was."] In view of the decision apparently taken by today's Cabinet, will the right hon. Gentleman arrange for a statement to be made to the House before we rise tomorrow by either the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry or the Secretary of State for Defence, or both, about the Government's current attitude towards the Westland deal and whether the Government are willing to accept the clear obligations of national interest which arise in that case?

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister said that the Roskill report on fraud trials, which contains 117 recommendations, was in the Government's possession. Will it be published in good time for the debate on the Financial Services Bill on 14 January? Why can it not be published now, or at least during the recess? It is clearly in a form which would enable it to be printed and published for the general consideration of hon. Members.

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Secretary of State for Scotland has today written to the stewards at Gartcosh, effectively tearing up the Select Committee report and glibly accepting British Steel's rather unconvincing view that the future of Ravenscraig is unaffected by the closure of Gartcosh? Does not the Secretary of State for Scotland owe the House an explanation of the way in which he is abandoning—[AN HON. MEMBER: "Cynically."] — indeed, cynically abandoning — steel workers and steel communities in Scotland? Can the right hon. Gentleman at least arrange for a statement to be made to the House tomorrow, before we rise for the Christmas recess?

In view of the Government's continuing failure to undertake any productive initiative in settling the teachers' pay dispute, will the right hon. Gentleman agree to a debate, in Government time, early in the new Session so that the House can ask the Secretary of State to account for his hapless attitude towards the profession, towards parents and, most of all, towards the pupils who are suffering as a result of the Government's intransigence and their lack of interest in the education system?

Now that the White Paper on the reform of social security has been published, when will legislation to implement those proposals be introduced? Are there any draft proposals to phase out heating additions for claimants, especially the elderly, on supplementary benefit?

Mr. Biffen: I shall respond to the right hon. Gentleman's questions in the sequence in which they were presented.

First, on the right hon. Gentleman's remarks about the Prime Minister confirming the statement made earlier this week on Westland by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, I can confirm that that statement was confirmed at a Cabinet meeting this morning. I do not think that there is anything devastatingly

novel about such a revelation, but I shall have the matter considered further through the usual channels to see whether it is to feature in our business before we retire for the Christmas recess. I say in all sincerity to the right hon. Gentleman — *[Interruption.]* It gets better as we go along. I shall do my utmost to ensure that the House has the advantage of possessing the Roskill report before the Second Reading of the Financial Services Bill. It is a fairly formidable document, but I do not think that it is in quite the advanced stage suggested in the right hon. Gentleman's question. As to the right hon. Gentleman's interpretation of my right hon. Friend's remarks, I think that that covers the full spectrum, but of course I shall look into the matter.

On the question of Gartcosh, I must confess that I was not entirely able to recognise from the right hon. Gentleman's comments the position of and the role being played by my right hon. Friend th Secretary of State for Scotland. However, I know that in this, as in all matters, one should proceed charitably. I shall look into the matter about the Select Committee report and, through the usual channels, consider whether an early statement, is appropriate.

I am sure that we all recognise the very serious position that is developing through the protracted industrial action being undertaken by the teaching profession. Perhaps we could look at the question of a debate through the usual channels.

I assure the right hon. Gentleman that legislation will be introduced setting out the proposals of the White Paper on the social services reasonably soon after we reassemble following the Christmas recess."

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): My right hon. Friend will be aware that there is considerable interest in the Shops Bill and the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill. I appreciate that they are now in their final stages in another place. Will he give some rough indication of when they are likely to arrive here for their Second Reading—sooner or later?

Mr. Biffen: There are some lively competitors for our time and affection in the period from mid-January onwards. I cannot answer my hon. Friend in the specific terms that he desires, but if he presses the matter when we return perhaps I can then give him a more forthcoming reply.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): The Leader of the House knows from last night's debate on the motion for the Christmas Adjournment that there is very deep concern in the north-west about the future control and operation of Manchester international airport. The right hon. Gentleman agreed to communicate urgently to the Secretary of State for Transport the call for an oral statement today about the airport's future. How did the right hon. Gentleman get on? Would it not be grossly contemptuous of the House for the airport's future to be decided without any opportunity for hon. Members to question the Government's decision?

Mr. Biffen: I undertook, as the right hon. Gentleman says, to communicate to my right hon. Friend the sense of the first of the debates on the Adjournment motion. I take note of his remarks about the importance of the House taking a view before the decision is taken. I shall convey that observation to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): Has my right hon. Friend noticed the increasing pressure from many reputable organisations and from all quarters of the House for the establishment of family courts? Can my right hon. Friend provide an opportunity to debate the matter early in the new year?

Mr. Biffen: I shall certainly take note of my hon. Friend's observation. I cannot be very forthcoming about guaranteeing such time, although I recognise the importance of the issue.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): May I take the right hon. Gentleman back to his first reply on whether there should be a statement tomorrow on Westland? The right hon. Gentleman has great mollifying qualities but he must understand that an intolerable state of affairs exists. Is the Secretary of State for Defence holding a press conference at this moment to repudiate what has been said by a Minister in the House? Will the right hon. Gentleman give us on his own account, and without the wisdom of the usual channels, an absolute assurance that there will be a statement on the matter tomorrow?

Mr. Biffen: The right hon. Gentleman, for so many years of his distinguished career, was part of the usual channels. He knows that there is no wisdom superior to that of the usual channels.

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): I should like to draw my right hon. Friend's attention to early-day motion No. 277, which raises the matter of the chief constable of Greater Manchester.

[That this House views with grave disquiet the outrageous treatment of the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester by the politically-motivated action of the Greater Manchester Police Committee in seeking to censure him for exercising his right of free speech.]

May I impress upon my right hon. Friend that any inquiry into that matter is unlikely to report before Greater Manchester county goes out of existence? Such an inquiry would be a total waste of ratepayers' money and there are some who feel that it would be a cynical way in which to promote the chairman of the Manchester police committee, Mrs. Gabriella Cox, in her search for a safe Labour seat on Manchester city council. In view of the great public concern in the area and the anger that has been aroused by the treatment of the chief constable, can there be an early debate on the matter?

Mr. Biffen: I shall certainly draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to the arguments advanced by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Will the Leader of the House not agree that it is both deplorable and regrettable that the family of a child that was deafened and brain-damaged in a medical accident should have to spend nine years fighting in a court of law for compensation for that child? In Britain we need a no-fault compensation scheme, as they have in other countries. Can we have a debate on that matter as soon as possible?

Mr. Biffen: I join at once with the right hon. Gentleman in acknowledging the poignancy of the case that he quoted and I shall consider his request. I cannot guarantee that Government time will be available for such a debate in the new year, but doubtless there are other opportunities available to the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Fred Silvester (Manchester, Withington): May I urge my right hon. Friend not to let his natural good will and Christmas spirit lead him to pay too much attention to the siren voice of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), as the matter of Manchester airport is now properly in the hands of the districts of Greater Manchester council. It would be most improper to have any statement or debate while decisions are being made.

Mr. Biffen: I had the advantage of listening to the problems as they were rehearsed last night by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris). When listening to him, I thought that there was possibly a degree of controversy. The remarks which I have addressed to the right hon. Gentleman must stand.

Mr. James Hamilton (Motherwell, North): The Leader of the House is aware that serious redundancies in the British Steel Corporation in my constituency are imminent, and he will recall that I raised the matter with him last week. Bearing in mind that the right hon. Gentleman has been asked that a statement should be made by the Secretary of State for Scotland on the situation which has arisen over Gartcosh and Ravenscraig, and that the Secretary of State has conveniently washed his hands of responsibility, is it not incumbent on the Secretary of State to make a statement tomorrow against the background of chaos in the Scottish steel industry?

Mr. Biffen: I think that the hon. Gentleman will have heard me say that it is a matter which could be pursued through the usual channels, and by those remarks I stand. The Department of Trade and Industry will be available for questions on Wednesday 15 January and the hon. Gentleman will have a chance to make some of his points then.

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, after the signing of the research programme by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and Caspar Weinberger a short time ago, we are fully committed to involving ourselves in the research programme? Is there not a case to be made for a debate on this subject? Practically every other Parliament in Europe has had a debate on the strategic defence initiative and many of the myths need to be cleared from this subject.

Mr. Biffen: I join my hon. Friend in underlining the significance of the decision on SDI. I cannot offer the prospect of an early debate in Government time after we return, but doubtless my hon. Friend will have other opportunities that he can pursue.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): The Leader of the House has given an assurance over the past three weeks that he will try to provide time to debate the creation of an Anglo-Irish parliamentary tier. How long will it be before we have a chance to have that debate?

Mr. Biffen: No, I cannot. This is a matter which will require a fairly thoughtful approach. Perhaps some discussions can proceed initially through the usual channels. I shall be in touch with the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): May I refer my right hon. Friend again to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) about the disgraceful attempt by the Left-wing loonies of Greater Manchester to attack the chief constable of that area? Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the chief constable has a fine record of service to the police force? Is it not appropriate that the House should have an opportunity of debating the matter at a very early date?

Mr. Biffen: I think that the record and integrity of the chief constable is so self-evident that it hardly needs debating in the Chamber.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Does the Leader of the House recall that it was October when the Select Committee on Privileges published its report on the confidentiality of deliberations of Select Committees of the House? Does he not think that it is about time that we had a debate on this issue? Is he not aware of the most recent complaints that have been made concerning the Select Committee on the Environment? Is not a debate required urgently?

Mr. Biffen: I am not sure that there is an urgency which is comparable with the pressures which exist for many other subjects to be debated. As I was the Chairman of the Select Committee which produced the report, I have all the pride of paternity, but that does not mean that I think it has to exclude other items that should be debated. *[Interruption.]* I think that the right hon. Gentleman was about the only Privy Councillor who was not a member of the Select Committee. Therefore, I think that his remark is wholly appropriate.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): My right hon. Friend will be aware of the concern that is felt in Scotland over the outcome of the inquiry of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs into the proposed closure of Gartcosh. Is he aware of the final sentence in the Committee's report, which asks the Secretary of State to review the situation in the light of the evidence presented to the Committee? Anyone who cares to study the evidence—there is a substantial amount of it—will realise that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland came up clearly with the correct answer in view of the evidence which the Select Committee accepted.

Mr. Biffen: I am most grateful to have my hon. Friend's interpretation of the findings of the departmental Select Committee. Probably, this last week before Christmas is the only occasion on which he might get away with it. I shall leave it at that.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): Is the Leader of the House aware of the strength of feeling in Scotland about the threat to the future of its integrated steel industry? Is he aware especially of the massive public support for the resistance of the work force at Gartcosh? Now that even the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, with its distorted representation, has come out in favour of the retention of Gartcosh, can we have an assurance that there will be a statement from the Secretary of State for Scotland?

Mr. Biffen: Obviously, the hon. Gentleman is anxious to place upon the record a rather different interpretation of the Select Committee's report from that of my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker). I take account of the serious nature of the problem for the Scottish economy and the deep feelings that are engaged by it. I have said that the matter could be considered through the usual channels, and I think that I must stand by that.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Will my right hon. Friend consider giving the House an opportunity to debate prisons and prison buildings? Is he aware that there are 46,900 people in prison and that, although there is some overcrowding, the Government, through the Home Office, have come up with the idea of super-prisons whereby Milton Keynes and Doncaster prisoners will be given the opportunity to have their own individual separate rooms with en suite bathrooms? Does he agree with me that prisons should deter and that they should not be regarded as luxury holiday homes?

Mr. Biffen: I suspect that my hon. Friend, like myself, had the advantage of listening to the "Today" programme. I think that that programme brought home the fact that the issue which he has raised is highly topical. I must confess that I can hold out no immediate prospect of a debate upon it in Government time. I recommend that my hon. Friend seeks to pursue the matter through the various other opportunities that are available to a Back-Bench Member.

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): Has the Leader of the House had an opportunity to note early-day motion 262, which I and a number of my hon. Friends bring to the attention of the House?

[That this House regrets that the United States of America now has congressional authority to develop new chemical weapons in 1987; notes that this approval is dependent upon the agreement of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies; calls upon the Secretary of State for Defence to withhold his agreement and demands that he encourages his counterparts in other North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries to do likewise.]

The motion brings to the attention of the House that the President of the United States of America has Congressional authority to develop a new range of chemical weapons commencing in 1987. This is dependent upon the support of the NATO allies. Will the right hon. Gentleman make time available to debate this important issue in view of the widespread public abhorrence of these obscene weapons?

Mr. Biffen: I shall, of course, draw the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the point that the hon. Gentleman makes, which I know is one of considerable general interest.

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the attacks on the chief constable of Manchester are but symptomatic of attacks elsewhere by Left-wing authorities which are seeking to undermine the independence of the police and public confidence in them? Will he take an opportunity at an early stage for the House to assert its full support for the police and their operational independence in future?

Mr. Biffen: I acknowledge what my hon. Friend has said and share his deep regard for the work and integrity of our police forces. I do not think that I can add to the answers which I have already given on this subject.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Did the Leader of the House notice that, when he read out the business for the week when we return after Christmas, no members of the Social Democratic party were present? Bearing in mind the difficulties of the Christmas post and the sending of the Whip to SDP members, would it not be a good idea if the right hon. Gentleman made a special effort to ensure that they know of the business that will be before the House when we return?

Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure also that the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth), who has recently taken on a paid parliamentary consultancy with Barclays Bank—the bank operates in South Africa, which Social Democrats regard as a repugnant regime—is made aware that the House will be debating the Second Reading of the Financial Services Bill on Tuesday 14 January, and that he can come and explain what he is doing? When the leader of the Liberal party, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), was talking about Members taking other jobs and moonlighting, his mate in the SDP, the hon. Member for Stockton, South, was picking up several thousand pounds for a moonlighting job for Barclays. We would like to hear explanations from the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) is in grave danger of becoming a matinée idol. He has made some shrewd and constructive observations about the gap between the smug rhetoric of the leaders of the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party and the rather lacklustre performance in the Division during the debate on Members' interests. I understand that many of my hon. Friends do not know whether those right hon. Gentlemen were in the television studios or on the ballroom floor, but, in either place, that is no way to lead a great political campaign.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): Returning to the question of Gartcosh, has the Leader of the House seen the letter that the Secretary of State for Scotland wrote to the convener of the shop stewards, which was written on the same day as the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs reported and which repudiated that report? Since when have Select Committee reports been dealt with in that way by the Government? Is this not a disgraceful way in which to behave?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Secretary of State for Scotland has said over recent months that, if he were presented with evidence, he would carefully consider it? Was not the behaviour of the Secretary of State yesterday a demonstration that that was a complete sham? The right hon. Gentleman has not considered the evidence. He has gone against the overwhelming evidence to the Select Committee which was brought out in its endorsement of the evidence in its recommendations. It is no good the Leader of the House saying that we can wait until 15 January to ask questions of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Decisions may have been taken by that time. Will the Leader of the House give an absolute assurance that we shall have a statement and a debate before the Government take any final decision on Gartcosh? There is overwhelming support in Scotland for the retention of Gartcosh. We want it to be retained. We do not want anything to happen by default through Government decisions taken while the House is in recess.

Mr. Biffen: In my experience, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is a courteous and most fair-minded man. I cannot conceive that he fits the description that is sought to be applied to him. This matter can be pursued through the usual channels.

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): Will the right hon. Gentleman reflect on the Prime Minister's words during Prime Minister's questions this afternoon when she said that the three years between the passing of the Lloyd's Bill and the scandals of today were not long enough to judge the effectiveness of that legislation? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this contrasts with the fact that yesterday at 3.30 pm the all-party Select Committee on Scottish Affairs concluded that there was a link between the future of Gartcosh and Ravenscraig; yet, on the same day, the Secretary of State for Scotland chose to pre-empt the evidence and the Select Committee's conclusions by rejecting them in advance?

Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that this will be seen in Scotland as a betrayal of everything that the Secretary of State has said about considering all the evidence on its merits? Will he ensure that the British Steel Corporation makes no irreversible decision before the House has had a chance to debate the conclusions of a very fair-minded report from the Select Committee?

Mr. Biffen: The observations of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on the Lloyd's legislation were grounded in monumental common sense. I note what the hon. Gentleman has said about the Gartcosh closure and the Select Committee's report. I can only repeat what I have said in respect of the matter being considered through the usual channels.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the return to the United Kingdom of Mr. Bob Astles, who was the right-hand man of that odious murderer Idi Amin? He has been allowed — apparently without much question — to return to this country. Is it correct that he has applied for renewal of his British citizenship? If so, will the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that that will not be granted without the House having the opportunity to debate the request? Many hon. Members on both sides of the House would regard Mr. Astles as a most unwelcome member of our citizenry.

Mr. Biffen: There is little that I can say in my capacity as Leader of the House about Mr. Bob Astles. I note the hon. and learned Gentleman's observations and will ensure that his remarks are put to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the otherwise excellent report by the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs was marred by its concluding paragraph, which did not flow from an objective view of the evidence? Will my right hon. Friend make arrangements whereby hon. Members may be encouraged to read not only the report but the evidence to the Committee? If that were done, we would not hear the kind of remarks made by the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) and the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson).

Mr. Biffen: I well understand my hon. Friend's point. It puts many of the Opposition's remarks into context. Clearly, this is a matter of great concern in Scotland. It is a matter of controversy. It can be considered through the usual channels.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): May I thank the Leader of the House for the kind words he uttered——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) has breached privilege.

Mr. Henderson: No—it has been published.

Mr. Clarke: I do not often get the chance to speak, and I would be grateful if my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) would be quiet.

I thank the Leader of the House for the kind words he uttered to my constituents last week. Notwithstanding that, they are still confused. They cannot understand why a Select Committee could present, with an overwhelming majority, a recommendation to the House and why that recommendation has not been debated. In spite of that, the Secretary of State for Scotland has issued a letter. Is it not normal practice for a Select Committee to receive a formal response from the Secretary of State? Does that letter not therefore pre-empt the rights of the House? Is this not a serious matter?

Mr. Biffen: In no sense does it pre-empt the rights of the House. I must ask the hon. Gentleman to observe just what are the relationships between Select Committees and the Executive. The matter can of course be considered through the usual channels. I made that remark very early on in response to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the right hon. Gentleman turn up the *Daily Telegraph* of 3 December in which he can find an article written by Blake Baker headlined

"MPs ready to greet dubious immigrants"

which is stacked with information compiled by the immigration service management and members of the private office of the Minister of State, Home Office? Will the right hon. Gentleman note that I have tabled a question to the Home Secretary asking him to refer that article to the Director of Public Prosecutions with a view to ascertaining whether it breaches the Official Secrets Act?

Will the right hon. Gentleman note that it is now six weeks since the Minister of State, Home Office, made serious allegations against a number of hon. Members with regard to representations to the Home Office? Will he note also that the Home Secretary is now talking about preparing a code of practice for Members making such representations? Is it not high time that we had an opportunity for a debate so that this important matter could be discussed by all hon. Members of all parties who are concerned about the issue behind these serious allegations?

Mr. Biffen: I note that a question to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has been tabled, and doubtless the hon. Gentleman will receive the answer in due course. It would be improper for me to try to anticipate that answer. I have noted what the hon. Gentleman has said. I cannot hold out the hope of an early debate, but the hon. Gentleman will have seen that a written answer was tabled on this topic earlier this week.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): As the Secretary of State for Defence has contradicted everything that was said on Monday about Westland by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, and as the Secretary of State for Defence has argued his case publicly at every opportunity, including yesterday to the Select Committee on Defence, will the Leader of the House recognise the importance of a further statement on Westland being made before we break for the recess? As the only opportunity is tomorrow, will the right hon. Gentleman give serious consideration to the requests by hon. Members, including myself, for such a statement to be made?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman portrays a total caricature of the remarks made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on this matter and the collective statement on behalf of the Government by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and by the Prime Minister. But, of course, he will have noted how I responded to the Leader of the Opposition, and he would not expect me to respond in a more forthcoming manner to him than I would to his leader.

Fisheries Council

4.20 pm

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the Fisheries Council which I attended with my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Scottish Office, on 16 and 17 December.

I have already given the House my right hon. Friend's apologies for his absence. He is attending a Council meeting in Brussels.

I am delighted to be able to report that, for the second year in succession, the Council was able to reach political agreement before the start of the year on a package of total allowable catches and quotas for the Ten in 1986. This was subject only to a waiting reserve by Ireland. As last year, we agreed to the package on a temporary basis pending a debate in this House, which I hope can be arranged shortly after the Christmas recess.

The agreement covers all the stocks for which TACs and quotas are currently set and we were able to achieve a package which is highly satisfactory for the United Kingdom. The TACs had to be based for the joint stocks on the agreement which the European Commission had reached with Norway and I was critical of some aspects of that agreement, notably on herring. But in general, the package of TACs, quotas and third country arrangements which we negotiated offers a particularly attractive range of fishing opportunities for United Kingdom fishermen. On North sea whitefish stocks, the package contains significant increases in our haddock and saithe quotas and improvements in the quotas originally proposed for cod, plaice and sole. We successfully resisted Danish pressure for continuation of the special allocation of cod to Denmark outside the TAC. On North sea pelagic species, we obtained from the agreed proposals and some further bilateral exchanges an increase of nearly one third in our herring quotas in the important northern and central North sea areas and a very useful increased mackerel quota in the North sea.

In the case of the western pelagic stocks, the original quotas for mackerel and herring were increased, but in the outcome were still, as they should be in view of the scientific advice, below last year's levels. Sole and plaice stocks are of particular importance in the south-west. I am glad to say that, as a result of the package negotiated and the associated quota exchanges, we were able to secure increases of about one third in the availability of sole in area VII and about 10 per cent. for plaice. We also obtained an immediate increase in our current quota for plaice in the Bristol channel which will allow the fishery to be reopened for the rest of the year.

This adds up to a very satisfactory settlement indeed, but it was all overshadowed by the danger of the Commission proposal for an increase in the Norway pout by-catch derogation which could have done immense damage to our industry and to conservation. We have fought against this for the past six months and I am relieved and delighted to report that this proposal was excluded from the package and the Commission has now withdrawn it.

Lastly, the Council also agreed a series of improvements to the regulation on the control of fishing

[Mr. John Selwyn Gummer]

activities which should provide for better enforcement of logbooks and landing declarations as well as better control of transhipments to receiving vessels. This is further evidence of the importance which all Fisheries Ministers are now attaching to more effective control of the fisheries.

I hope that the House will have an opportunity to debate this settlement very shortly after the Christmas recess. I have no hesitation in commending this package to the House.

Mr. Stuart Randall (Kingston upon Hull, West): May I first thank the Minister for coming to the House and giving his statement on the Fisheries Council. We on the Opposition Benches are pleased that an agreement on TACs and on quotas has been reached at the beginning of the year. We also accept the notion to which the Minister referred in his statement, that determination of the size of quotas and TACs should be based on scientific advice. We accept, therefore, that from time to time restrictions for genuine conservation purposes are necessary.

Is the Minister not aware that many British people, especially those who work in the fishing industry, regard the way in which other EEC countries have over-fished certain stocks as grotesque and totally unacceptable to British fishermen? Will the Minister give some assurances that these unfair practices will be discontinued? We believe it is vital to discuss new quotas, especially limitations, in combination with measures on protection, inspection and enforcement.

I believe that the Minister's statement was inadequate as far as protection and enforcement is concerned. I invite the Minister to attempt to convince the House that we shall not continue the same old routine of the other EEC countries ripping off our fishing industry while the Government are unable to deliver any satisfactory solution. Is he aware that many people in the industry believe that the Community and the British Government have failed to keep their policy on enforcement intact? The Opposition are disappointed that the Minister has been unable to say anything substantial on the matter at this important time of announcing the 1986 quotas.

Will the Minister tell the House specifically whether the illegal over-fishing by the Dutch has been stamped out? Will he give the House and the British fishing industry a categoric assurance that this illegal over-fishing has been stopped? If it has not been stopped, will the Minister tell the House exactly what he intends to do about it?

Will the Minister also tell us how we can be sure that British fishermen will not lose out to other EEC fishermen in 1986 when it can be argued that member states do not have the political will to carry out in full their responsibilities for applying and enforcing Community law? Is it not time that the Government did more to protect the British fishing industry?

The Minister will be aware, I am sure, that certain parts of the industry that operate in the North sea fishery catch appreciably less haddock and are much more reliant on the cod quota. Does he not realise that these new cod quotas will produce considerable hardship for fishermen in these areas? What does the Minister have to say to the people in these areas because it is a matter of great concern?

Will the Minister accept that much tougher protection, enforcement and inspection procedures are vital if the Community conservation policy is to remain intact? Does he not agree that the accession of Spain and Portugal will increase pressures on our existing enforcement resources? Will he further accept that this is not the time to reduce the function of our fisheries protection service by phasing out the Nimrods? Would it not have been preferable to establish better enforcement before taking this step? What steps is the Minister taking to compensate British industry for the cuts in some quotas by taking advantage on a Community basis of the agreements that Spain and Portugal already have with other countries outside the EEC? What scope is there for providing new fishing opportunities for British fishermen in this way?

Finally, is the Minister aware that the British fishing industry is very angry at the way in which the EEC Commission has agreed to give Norway, which is not a member of the EEC, 40 per cent. of the North sea herring stocks? Does he not agree that this is very unfair, especially at a time when British fishermen are having to cope with cuts in certain quotas? Can this not be thought of as a sell-out to Norway?

Mr. Gummer: It was a little less than generous of the hon. Gentleman to pose so many questions without starting off by admitting that this is a remarkably good result in the negotiations for the United Kingdom. I was also surprised that he did not say that we actually won the battle over Norway pout, something the Opposition always believed we could not do and would not stand by. He went on to complain about protection when, indeed, I said in the statement that at yet another meeting the Council has moved forward on the protection and control arrangements of the common fisheries policy.

The British Government have got the Inspectorate of Inspectors, have extended that inspectorate so that it will have 21 soon and have pressed upon other nations the need for control. We can look with satisfaction at the way in which, for example, the Dutch Government have so tightened up their policies that the Dutch fishermen are busy chasing their Government to complain about the strictness of the new regulations. The story of Britain's campaign for a better system of control in the European Community fisheries policies is a remarkably good story for the Government and one on which the hon. Gentleman should congratulate us.

It is not fair to suggest that we have not been concerned about enforcement. I can give the House the news, which will interest the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon), that from 1 January, in the south-western approaches, there will be two fishery protection vessels and some extra Nimrod runs, increasing direct control of our protection. We have computerised the new monthly list of the Spanish boats that come to the area and we shall be able to check automatically and rapidly on any boat that comes in.

We now have a common arrangement with the Irish and French Governments to see that the protection arrangement is enforced together, so that we can give each other information about the movements of Spanish boats within the area. I am sure that that will help the House if it has any concern about the control of this part of the common fisheries policy.

As to the accession of Spain and Portugal, there will be further discussions of the arrangement for the fishing policy for the Twelve. One of the issues that will be discussed will be the results of the special arrangements that come about because of previous agreements between

Spain and such countries as Mauritania and Morocco. Those are very much in the hands of the Commission, which is looking at how best such arrangements can be applied.

No one can be more concerned about enforcement than we. I mentioned the measures that the British Government have taken and the strong measures taken by the Danish Government. A number of other Governments have taken measures to ensure that their fishermen abide by the common fisheries policy. If they do not, we shall continue the policy of pressing hard to make the policy work, a course of action that has been successful up to now.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Is my right hon. Friend aware that of the many things that are helpful to fishermen in the statement, the one that Scottish fishermen will most particularly welcome is that concerning the pout box, which is helpful to many Scottish fishermen in the North sea? What can my right hon. Friend do to stiffen the back of the European Community in its negotiations with Norway, which are of great importance to fishermen on the east coast of Scotland? There is a growing feeling that, although we are getting satisfactory arrangements within the EC on fishing matters, there is some weakness in the Community in facing up to getting satisfactory arrangements with the Norwegians, although there is a wide basis on which there could be a more satisfactory agreement with Norway.

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that my hon. Friend puts the case properly when he suggests that the agreement with Norway is not as good as it could or should have been. It is easy to criticise negotiations that are not carried out by ourselves, but the agreement should have been better. We have managed, within the Community agreement and the swaps that we have arranged, to ensure that our fishermen have a proper amount of herring to go after. However, there is no doubt that they feel hard done by because the Norwegians appear to have had a better deal than was necessary, and we believe that the deal should not have been carried out in the way that it was. We have made this position clear and have been joined in that by other countries. I assure my hon. Friend that I shall do everything that I can to make sure that in future negotiations those points are borne strongly in mind.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): In the past 10 or 11 years I have listened to various Ministers of various Governments use various descriptions, all of which included something along the lines of, "the importance that all fishery Ministers are now attaching to more effective control of fisheries". However, throughout that time, with the single exception of herring, the position on most types of fish has become worse.

Although on first examination this statement seems a little more acceptable, does the Minister agree that, if factory boats from Russia, Bulgaria and Egypt are still allowed to go to the east coast of Scotland, as they were allowed to go the coast of Cornwall, the mackerel of Scotland will be as rare as it is in my part of the world, and the stock will inevitable be annihilated? Is not the answer in the long term European negotiations to the effect that the people who rely on the fishing from their own ports are made primarily responsible for the conservation measures of their area? Does he agree that the pressure from those who wish to maintain a long-term income for their community and family is the pressure most likely to solve this problem?

Mr. Gummer: There have been major improvements in the control service in the past couple of years, and the hon. Gentleman will agree that there have been encouraging actions from a number of Governments, so much so that a number of Governments are under considerable pressure from fishing fleets because of the toughness of the action that they have taken. We are pleased about that because it shows that they are acting as we intend them to act and as they are now bound to act because of the inspectorate and the way in which the system works.

In Holland, Denmark and other countries there has been a major improvement. During this negotiation, we have added to what we did last time and the time before and insisted on further ways to ensure that the Community imposes its will, particularly in conservation. We have been tough in supporting conservation measures and as a result have ensured the removal, for example, of the Commission's proposal of the Norway pout bycatch, entirely because of the conservation reason that we put forward. It meant that, although we started off isolated as the only country that did not want an extension of the derogation, we ended up by having the support of a large number of other countries which saw our conservation case. This is one sector of the European Community in which there have been significant advances in the way in which the Community can operate successfully.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): The right hon. Gentleman is full of praise for his Department's cleverness, but he omitted to mention the disastrous fact that the allocation of North sea cod is 17 per cent. down on our catch this year and 30 per cent. down on our quota this year. This has serious, if not disastrous, consequences for Grimsby, which is a cod port whose vessels are overwhelmingly suited for catching cod. If the reduction is inevitable, what proposals does the Minister have for the Grimsby fishermen who are struggling, are not making a return adequate to provide new investment and will face horrendous financial difficulties if the catches go down? The Department allocated £16·9 million compensation for hill farmers for the sopping summer that we had earlier this year, but what compensation will be given to fishermen for the reduction in the cod quota?

What attempt did the Minister make to get Britain a bigger allowance within the total allowable catch if that is to be reduced? We provide most of the fishing area. What proposals has the Minister, if there is to be this reduction, for conservation measures that will rebuild the cod stocks in the North sea? Does he have proposals for closure for spawning, or for the increased mesh sizes, or for increased landing sizes to safeguard the stock and allow it to be built up to a safe level again?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman would do his constituents more good if he started by saying that the future of the cod fishing industry depends on the protection of the stock and that the reduction of Britain's quota is to give the fishermen of Grimsby a future for themselves and their children. If he were to support what the Government have done, and the fact that they have gained from the arrangement a fairly creditable amount of the available stock, that would be better. We have all had to take a cut

[Mr. Gummer]

because it is necessary to protect the hon. Gentleman's constituents. It would do the hon. Gentleman and his constituents more good to fight for an understanding by fishermen of the need for conservation and thus for smaller quotas this year. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) spent much time asking the question and I shall answer. If he is not satisfied, he will ask me about the matter again. If we are to help his constituents, we must protect the cod for the future, and that means a low quota this year.

I know that this causes great difficulty in Grimsby and the other cod fishing ports. We have managed to find alternative fish in the share-out, especially haddock. I know that this is not what the fishermen of Grimsby would wish. In the circumstances, however, it is the best deal that we can get and still protect the cod for the future. I am sure that, in those terms, the hon. Gentleman's constituents, if not the hon. Gentleman, will support what we are trying to do.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): May I point out to the Minister that the presence of Russian and other east European factory fishing vessels in Scottish waters, as mentioned by the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon), is welcomed by the Scottish fishing industry? Those vessels do not fish but rather buy the fish caught by Scottish fishing vessels. I am glad that the hon. Member for Truro now agrees with that. Several Opposition Members have actively supported the need to reduce the bycatch in industrial fishing. I have argued and will continue to argue that industrial fishing must be severely reduced in the North sea and elsewhere.

The deregulation news is good news. I am not sure that the expansion of the inspectorate to 21 members is good enough, considering the expansion of the fishing effort by EEC vessels with the accession of Spain.

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman is right in his assessment of what is happening in Scottish waters. I agree that he has a distinguished record in pushing for the reduction in the bycatch and for giving credit where it is due.

We are talking about the Inspectorate of Inspectors. One does not need a vast army of inspectors. One needs enough to ensure that the national inspectorates work, and, in Britain as in other countries, ensure that foreign nations fish properly within our traditional waters. I do not think that sheer numbers are the problem. We have had a major increase, and we shall have to see how that works.

As to the accession of Spain and Portugal, of their 300 ships, only 150 will be allowed to fish at any one time in the waters with which we are most concerned. The hon. Gentleman will see that that is not a substantial expansion of Spanish efforts—it is an expansion of the methods of control of that effort. The Spanish will have to work within the regime of the Community. Spain will have to give a monthly list of ships to the United Kingdom beforehand, as well as to France and Ireland. We will have notification of every ship as it reaches the point where it will start fishing. We will be able to keep close control and the vessels will have to adhere to all the logbook arrangements, which are increasingly tough in the Community. The hon. Gentleman should be able to tell his fishing constituents that we can control the Spanish to an extent which has never been possible before.

Gartcosh

4.43 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order arises from the exchanges between my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) and the Leader of the House relating to the closure of Gartcosh.

In those exchanges, we learnt that a letter had been sent from the office of the Secretary of State for Scotland, signed by the private secretary, to the convener of the trade union committee at Gartcosh. That letter referred to the report of the Select Committee and in paragraph 2 stated that the shop stewards put their view to the committee that "the link between Gartcosh and Ravenscraig was such that if the British Steel Corporation went ahead with their intention to close Gartcosh, then the closure of Ravenscraig would inevitably follow. You gave Mr. Younger papers in support of the arguments which you and your colleagues had developed at the meeting."

Part of paragraph 6 states:

"The overriding factor in persuading Mr. Younger to come to his decision has been the clear and firm statements by the Corporation that Ravenscraig's future is not prejudiced by the intended closure of Gartcosh, particularly in evidence to the Select Committee."

The Secretary of State and his private secretary had referred to the impending reply by the Government to that Select Committee. Mr. Speaker knows, as does the rest of the House, that such replies are Command Papers. Select Committees expect and usually get from the Government the respect that is due to them. My point is that the terms of this letter pre-empt any considered reply by the Government to that Select Committee. The fact that the letter is dated the day of that report downgrades and pre-empts the report and, in some respects, shows discourtesy not only to the Committee but to the House, which allocated duties to that Committee. Does that not require a comment from you, Mr. Speaker, as upholder of the rights of Back-Bench Members and the House and later, perhaps at an appropriate time, comment from the Leader of the House?

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Is it on the same point of order?

Mr. Walker: Yes, Sir. I draw attention to the problems of the members of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs and the uncertainties created by the activities of its Chairman. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) advised the House on the Wednesday evening that the Chairman and the Labour members of the Committee had asked to be removed from it. Further to that, the Chairman put forward proposals on Scottish radio and television—I did not see the television programme—and in the press. The Chairman proposed to call a meeting of the Select Committee—he did so on a radio programme in which I took part.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot answer for radio programmes.

Mr. Walker: It followed that the Committee had received only 48 hours' notice of this meeting. Consequently some members of the Committee were unable to be present. I wish your guidance, Mr. Speaker, on how hon. Members serving on Select Committees and other Members of this House can be protected from such uncertainty. We did not know whether the Committee was going, running or existing. Those of us who take our duties

seriously, particularly our duties on Select Committees, are worried about what happened. It is not surprising that the Secretary of State was equally uncertain what was happening.

Mr. Speaker: May I answer both questions, but separately. I say to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), who raised this matter on behalf of his hon. Friend, that if, as he is alleging, the Secretary of State for Scotland has been discourteous to the Committee, that is a matter for the Committee to take up with the Secretary of State. It is not a matter for me.

The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) will know, as he has been in the House for a long time, that this Select Committee was appointed on the recommendation of the Committee of Selection and that only it can recommend that an hon. Gentleman be taken off a Committee. It is not a matter for me.

Royal Assent

Mr. Speaker: I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 3) Act 1985.
2. European Communities (Spanish and Portuguese Accession) Act 1985.
3. Northern Ireland (Loans) Act 1985.
4. Fraserburgh Harbour Order Confirmation Act 1985.
5. Fraserburgh Harbour (No. 2) Order Confirmation Act 1985.
6. Fraserburgh Harbour (No. 3) Order Confirmation Act 1985.
7. Okehampton Bypass (Confirmation of Orders) Act 1985.

BILL PRESENTED

DRUG TRAFFICKING OFFENCES

Mr. Secretary Hurd, supported by the Prime Minister, Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe, Secretary Sir Keith Joseph, Mr. Secretary Fowler, Mr. Peter Brooke and Mr. David Mellor, presented a Bill to make provision for the recovery of the proceeds of drug trafficking and other provision in connection with drug trafficking and to increase the number of assistant commissioners of police for the metropolis: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 54.]

Orders of the Day

Building Societies Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the Minister to move the Second Reading, I must announce to the House that I have selected the reasoned amendment in the names of the Leader of the Opposition and his right hon. and hon. Friends.

4.49 pm

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ian Stewart): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The story of British building societies has been one of success and of national achievement over many generations. They have helped millions of people to buy their homes. Currently more than 25 million of our fellow citizens use the societies for their savings. Indeed, at the outset I should declare that I have a share account and a building society mortgage, and I suspect that the same is true of the majority of hon. Members. The societies have promoted their traditional purposes of thrift and home ownership for nearly 200 years. The main purpose of the legislation before the House today is to enable them to continue to develop and prosper in a world which has changed a great deal since the societies came into being at the end of the 18th century.

The Bill is the most far-reaching legislation on building societies for more than 100 years, since the Building Societies Act 1874. There has been amending legislation since, notably in 1894, 1939 and 1960, but the fundamental structure of the 1874 Act has survived until now, and the consolidated Act of 1962, which is now in force, still bears a clear similarity to it.

But time has moved on, and as the societies themselves have changed since their humble beginnings, so has the market place in which they operate. Individually, the largest societies are now among the great institutions of our land. Collectively, the societies represent a major influence not only on the housing market but in the financial system as a whole.

In today's fast-changing markets, societies need to be able to offer a wide range of facilities to an increasingly sophisticated public if they are to continue to compete effectively. New technology and greater customer awareness are posing a new challenge for all financial institutions, but I believe that, by allowing the societies more scope, we will not only enable them to develop their business but will bring extra healthy competition into housing and finance.

Seen from today's perspective, the existing legislation contains restrictions that no longer make sense either in commercial or in prudential terms. For example, although societies can arrange insurance on a borrower's garage, they cannot obtain cover for his car. They can supply him with a valuation report by a staff valuer, but it cannot be extended to a full structural survey. There are many other such limitations which, as time has passed, have come to seem increasingly illogical.

Many technical provisions of the old legislation have simply become out-of-date, reflecting neither the sort of institutions that societies now are, nor the corresponding

[Mr. Ian Stewart]

legislation for companies that has been passed in recent years. Some provisions are entirely anachronistic. It is safe to say that we no longer need a prohibition on balloting for mortgages to see which member will be lucky enough to get the next advance. Nor need an officer any more put up personal security for the funds in his charge, rather as though he were treasurer of the Christmas club.

Such considerations have led us to conclude that completely new legislation is needed, not just another in the long line of amending Bills. Therefore, I do not apologise for the fact that the new Bill is large. Beside providing new powers for the societies, it thoroughly modernises their legislative framework, and incorporates many of the provisions which have already been enacted for companies in the Companies Acts of the past 25 years. Before embarking on such a fundamental revision, we thought it right that there should be a full process of consultation. Since the Government's Green Paper was published nearly 18 months ago, we have received and considered a wide range of comments which have been of great assistance in formulating our proposals. On some matters, consultation was not completed in time for inclusion of the necessary provisions in the Bill, and one or two are still under consideration, and on these I propose to bring forward amendments in Committee.

Although the Bill marks a fresh start in terms of building society legislation, I should at once say that its primary theme is continuity based on a successful formula. So the basic function of providing loans for house purchase from the savings of members will continue to form the core of building society business. But the Bill is designed to allow considerable diversification around that central theme. Societies will be able to provide a much greater range of services, but the emphasis will still be on their primary function.

Some flexibility has been deliberately included in the Bill. As time goes by and in the light of experience, the specific powers and the quantified limits placed on them may need revision. Therefore, the Bill provides for some of those aspects to be amended, within limits, by statutory instrument, so that necessary changes need not be shelved until a place for primary legislation can be found in the busy parliamentary timetable.

The new powers that societies will have fall broadly into two groups—those that involve the balance sheet, mainly in the form of new types of lending and other assets, and those that involve the provision of new sorts of services.

The commercial assets of a society are defined as all its assets other than fixed assets and its liquid funds, and they are divided into three classes. Each class is subject to quantified limits, which will be variable so as to provide for some further evolution; but again only within limits, since there comes a point when extension of the permissible proportion of the new types of assets would no longer be consistent with the basic purpose of societies, and where fresh primary legislation would be appropriate if further change was proposed.

Class assets correspond to the principal existing mortgage business of societies. They consist of loans secured on first mortgage of property for the borrower's residential use. Such loans account for about 99 per cent. or more of present building society lending. So the requirement that at least 90 per cent. of a society's total commercial assets should fall within class 1 allows ample scope for developing other business. But the 90 per cent. requirement will ensure that the great bulk of building society lending continues to be of the sort traditionally done by the societies. I should add that the Government still intend that class 1 should include loans secured on shared premises such as houses split into two flats, one of which is occupied by the owner, or corner shops with flats above them.

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): I apologise for challenging my hon. Friend on what may appear to be a detailed point, but can he give us any idea of how the Government will interpret the division between the part of a premises occupied by the proprietor and the part not occupied by him? Do the Government expect that there will be a restriction on lending on business premises only 40 per cent. of which are occupied by the person who seeks the loan? Do the Government have a percentage in mind?

Mr. Stewart: We have in mind a figure of 40 per cent., which should allow for shared property between domestic uses, allowing for part of the premises to be in common use. A similar percentage would apply to commercial uses.

The balance of up to 10 per cent. of a society's commercial assets will be available for other purposes. In principle, the whole of that figure may be used for what are defined as class 2 assets, but no more than half of it —or 5 per cent. of total commercial assets—may be devoted to the essentially riskier type of assets which fall within class 3.

Class 2 will consist of other lending secured on mortgage. Some such lending is open to societies now —for example, lending to housing associations or other bodies corporate. But it will also cater for lending on second mortgage. The ability to participate fully in shared ownership schemes and the greater scope for index-linked loans will enable the societies to contribute more effectively to the development of new forms of finance for housing and home ownership.

Class 3 includes the remaining assets which it will be permissible for societies to hold, including the share capital of subsidiary or associate companies, lending without mortgage security and the ownership of residential land and buildings. The last of these represents an important extension of the capacity of societies to participate more actively in the provision and rehabilitation of housing and in projects involving housing associations and local authorities. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment will have more to say about that when he replies to the debate.

The new power to lend without the security of first or second mortgage will allow people to borrow from their building society for other purposes, for example, to meet the expenses that inevitably go with buying a new home, such as carpets, curtains and furniture. It will also enable the societies to offer a more comprehensive banking service. To encourage societies to spread their business and their risk in this new area of lending there will be a limit of £5,000 on class 3 loans to any individual. Because of the need to ensure that a society has sufficient depth of management to undertake class 3 lending or the ownership of land, these powers will be exercisable only by societies with at least £100 million of commercial assets.

The 1962 Act did not address itself to the need for societies to maintain adequate liquidity, merely referring

to the investment of what is called "surplus funds". In the more competitive market conditions of the present day the legislation needs to be more explicit about the function of liquid assets. At the same time it provides that the proportion of total assets that may be held in liquid form should be limited to one third, the purpose of this being to ensure that the balance sheet of a society reflects its principal purpose and that its capital should not be used to support the conduct of a money market business for its own sake.

For a similar reason a limit is also placed on the other side of the balance sheet in respect of the proportion of liabilities that can be raised from wholesale sources. The 20 per cent. limit on such funds should allow societies adequate scope to increase their wholesale borrowing, but it means that they must continue to raise money primarily from individual members. Not only is this in tune with their own traditions, but experience shows that a solid funding base is essential for the prudent management of deposit taking institutions.

I have already alluded to the anomalies and inconsistencies in the range of services which building societies can offer under the present law. The Bill includes a new and specific list of what they may do, enlarging their scope to compete in the provision of services related to both finance and housing. In addition to more comprehensive money transmission and banking services, they will be able to handle a wider range of insurance and investment matters. New opportunities will also be open to them in the housing market to own estate agencies and to provide structural surveys as well as valuations. The existing prohibition on conveyancing will be lifted, although, like other institutions, societies will have to comply with rules to be laid down by the Lord Chancellor.

With more institutions expressing interest in entering the housing market, it makes sense for the societies to be able to offer other lenders the benefit of their own skill and experience as managers. The societies will thus be able to engage in property management and to manage mortgages. And as more people now move home from one country to another in Europe, it is right that societies should no longer be prohibited from operating elsewhere in the European Community.

The use of the further powers contained in this Bill will clearly expose building societies to new risks with which they will be unfamiliar. While the prime responsibility for protecting their reputation for soundness will continue to rest with the boards of the societies themselves, we certainly need to strengthen and modernise the arrangements for their prudential supervision as their business becomes less restricted. Although the problems that have arisen in relation to building societies in recent years have not been unduly serious, we must not neglect the need for their proper supervision. And the supervisory system for the societies must reflect and respond to developments elsewhere. The Government are committed to providing for the first time a comprehensive framework of regulation that maintains confidence in the financial sector as a whole. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer published his White Paper on banking supervision earlier this week, and the Financial Services Bill is published today. The prudential provisions in the Building Societies Bill are therefore part of the Government's approach to the supervision of financial businesses in general.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): My understanding of the Bill is that building societies will be able to establish subsidiaries that will operate in other member states. Will the Economic Secretary to the Treasury confirm that the class 1 asset restriction—lending on first mortgages for houses in the United Kingdom—will not be affected? If money is to be raised for lending overseas, will it have to be raised overseas as well as disbursed overseas?

Mr. Stewart: The subsidiary that is operating will need to raise foreign currency in order to lend in foreign currency. Except for a marginal mismatch, that matter would be taken into account by the prudential supervisor.

Accordingly, under this legislation we propose to establish a Building Societies Commission to exercise and extend the functions at present carried out by the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies. The Chief Registrar himself will become the first chairman of the new commission, which will include people with suitable experience outside the public service, and the supervisory staff of the registry will be strengthened. In parallel with this, the commission will have new powers, based on the Community requirement for prior authorisation of deposit taking institutions.

The main power of the supervisor will rest in the granting and revocation of authorisation and in the imposition of conditions on it. The Bill sets out criteria for prudent management, against which the commission will be able to measure the performance of a society's board. There will also be statutory powers for the commission to obtain from societies the information necessary for supervision, which will be treated as confidential and may be shared with other supervisory authorities only in strictly defined circumstances. And in line with what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on Tuesday in the case of the banks, we are proposing to make it a criminal offence to provide false or misleading information to the supervisor.

Mr. Jim Craigen (Glasgow, Maryhill): The Economic Secretary to the Treasury has referred to the new commission. What will be the residual position regarding industrial or corporate societies and friendly societies?

Mr. Stewart: I shall be pleased to clarify that point. The Registry of Friendly Societies will continue in being for all of its other existing purposes. The commission will be established only for the purpose of supervising building societies.

New provisions relating to the preparation of the accounts of building societies and the duties of auditors are also included in the Bill. Following the issue of a consultative paper in the summer by the Registry of Friendly Societies, the accounting and control provisions have been brought up to date, and the Government will bring forward appropriate amendments in due course covering a number of further changes which have now been decided. Each year the auditors of a society will have to make a report to the commission, sent in the first instance to the board, on whether the society has complied with the statutory requirements for accounting and control systems. Communication between auditors and supervisor has long taken place, but we shall be introducing measures to permit dialogue between the two on a similar basis to that envisaged for the banking sector.

Since many of the supervisory provisions in the present Bill have been drawn up in parallel with the proposals on

[Mr. Stewart]

banking supervision and financial services, amendment will be necessary on certain points to reflect the development of policy. For example, detailed provisions will be introduced for appeal against the supervisor's decisions on authorisation to reflect the system as it will in future apply to banks; and adjustments will be made to the provisions governing disclosure of confidential information between supervisors in line with the Financial Services Bill.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): My hon. Friend referred to the position of auditors, which is dealt with in clause 76(6). It says:

"The auditors . . . shall be entitled".

Does my hon. Friend intend to amend the subsection to read:

"The auditors . . . shall be required"

in certain circumstances to communicate with the supervisor?

Mr. Stewart: My hon. Friend draws attention to a point to which I have already referred. The Bill's provisions do not entirely coincide with what has now been announced in relation to banks, where, in certain circumstances, there will be communication both ways between auditor and supervisor. We propose to bring the two into line.

Effective management subject to appropriate supervision is the best means of providing for the integrity and soundness of the societies. But the Bill contains further measures to protect the interests of investors and to ensure that the societies give proper public account of themselves, and compete fairly and openly in the market.

As part of the comprehensive reform of the constitution of the societies, directors will have to make full disclosure of any personal interest in the business of their societies, and there will be new restrictions on loans to directors and their families in line with provisions already enacted for banks.

We propose to put building societies and banks on an equal footing in respect of exemption from the Consumer Credit Act. At present, the societies enjoy exemption from that Act in respect of all their mortgage lending, but under this Bill such exemption will be limited to first mortgage loans for the purchase, improvement or repair of property, and an early opportunity will be taken to enact a similar provision for the banks.

Anxieties have also been expressed about the way in which building societies might exploit their huge share of the housing market in the use of their new powers. We have therefore decided that they should not be permitted to make offers of mortgage conditional on the use of their other services and that the cross-subsidisation of one service by another should be brought above board by a requirement to quote separate prices for each of them.

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): Will the Minister explain, in relation to what he just said, why, if that was considered necessary, it was not also considered necessary to remove the conditionality, as I understand it is called, in relation to some of the additional services in which the building societies are now to be allowed to participate, in particular lending on unsecured loans?

Mr. Stewart: The provision of services relating to housing is so closely related to the main function of building societies, in which they have such a huge market share, that it puts that consideration in a much higher relief than the point which my hon. Friend raises about the rather limited provision that would apply to other sorts of lending.

At present, the building societies operate a voluntary scheme to protect investors, in which not all societies fully participate. The Banking Act, on the other hand, includes a statutory scheme covering up to 75 per cent. of the first £10,000 of any investment, and we have felt it right that the societies should also be required to provide a similar level of protection by statute. They will, in addition, be given the power to provide a higher level of protection by entering into voluntary arrangements, if they so wish.

Throughout their existence, the constitution of building societies has been based on mutual ownership. This Bill is based on the principle that, as long as the members of a society so wish, its mutual status should continue. But mutuality in the conditions of today is not without its problems. It can, in particular, cause difficulties of accountability when applied to institutions as large as some of the major societies are today.

The Bill therefore contains a series of measures designed to enhance the opportunities for member participation and to make the mutual system work more efficiently. The rights of members to vote on resolutions have been overhauled and the extent to which voting rights can be restricted is limited. The election of directors by members is made mandatory, and members wishing to stand for election will be able to circulate statements in support of their candidature. The rules for co-option and proxy voting will be tightened.

Mr. Richard Ottaway (Nottingham, North): While I welcome the protection envisaged in the Bill for investors in and members of building societies, the measure makes little reference to protecting building society borrowers. What does my hon. Friend propose to do about abuses by building societies, say, of the introduction or use of penalty clauses in mortgages, the portability of mortgages and the way in which building societies set their interest rates? Does he propose to introduce any regulations or to amend the Bill in those respects?

Mr. Stewart: I do not have such amendments or regulations in mind. With increasing competition within the building society movement and between building societies and banks, those building societies which seek to impose unacceptable conditions on the lending they make are not likely to get the business of my hon. Friend and those who think like him.

Mr. Christopher Hawkins (High Peak): Building society borrowers need a guarantee that they will be charged the market rate of interest on their mortgages after they have become locked into them. The Halifax has cut its interest rate for new borrowers but not for existing borrowers.

Mr. Stewart: I appreciate my hon. Friend's point, but I do not think it would be proper to set out in legislation for any group of companies or institutions the precise way in which they should set the terms of their lending, and we have no plans to do so in this measure.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): The question of protection and proxy voting will be vitally important should a building society ultimately move forward to incorporation.

There is fear that there will be abuses of the present proxy voting system. Will the safeguards to which the Minister referred ensure that on any of those matters the members will take the decisions and the decisions will not be taken for them?

Mr. Stewart: We are anxious that all decisions are properly taken by the members on mergers, conversion or any other matters to do with the ordinary routine business of the society. The measures that we are suggesting for proxy voting will tighten up the procedure and make it less open to any abuse of the kind about which the hon. Gentleman is concerned. I hope that that will be the result of the provisions that we are bringing forward.

Two important constitutional issues which have attracted much comment are those of mergers and conversion to companies. Again, we are providing for increased participation by members before any such change can be implemented. In addition to the 75 per cent. majority of investors voting, any proposal for merger or conversion will also require the approval of a majority of borrowing members voting so as to protect the interests of those with mortgages. When a merger involves a society being absorbed in a much larger one, there is to be a minimum vote required of 20 per cent. of all its members.

Despite these safeguards, some directors of smaller societies have expressed misgivings about the plan to allow a society which sees advantage in a merger with another to put its case directly to the latter's members, even if its board does not agree. I recognise their worries and we are considering some detailed amendments to the procedure, including tying it more closely to annual general meetings rather than to special meetings. But I am sure that it would be wrong to allow an unresponsive board to insulate itself entirely from commercial pressures against the wishes of the shareholders.

Equally, I am convinced that it would be wrong to forbid the members of a society to make a decision that it should incorporate, if that is their clear wish. Along with the Bill, we published a consultation document on the procedure for conversion, since the technicalities involved are complex. But the principles are clear and simple. We need to prevent the movement of speculative funds from one society to another in search of easy profits, and to protect the rights of members in societies undergoing conversion without giving them an incentive to convert purely to capitalise on their stake in the reserves.

Furthermore, during the first five years of a former society's existence as a company, no single shareholder will be able to hold more than 15 per cent. of its capital. The provisions we propose should ensure that a society is converted into a company only if its members clearly wish it to evolve beyond the constraints of the building society legislation, and that, if it does so, it would be able to convert in a manner which does not involve surrendering its independence.

The Bill gives the building societies important new opportunities to respond to the needs of their customers today and to plan for the future. Our purpose has been to provide a framework in which each of them can develop in the way it judges best, while always retaining the essential characteristics on which their reputation has been based.

Of one thing I am sure, and that is that there will still be room for societies of all sort — large and small, national, regional and local — so long as they provide the services that the public want. Indeed, the Bill should not diminish but enhance the diversity of the building society movement, which has been one of its greatest strengths.

The societies have given outstanding service to the community since the time of our grandfathers' grandfathers, and this legislation will enable them to continue to do so for many years to come. I commend the Bill to the House.

5.19 pm

Dr. Oonagh McDonald (Thurrock): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which extends to building societies powers to engage in unsecured lending and commercial investment which may lead to their failure to maintain their commitment and responsibility for increased housing finance; weakens this commitment by the facility for societies to become public limited companies with only a commercial interest in housing finance; creates the risk of United Kingdom and foreign financial institutions taking over smaller societies; increases financial risks without substantially new statutory means of control; and reduces public accountability."

When appearing on a television chat show in May 1983, Clive Thornton, the then chief general manager of the Abbey National, described the building societies as the highest form of Socialism. If that were wholly true, we could understand the Government's enthusiasm to introduce a Bill which, over a period of time, could fundamentally change the nature and status of the building societies. We do not totally accept that description of building societies, but, as the Minister has said, the societies have performed an important service for a long time by providing a stable system of housing finance.

The fact that mutual organisations are non-profit making has enabled them to fulfil social and housing needs, as well as maximise their profits. That feature differentiates building societies from profit-making companies. We may come to regret the fact that within five or 10 years building societies, as a mutual sector focusing on housing needs, could slowly disappear.

The Bill has been introduced in response to pressure from some members of the building societies movement, especially the large building societies, in particular, the Halifax and the Abbey National. Some of the changes proposed in the Bill are unnecessary and could detract from the main purpose of fulfilling the housing need. We do not oppose the principle, but we are concerned about the possibility of building societies being converted into public limited companies.

I said earlier that we were anxious about the publication of the consultation paper. The Minister has said that the process of conversion from a mutual to a public limited company is complex. His recent experience in that area has not been entirely happy. Therefore, the consultation document should have been published earlier and we should not have to wait until the end of the proceedings on the Bill to analyse and debate the clauses that will allow building societies to be converted.

I emphasise that the Opposition are opposed to allowing building societies to convert from mutuals into public limited companies. We do not consider that that move is necessary. We believe that it would bring about enormous changes in the building society movement.

In the City the proposed legislation has stimulated great interest in building societies. The reasons are obvious.

[Dr. Oonagh McDonald]

Building societies have 26 million customers and 7,000 branches. Interest has been shown by various financial institutions, to the surprise of the deputy secretary general, Mr. Mark Boleat, who, in the *Financial Times* of 7 December 1985, admitted:

"It is clear that there are many predators around who want to get their hands on building societies and their branches."

It is perhaps a little late in the day for the Building Societies Association to recognise the implications of the big bang that will occur in 1986.

I am aware that the Minister has tried to build safeguards into the process of conversion, but it could lead to mergers. Building societies could become even more dominated by a few large societies, which may then convert into public limited companies. One or two societies have already expressed the wish to become public limited companies. They could be then taken over by other financial institutions, and the result would be large financial conglomerates whose main business would no longer be housing finance.

If societies become large financial institutions, they may be anxious to retain a higher cash ratio, which could have implications for foreclosures on mortgages. The House will know that the building societies have an excellent record; the number of foreclosures is small. As constituency Members, we are aware that building society managers are often anxious to assist mortgagees to retain their mortgage, despite difficult financial circumstances or a family crisis. I hope that the Government have properly considered the long-term future.

Mr. Tim Smith: Is there any evidence that the clearing banks, which are now quite big in that market, foreclose more often than the building societies?

Dr. McDonald: The Minister should be able to answer that. We want to know whether that has been considered in the formulation of the Bill. Both sides of the House are anxious for a stable system of housing finance to continue, and no one would wish for an increase in foreclosures. We wish to know whether the Minister has made any comparison and what the future possibilities are.

The changes in the building society movement could lead to an increase in the market for secondary mortgages. Those are not so attractive in Britain as they are in America, where there is a fixed rate of interest on mortgages. However, there could be an attractive market here, because it is a safe method of lending. If that market increases, what protection will there be in the legislation for the borrower? Have the Government considered that eventuality, which is important for the future of housing in Britain?

Mr. Ian Stewart: It would be for the borrower to ensure that the terms of a second mortgage were suitable. That applies whether it is offered by a building society or by any other lender.

The hon. Lady also mentioned that there might be more foreclosures or a different attitude to borrowers if there were a merger or a conversion into a public limited company. I emphasise that the new provision means that at least 50 per cent. of borrowing members would have to vote to approve any change, such as a merger or a conversion. That would place the onus on those proposing a different corporate structure or ownership to satisfy the borrowers that they would not be placed in a worse position. That could be a difficult task. The borrowers would have a new power, through their votes, to exercise their judgment as to whether they wanted such a change. They would not be going in with their eyes closed.

Dr. McDonald: I appreciate the Minister's remarks about that provision. However, we wish to be reassured that the onus is on the societies to make clear to the borrowers the implications of any change in structure.

I believe that the Minister misunderstood my point about secondary mortgages. The hon. Gentleman referred to second mortgages. A secondary mortgage is when a parcel of loans is sold off to another company. Perhaps the Minister could reply on that point.

There are two or three points to be made about unsecured lending. First, Labour Members do not see the necessity for another source of unsecured credit. As anyone who walks down the high street knows full well, there are already many sources of unsecured credit. It is not necessary for building societies to provide it as well. In fact, the Consumer Association said that only a quarter of building society members whom it surveyed were interested in that particular facility being provided.

Mr. John Watts (Slough): The hon. Lady says that in a survey only 25 per cent. of building society members were interested in taking advantage of that new facility. Would she concede the possibility that a wider range of services being made available by building societies might well make them more attractive to a wider investing public and that that would increase the flow of funds into building societies for the purpose of their major objective, which is lending for house purchase?

Dr. McDonald: That is possible, but I do not think that that is the main reason for people choosing to invest in a building society as opposed to some other form of organisation.

There has been a growth in consumer credit under this Government. It is interesting to note now much that has grown. After allowing for inflation, the amount of debt outstanding in terms of consumer credit rose by about 60 per cent. between 1979 and 1984, and it now stands at over £22 billion—an enormous growth in consumer credit. The Bank of England has estimated that if building societies put half of what was allowed into consumer credit that would add another £2 billion to the outstanding debt and give them a market share of about 10 per cent.

The Minister's proposals in the Bill have been described as modest. That is a fair comment so far as it goes. However, he is no doubt aware that some of the societies are already pressing for an increase in the limits. The Abbey National's view, which was given to us this week, suggests that instead of 5 per cent. of their total assets being used for unsecured lending, building societies should be allowed to start at 10 per cent. He will also be aware that, although his proposals might be described as modest, they can be changed by parliamentary order. That means that the amount of unsecured credit offered by building societies could increase fairly rapidly over the next few years, once the Bill takes effect.

The building societies claim that they want to become public limited companies because of the necessity for raising capital which they might not otherwise be able to do, so that they can extend their services in a variety of ways. It is interesting that the building societies should put

forward such an argument when, in fact, in the Building Societies Association's October bulletin an article is devoted to describing the success of the building societies movement in raising money on the wholesale market having been given the necessary tax changes and permission to do so by the Government during the 1980s.

It is especially interesting that it should be argued that building societies must become public limited companies in order to raise sufficient capital when not only the wholesale market but the Eurobond market proved attractive for societies. The reason for that is that the unique security which building societies as mutual institutions offer means that those looking for sterling floating rate assets will find building societies' floating rate notes particularly attractive. In other words, building societies have not found that they have suffered particularly great difficulties in raising funds over recent years; and they appear to have every opportunity to continue in that way. Therefore, we reject the argument that some building societies have put forward for wanting to become a public limited company, and we do not consider that to be necessary. We would rather that they remained in the housing sector as mutual organisations.

Let me deal with some of the issues which will affect the small building societies and investors. I am concerned that the investor protection scheme proposed in the Bill falls short of the level of protection currently available to most building society investors. I cannot see that there is any reason, particularly as building societies are entering into more risky ventures, for reducing that level of protection. I hope that the Minister will consider amendments to that in Committee. If not, the Opposition will certainly stress the need for that.

The Building Societies Commission is obviously an area at which we shall look closely since we are concerned that building societies should be properly regulated. One of the issues that the Minister must make plain in the course of our debates on the Bill is that the commission will have adequate resources. Secondly, we shall want to know a great deal more about the relationships between the commission and the other self-regulatory bodies and the proposals to regulate banking activities. In so far as building societies engage in those activities, they should come under banking regulations.

The Minister referred to the anxieties of small and medium-sized societies which fear the prospect of hostile takeovers. I am glad that he intends to respond to some of that pressure. I have received a number of such letters and I must mention one from the Essex Equitable building society which operates in my constituency. It is the fifth oldest in the country and, as it says, has grown steadily if slowly. It is a small society, but I have a particular interest in ensuring that it is protected from any hostile takeover bid; and that applies to other societies which have made their views clear. Many of the small to medium-sized societies offer either a specialist service or a service to a particular area. There is no reason why the minnows should be swallowed up by the whales. I hope that the Minister will ensure that they are properly protected.

We are glad to see some of the other services being offered by building societies in connection with house building, but we shall want to ensure that the consumer —the borrower—is properly protected against conflicts of interest while at the same time making sure that the legal profession does not have it all its own way.

The Opposition feel that the Bill contains proposals which in the long term could mean that the building societies movement as we know it will disappear from the scene. Its loss is something that we could well live to regret. It has served us well. It has provided for many people's housing needs throughout the country. We want to make quite sure that it will continue to do so. We are not certain that the proposals in the Bill will ensure that that will happen.

5.40 pm

Mr. Christopher Hawkins (High Peak): I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the chance to speak about this important Bill.

I, too, have certain misgivings. I would prefer building societies to stick to their last and to remain as mutual societies, friendly societies, which were set up to help people to buy their own home. What better aim could they have? I do not want to see them lending money for people to buy motor cycles or holidays abroad. I do not want to see them become banks and put up charges to make profits for shareholders.

I ask the Minister to assure me that he will carefully monitor the effects of the Bill, and will be prepared to come back with new legislation if the fears of some of us are realised and if changes occur which are not in the public interest—and in particular not in the interest of home owners.

To some, the Bill may appear merely to tidy up the current law relating to building societies. To others, its importance will lie in the extension of powers given to building societies so that they may, if they wish, become full-blown banks or may extend into providing services such as insurance, estate agency, conveyancing and valuation. Those aspects of the Bill merely allow building societies to do what others are already doing. They will not radically change people's lives.

There is, however, one clause in the Bill which will allow building societies to do something which is radical and different. It is clause 10(4)*(a)* in part III, which gives building societies the power to make advances in which

"the amount due to the society may be adjusted from time to time by reference to such public index of prices as is specified in the mortgage".

Although it may seem an insignificant clause, it would be possible to write a book on what it implies. In fact, I wrote a book on what it implies, in early 1983. I would not normally seek to plug a product in this House but, as many other hon. Members wish to speak, instead of saying all that I should like to say on this complex topic, I will merely say that the book is called "Britain's Economic Future" and is available in the Library for those who would like to see it. Having campaigned for several years for index-linked mortgages to be widely available, I am naturally delighted to see clause 10 in the Bill.

The problem with the conventional mortgage is that the money payments are constant over the life of the mortgage. Therefore, in real terms they are very high to begin with and decline over time as inflation erodes their value. To buy even a £20,000 house at recent interest rates costs from £40 to £45 per week, even after allowing for tax relief. With the addition of the cost of rates, water rates, repairs, maintenance and so on, it creates a real burden for a young married couple on average earnings or less.

[Mr. Christopher Hawkins]

In the early years of marriage, the burden is especially high because of the need to furnish the home and because many will be raising a young family. Later, the burden will become far lighter, partly because commitments will have declined but mainly because inflation will have eroded the value of the payments that need to be made, and the couple will have had a major growth in their real living standards as the economy grows.

The present mortgage may be fine for those who can afford it, but for many the burdens are the wrong way round. The burden is greatest when they can least afford it in real terms; the burden is least when they can most afford it. Index-linked mortgages solve that problem by having low payments in the early years, which rise over time as incomes and prices rise. Under those schemes it will be cheaper to buy a council house than to rent one. It will be cheaper to buy a £20,000 private sector house than to rent the average council house. That will radically affect many people's lives.

It is true that the mortgage payments will rise over time in line with inflation, but so do rents. It is better to have a smaller mortgage payment rising with inflation than to have a larger rent which also rises with inflation. As a result of introducing such mortgages on a widely available basis we could well see, by the end of the century, over 80 per cent. of families owning, or in process of buying, their own home.

We have given people the right to buy. In the Bill we can now offer them the means to buy. Together, the changes will create a property-owning democracy on a scale never dreamt of before. In doing that, we shall have created one of the biggest social revolutions of the century. For those reasons, I commend this radical and important Bill to the House.

5.44 pm

Mr. Gordon Oakes (Halton): Like the Minister, I must begin by declaring an interest, in that I have a mortgage and a building society account. I am also an honorary—I stress the word "honorary" — vice-president of the Building Societies Association. I assure hon. Members that I get no fees and have no directorships. I attend an annual vice-presidents' dinner, but I do not think that my mind is too much swayed as a result of that.

I am very proud to be a vice-president of the Building Societies Association because the origins of building societies spring from working class people. At the beginning of the 19th century, working class people banded together for their own protection from rapacious landlords or employers who wanted not only to own their souls at work but their homes. Therefore, working class people banded together in a mutual institution to buy their own homes.

The origins of building societies are closely linked with my part of the world, the north of England. Among the greatest and oldest societies are the Halifax, the Burnley, and the Bradford and Bingley. They are northern names of northern societies set up by northern working people many years ago. As a result, building societies are steeped in the principles and practice of mutual aid. I am glad that the Bill preserves that characteristic, while at the same time bringing societies out of a straitjacket of an Act which is 111 years old this year. The Act of 1874 is the principal Act. There was an Act in 1962 but it was merely a consolidating measure; it did nothing new. Building societies have been constrained by the conditions of 1874 since that time.

I welcome the Bill and I assure the House that the Building Societies Association welcomes it. I think that for once the Government have got the balance right. That is the result of three years of extensive consultation with the Building Societies Association, with building societies and with others. It is essential that we get it right, because it may well be another century or half-century at least before we have another comprehensive Act.

In the commercial climate, in competition with other financial institutions, building societies at present have one hand tied behind their back. Despite that, they have enormous popularity with the public. We are not talking simply about building societies or about the association; we are talking about people——constituents.

I have some facts and figures which may astound some hon. Members. Over 60 per cent. of all adults in Britain have building society accounts. That means about 28 million individuals. Societies have been particularly successful in attracting business from the younger age groups. A research survey in 1983 showed that no fewer than 52 per cent. of those in the 16 to 19 age range had building society accounts, compared with only 29 per cent. who had bank accounts. Well over 60 per cent. of all adults in the 20 to 30 range are building society investors. Societies have helped considerably to spread the habit of saving and efficient money management among the young. It may astound the House to know that over a third of all children now have building society accounts, although individually the amounts are small.

The popularity of building societies arises from their friendliness and the sense of belonging. People feel that they are wanted by the societies in the 7,000 outlets at which they can do their business with the societies. Those outlets are usually in the high street where the shops are. They are easily reachable. One principal reason is that they are open when people need them whereas banks are not, for example, on a Saturday, at tea time or after 3.30 pm.

The Bill brings many improvements. I shall deal with clause 14 and unsecured advances. I do not agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) in her anxiety on that matter. It is only a small proportion of building society funds that can be used in that way. It is right to enable a borrower to buy furniture or to pay for home improvements or essential repairs when it would be meaningless and costly to add those to the mortgage.

The Bill gives power to the building society for cash dispensing facilities. They are a doubtful legality at present, although some building societies do have cash dispensers. Most importantly, it gives power to the building society to issue cheque guarantee cards. At the moment if a building society were to give a cheque book it would be of little use without a guarantee card. To do that would almost certainly be illegal under the Building Societies Act 1874.

Clause 15 of the Bill gives building societies the power to own land for residential purposes. That is important in inner cities and it enables building societies to become what their name implies, a "building society" rather than a mere loan club. That is even more important in the concept of shared ownership. I agree with much that the hon. Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) said about the burden of the mortgage being at a time when the borrower can least afford it. One answer to that is shared ownership.

At the moment, it would be illegal for a building society to own the rented part of that shared ownership. That would have to be avoided by various legal devices. The Bill will enable the building society to own the rented part.

I know that the Bill cannot do anything about our land tenure system but I believe that it is ludicrous. If one was to buy a back-to-back, small terraced house, or even a flat, the mechanism and the law involved in buying it is the same as if one were buying a baronial medieval estate. It is time that some Government—I hope that it is my Government—brought the whole issue of land tenure in Britain kicking and screaming out of the 14th century and put it in the 20th and 21st centuries. The power of ownership under clause 15 allows some flexibility. I want to see that, as I know from his speech does the hon. Member for High Peak.

The Bill gives power in clause 16 for the major societies to operate in the EEC. That is important today because many working people retire to Spain or Portugal and buy a villa. It is important that while buying that villa they have the help of their own building society, the one that they are used to, especially when they are operating under foreign law and in foreign climes. Such people are not tax exiles; they are rain exiles. They go away after a summer such as we have just had and they want to live abroad in order to buy sunshine. Why confine clause 16 to the EEC? Why not make it a worldwide power instead of just a European geographical area in which building societies can operate that clause?

There is also the important provision of new services. It is right that a building society investor can use his account to pay gas or electricity bills. The building society can also operate insurance facilities, foreign exchange, valuation and estate agency facilities. For example, the Leicester building society introduced a scheme a couple of years ago called Home Link. It is a pioneer scheme using computers in one's home. With the aid of a television set and telephone, one can pay bills and deal with many matters. That is a boon to disabled people because they do not even have to leave their houses in order to pay bills. That is the sort of innovation and experiment that the enabling power will encourage.

My first major criticism of the Bill is that it does not deal with conveyancing. My hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) was let down by the Government in that matter because he withdrew his private Member's Bill on an undertaken that the Government would do something. However, on the day that the Bill was published, 6 December, the Solicitor-General told the House:

"the Government have concluded that there is no difficulty in principle in such institutions providing conveyancing to persons to whom they are not also offering a loan. However, the Government are not satisfied that lending institutions could safely be permitted to offer both conveyancing and a loan in the same transaction. It is therefore proposed to prohibit lending institutions from providing conveyancing, either directly or through a subsidiary company in which they hold a majority stake, to those who are also borrowing from them."—[*Official Report*, 6 December 1985; Vol. 88, c. *354*.]

That is arrant nonsense. What conflict of interest can there possibly be? The building society is obviously just as worried and entitled to ensure that the purchaser has a good title as the purchaser himself. It is lending its money to the purchaser, so there is no conflict of interest.

When I was a solicitor the practice was that the purchaser's solicitor invariably acted for the building society as well. I believe that that still happens today. The building society instructs the purchaser's solicitor. I can see that there could be difficulties if, for example, a building society had foreclosed and was selling the house through a loan to another purchaser, but rules can be made and drawn up to deal with that matter. It is nonsense to say that building societies should not have the power to provide conveyancing services.

My hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby was temporarily out of the Chamber, but as he has now returned I shall repeat that I feel he was let down by the Government on the undertaking that they gave him. I was convinced that the Bill was the vehicle by which that undertaking could be carried through. It is obvious from the Solicitor-General's statement that that is not the case. No doubt, my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby will deal with that at greater length.

I am worried about building societies becoming limited companies. I do not think that many will want to do that. There may be a need for the odd experiment in that direction but, given the constraints that the Government have rightly put in the Bill, there will be few building societies which will have a sufficient percentage of investors who will want to convert the society to a limited company.

Clauses 84 and 85 worry me. They deal with the matter of unagreed mergers. I think that I know what the Government are worrying about. Their object is to protect members from directors blocking the merger for their own ends. I stress to the Government that a building society is a mutual institution. It is not a company. Therefore, I cannot see how one can have an unagreed merger of a mutual institution of that nature.

My second worry about those clauses is that the membership list could be subject to abuse. I know about the Data Protection Act 1984, but people could obtain that membership list and use it for many purposes. It is a valuable commodity. It identifies the amount of money that people have at their disposal. That is something that commercial companies would give their right arms for. It would enable them to check the credit of particular individuals. I think that in Committee something should be done about safeguards against abuse.

The third matter that worries me is building societies' staff. If an unagreed merger is possible, there should be some way of consulting the staff. The Bill provides for the society members to be consulted, but the staff should have some say in the matter. That must be put right in the Bill.

On the subject of agreed mergers, there is no doubt that societies will continue to merge. In 1974, there were 416 building societies, and at the end of last year there were 190. In 10 years, there has been a considerable merging of building societies, and that will continue.

The smaller building societies do not have a great deal to worry about from the Bill because, as my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock correctly said, they offer specialised services. Some offer those services geographically. They give more favourable treatment to people within their own counties. That is commendable. Other building societies look not so much to the geography of an area but to the characteristics of the residential property upon which they are lending. They might, for example, look more favourably on thatched houses than most building societies. Some building societies will not touch them. They may look more favourably on houses with a cellar. It has always intrigued me that a house with

[Mr. Gordon Oakes]

a cellar is almost unmortgageable in many parts of the country. I do not know whether the building societies fear for the structure of the house or fear that the existence of the cellar will lead the purchaser to drink so much that he will be unable to afford his mortgage. Cellars are anathema to all but one or two building societies which say that there is nothing wrong with them.

Thirdly, a small society might specialise in a particular class of person. Some societies favoured policemen when they were in police housing. When their service was complete they needed to buy a house. That does not apply so much now, because many policemen live in their own houses during their service. Another example is that of public house tenants. They suddenly find when they are in their fifties and wish to retire that they need other accommodation and a mortgage. Some of the smaller societies specialise in that category of borrower.

In Committee, where I hope to serve, there will be other i's to be dotted and t's to be crossed, but this is a most useful Bill which will be to the benefit of many millions of borrowers and investors. It preserves the nature of the building societies but brings the law up to date for present and future needs. It has the broad support of the Building Societies Association and it certainly has mine.

6.2 pm

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): The right hon. Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) has talked himself into a job with his last remarks about the Committee stage. I am sure that he will make a distinguished contribution to it. I wish to begin by echoing the same interest as he did. It is an entirely non-financial one. Like him, I am a vice-president of the Building Societies Association and also of the Midland Association of Building Societies. They are both honorary, unpaid positions.

I have been involved directly in the building industry for 18 years. I have been a director or employee of a large building company for nearly 11 years. That company has recently combined with two large building societies to assist urban renewal in decaying inner city areas.

My general attitude to the Bill is one of cautious welcome. I was never especially enthusiastic for new legislation in this sphere. The British building society movement is the envy of the world for the efficient and economic manner in which it helps millions of people to buy homes of their own. It has a special place in the affections of our people. They see it as a completely safe investment. I shall say more about that, as the Bill contains some disappointing provisions in that regard.

The public do not regard building societies as a dodgy speculation, run by smart Alicks or City whiz kids. They see their local manager as a pillar of his community, utterly respectable and safe, cautious perhaps, and dull, even in the view of the media or the publicity conscious business entrepreneur. That reputation is to be treasured. Building societies have brought home ownership and completely safe investments to vast numbers of our fellow citizens. They have rarely been troubled by the squalid scandals which have sometimes disfigured the City of London. When building societies have fallen into the hands of crooks or incompetents, the other societies have immediately rallied round to give complete protection to the investing or borrowing public.

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): My hon. Friend used the phrase "complete protection", but will he confirm that that is not the case and that building societies that have got into difficulties, such as Grays building society, did not give a 100 per cent. return to their investors? It is only marginal protection.

Mr. Latham: I shall deal with that point in a moment.

As a good friend of the movement, I should like to sound a firm word of warning. Yes, let us have cash dispensers, as the right hon. Member for Halton said, improve the savings schemes and compete over interest rates and terms offered to the public, provided that the high street is not filled with too many identical branches. Those changes may be necessary in 1985-86, but we should never forget that the societies' real job is to help people to buy homes. We should never forget that people expect building societies to be cautious, conservative, and even dull. There is nothing but honour in the course that has been followed for the past 150 years. Smart dealing should be left to the whiz kids. The societies do not need that type of business, and they should not be looking for the type of director or general manager who will urge it on them.

I hope that clause 14 business will be the exception rather than the rule for societies. If they have spare money, I hope that they will prefer to use it for residential or other kinds of development in inner city areas under clause 15 rather than to make too many unsecured loans for general consumer credit or activities in the Common Market.

I doubt whether it is necessary for societies to have the powers in clause 14 which enable them to offer loans to the public to buy cars or summer holidays. Surely those things can be left to banks, Barclaycard, Access, or finance companies. But if that concession is to be made to the societies, why should it be restricted to those with assets worth more than £100 million? If the power is acceptable in principle—it is limited to 5 per cent. of assets — there is no clear reason why the smaller societies should be denied it, subject, of course, to the control of the new Building Societies Commission, which will replace the registrar.

A smaller, but completely respectable and greatly respected local society, such as the Melton Mowbray building society, whose assets last year were £72·6 million and which has been helping my constituents since 1875, is as capable of using such a power sensibly and cautiously as a society with assets of £130 million. Either the power is desirable in principle or it is not. I find it difficult to believe that Conservative policy is that big societies can be trusted to behave sensibly but that smaller ones are beyond the pale. That clause will need further consideration in Committee.

There is one power in the Bill that I find utterly regrettable and that I believe should be struck out. It is in clause 84(2) and schedule 13. It has been mentioned by the right hon. Member for Halton and the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald). For the first time, a Conservative Government are offering us the prospect of contested takeovers for building societies. Do we not have enough bids for public companies going on at the moment? Are we returning to the 1960s syndrome of large is beautiful?

I remember the first time that, as a new vice-president, I went to the annual lunch given by the Building Societies

Association for its vice-presidents. The then chairman, Mr. Alan Cumming—he is with the Woolwich—started his speech to his startled audience by saying:

"One thing is quite certain. When we meet again in 12 months' time, there will be fewer of us."

He did not mean death, the grim reaper of us all. He meant the flood of voluntary society mergers. Of course, he was correct. Whereas in Leicestershire we had a Leicester Permanent and a Leicester Temperance and then a merged Leicester, we now have an Alliance-Leicester. The Midland Association of Building Societies has lost a leading permanent member. That, at least, was a voluntary arrangement.

The Bill will allow largish authorities seeking growth at all costs to circularise the members of smaller local societies and to offer them "bonuses" to vote for a forced merger. That is not my idea of building society practice.

The Melton Mowbray building society, with branches in Melton Mowbray, Oakham and Grantham, has regularly to rebuff larger societies wishing to absorb it voluntarily. It has an excellent management team, and I wish to see it getting on with the job of granting mortgages to my constituents, not directing management effort to fighting off unwelcome embraces from larger societies.

Under the Bill, if a contested merger is unsuccessful, the same society cannot try again for another three years. But there is nothing to stop another society from doing so the next day. That means that the management of the smaller, locally based, perfectly well run society will be continually looking over its shoulder for takeover bids. That is not a proper expenditure of time for non-profit making, mutual organisations. There is no need for tooth and claw City practices in the building society movement. There are already clear and well used systems for voluntary mergers.

Several societies, other than the Melton Mowbray building society, have written to me and many other hon. Members on that matter. Indeed, the Building Societies Association is opposed to those provisions. I shall certainly seek to have them deleted at a later stage.

Of course, if a society decided to go for company status, as is foreshadowed in the Bill, that would be a wholly different matter. Obviously, the normal rules for takeovers would then apply. I find the concept of contested takeovers of mutual organisations in the interests of growth to be quite abhorrent. Surely no Conservative Member can instinctively feel that it is right for large societies to be given an effective carte blanche, sweetened by cash inducements, to harass the smaller local societies. It does not seem right that that should come from a Conservative Government. It is not my idea of Conservatism. If change is not better—to coin a phrase—it is better not to change.

My final point concerns the investors' protection scheme in clauses 22 to 28, but especially clause 25. I am disappointed with the Government's proposals and with what the building societies have agreed—that in the event of the failure of a society, investors shall be protected only up to 75 per cent. of their investment, or a maximum of £10,000.

In the past, when societies have been in trouble—my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) referred to the Grays building society — or have been compulsorily transferred by the registrar because of irregularities, investors have been protected because another large society has stepped in to take over the assets and the mortgage book. I believe that nothing less than 100 per cent. protection is acceptable. That can be done. Indeed, I believe that that has always been done in the past.

Money in a building society should be like a house built upon rock — safe and solid. The voluntary scheme currently operated by societies involves 90 per cent. protection, although in practice it has been 100 per cent. protection. It has worked satisfactorily, and I cannot see any reason to change it. I hope that those provisions will be altered at a later stage of the Bill's progress through the House.

The societies called for this legislation some years ago with the Spalding report and other subsequent documents. I was never enthusiastic about going to any Government for new legislation. I warned them that once the Pandora's box of legislation was opened, all sorts of gremlins and evil spirits might jump out, as in the ancient myth. In fact, the Minister's box has been mainly benign.

Building societies realise that there is some pressure for change from their consumers, and they want to meet that. They have a major and honourable role to perform in combating urban decay. The Bill certainly deserves a Second Reading, but some of us hope that it will be somewhat changed in Committee before it returns on Report. Indeed, some of us will do rather more than hope, and will seek to bring about changes.

6.13 pm

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): I suppose that, like other hon. Members, I should declare an interest because, in a sense, I own the Halifax building society. I happen to share that ownership with several million other people, and at times I feel as though the society owns me, given the size of my mortgage.

Like other hon. Members, I welcome the Bill. The building societies have served the people well and have encouraged home ownership. They have made home ownership more widely available to a constantly widening circle of people. They have a long tradition of service to the public — some of us might call it Socialism in action, others might call it people's capitalism. We can quibble about the label, but the fact is that building societies have mobilised the savings of the people to serve the community and to advance the cause of home ownership. They can be proud of their record.

However, that record needs to be updated, because the societies face new competition from the banks, there are the problems of new techniques and methods, and new requirements need to be served. Therefore, there is a need for a flexible arrangement that is adequately regulated and supervised. I believe that the Bill provides exactly that.

In common with most hon. Members, I want to look at the Bill from the point of view of the problems and difficulties that it poses. Several hon. Members have pointed to the same problems. The first is the safeguarding of deposits. Through the voluntary scheme that has operated until now, deposits have been adequately safeguarded—up to 100 per cent. in most cases. It is wrong that that protection should be scaled down to bring it into line with the level of safeguarding practised by banks. That will mean less protection, which cannot be right. The current level should have been confirmed, with the banks brought up to that level, rather than the societies being scaled down to the level of banks.

[Mr. Austin Mitchell]

My second reservation is much more substantial. The Bill, together with the regulations that will come from the Lord Chancellor's Department, restricts the ability of building societies to provide the integrated house buying service which they want to provide, and which is a logical and important extension of their role in encouraging home ownership. It is important to have the full ability to provide an integrated house buying service—one-stop shopping, call it what we will — to the consumer. A new generation of people and groups are buying houses who do not have the same middle-class skill of building up an orchestra of a solicitor, a building society, a surveyor and so on, and then conducting the orchestra to provide the full symphony of home ownership.

If organisations compete to provide an integrated service, that is better for the consumer. That competition can come from estate agents employing conveyancers, from solicitors running property shops — they are increasing in number, following the pattern of Scottish solicitors—or from the building societies.

To provide that integrated service was the intention behind my House Buyers' Bill of two years ago. In an attempt to divert support for that Bill from the Conservative Benches—it was striking a popular chord and was obviously a necessary measure — the Government proposed, of their own volition, that building societies, like banks, should carry out conveyancing.

On 20 December 1983, exactly two years ago, the Prime Minister told the House that the Government had decided

"to introduce a Bill to enable solicitors employed by institutions such as building societies and banks also to convey houses." —[*Official Report*, 20 December 1983; Vol. 51, c. 270]

The Prime Minister must have believed what she was saying because she repeated it in January on the television programme "Weekend World".

In the negotiations about the withdrawal of my Bill, I asked the Government firmly to state their commitment to the promise that they had given, and they did so. On 12 January 1984, the Solicitor-General said in a letter:

"We are committed to legislation to enable solicitors employed by organisations such as building societies and banks to undertake conveyancing."

There was no equivocation or reservation—the Solicitor-General said that the Government were committed.

The agreement which formed the basis of my withdrawing the Bill was confirmed in a written answer on 17 February 1984 from the Solicitor-General, who talked of the time

"when solicitors employed by banks, building societies and other organisations are permitted to undertake conveyancing for their employers' customers."—[*Official Report*, 17 February 1984; Vol. 54, c. *347*.]

He said for "employers' customers", not anybody else's customers or some remote organisation that the building societies do not own. That is an absolutely clear and unequivocal commitment.

The Prime Minister must have had time to consult the Lord Chancellor—the fount of all Government policy and wisdom, especially on these matters. They were honourable commitments, honourably given, on the basis of which I withdrew my Bill in February 1984. The commitments were confirmed by the Green Paper on building societies. The building societies were promised in that document and on other occasions the ability to offer their customers a full, integrated house-buying service. Since then, the Law Society has roused itself into a paroxysm of fury about the prospects of building societies undertaking conveyancing. The Law Society fears the competition and the loss of revenue and money that that competition might cause.

Conveyancing has provided over two fifths of the revenue of solicitors' practices. I did not fear the Law Society's anger, because the Government clearly were not going to give way to a sectional interest, however powerful. The Government are the custodian of the general interest and do not want to give way to sectional interests. I did not fear the Law Society's anger because competition is integral and central to the Government's policy and the proposal allowed competition.

The proposal allowed a necessary form of competition because house buying and selling is an increasingly rich market. The circles of home ownership are widening and approximately 64 per cent. of the population now own their own homes. More housing is owned by occupiers and occupiers are moving house more often. House prices are increasing, and the fees are based on percentages of purchase price.

There is a rich market, in which there must be increasing competition. There is a lot of loot to share out, if I may put it that crudely, between the interested parties, and an increasing total of revenue to be shared among that competition. It is essential that the Government allow that competition.

The Lord Chancellor began to act in his capacity as the provisional wing, the political arm, of the Law Society, and started to make demurring noises. We now find that the Bill allows building societies to do conveyancing, but only under the regulations which the Lord Chancellor has rushed to announce.

Why has the Chancellor rushed to make that announcement? Does he want to assure the Law Society that all is well and that he will hold the line until the bitter end? There is no other conceivable reason for rushing out the announcement at this stage. The effect of the announcement is that building societies will be able to undertake conveyancing for other people's customers, and that is absolutely ludicrous. Is a customer of the Halifax to be told, "Well, we can do everything else for you, but we would like you to go across the road and have your conveyancing done by the Bradford and Bingley"? There can be nothing more comic that that. Alternatively, conveyancing may be done by a company which the building society does not control. That is just plain silly.

Why should there be a hands-off operation in connection with conveyancing when other aspects of the integrated service are not so restricted? The pretext for that is that there is a conflict of interest, but I stress that that is only a pretext. That is a last-minute argument dredged up by the Law Society and it has no great validity. If ever there was a profession qualified to cope with conflicts of interest, it must surely be the legal profession. Solicitors handle such matters every day and they know how to deal with them. Indeed, conflict of interest does not stop solicitors from setting up property centres. I welcome that as competition, but solicitors do not feel that there is a conflict of interest in property centres; that is for their benefit and therefore acceptable.

Where conflicts of interest do arise they can be coped with by regulations of the Office of Fair Trading. There can be proper safeguards and even prohibitions for

handling certain cases. There can be proper warnings, and no difficulties should arise in coping with the problem of conflicts of interest.

If by conflict of interest we mean that people should have independent financial advice, solicitors are not qualified to give that advice or legally responsible for it. Indeed, many solicitors have a vested interest in recommending clients to building societies with which they have a connection and a financial relationship. That cannot be independent financial advice. It is interesting that both Sir Gordon Borrie and Professor Farron, the chairman of the Farron conveyancing committee, have said that the pretext of conflict of interest is ludicrous. That restriction is therefore not fulfilling an honourable promise honourably given, on the basis of which I withdrew my Bill in February 1984. That makes the Prime Minister and the Law Officers look dishonourable.

I would not have thought that the Prime Minister, with her roll of honour which includes Orgreave, the head of Arthur Scargill, Liverpool and all her other triumphs over sectional interests, would want to be seen to be succumbing to the Law Society, however powerful the society and the legal profession may be on the Tory Benches and in Cabinet. The indecent spectacle of the Prime Minister giving way to such interests should not be foisted on the right hon. Lady by any party that has a real concern about her public interest and standing.

The Law Officers are also made to look deceitful. There is now a cloud of corruption hanging over the City, Lloyd's and other financial institutions and over the country as a whole, which resembles an offshore tax fiddle in many financial markets. Do we want that cloud of corruption hanging over the Government because they betray honourable promises, honourably given to an Opposition Back Bencher to persuade him to withdraw his Bill? The Government cannot want that spectacle, but that is exactly what will happen if the Government persist in the restriction proposed by the Lord Chancellor.

Competition by the building societies is necessary to maintain pressure on conveyancing prices to keep the prices coming down, to keep the market covered and to provide better service for the consumer. That provision will come with the same Lord Chancellor. What we are seeing now is a rearguard action and nothing more. Lord Hailsham is not eternal. *[Interruption.]* My speech might be eternal but Lord Hailsham cannot be.

I should like to make the final point about the selling on of mortgages. It is an innovation from America which is used by local government and which may well be used by financial institutions. Some financial institutions have already displayed interest in the selling on of mortgages as that provides access to capital which, in difficult times of mortgage famine, might be a useful way for building societies to raise money. It is interesting that Barclays bank and the Trustee Savings bank are considering that for their mortgages. The Chemical bank has shown an interest in buying the Alliance or the Bristol and West. I am not sure how it can do that, but there has been interest by American institutions to move into that market.

The Government have stepped in to stop local authorities selling on mortgages in that fashion without the permission of the person who took out the mortgage. That provision is made in the Local Government Bill that will come into effect in two stages, part this year and part next year. That protects people and prevents local authorities from carrying out that practice. It should offer the same protection to mortgagors with building societies that is offered to local authority customers. One would not want a mortgage shunted off, without consent or consultation, over one's head in the superior cattle trading that goes on in financial institutions.

I do not echo the fears of my right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) about unsecured credit. There is no great harm in more unsecured credit, particularly when that comes from institutions we can trust like the building societies. That is competition and is therefore desirable. That form of unsecured credit is preferable to people falling into the hands of loan sharks or hire-purchase contracts with huge rates of interest. I welcome the Bill because the building societies have done a good job in protecting people and encouraging house purchase. The Bill will allow them to do that in ways relevant to a more modern and dynamic society.

6.30 pm

Mr. Eric Cockeram (Ludlow): First, I must declare an interest. I am the parliamentary adviser to the Midshires building society, a society with strong regional links in the west midlands and the north-west. I was a director of the society some years before being returned to this place.

I welcome the Bill, although it does not do everything that one would expect or that building societies want from it. I welcome the Bill because of the contribution that I believe it will make to the nation's housing. I felt that my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury was not as generous as he might have been in his tribute to the building societies movement. It has been one of our great successes since the war. If only other industries had been as successful as the building societies movement. The movement has about 6 million borrowers and 25 million depositors. Building societies overtook the banks long ago as the bankers for the people's savings. Men, women and schoolchildren use the building societies. The societies have been extremely successful, and one of the reasons for their success is that they have proved to be such a safe place for people's savings.

When a building society runs into trouble—happily, that does not happen very often but it has happened enough times to cause us concern — the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies is called in. He is rather like a fireman, who sits in his fire station waiting for the telephone to ring. If someone telephones the fire station because his house is on fire, the fireman will go out to deal with the emergency. That is the role of the registrar. When he receives a telephone call saying that the Puddlecum-on-the-Marsh building society is in trouble, he reaches for his Bradshaw, packs his bag, and goes to Puddlecum-on-the-Marsh.

Who saves the society? Who puts his money where his mouth is? Who looks after the depositors? The answer is the building societies movement, through the Building Societies Association. The association moves in staff and they reorganise the crashed society, whatever the cause may have been, and look after the depositors. There is criticism about the time that it takes to do that, but the building societies movement has always looked after the savings of the nation in those circumstances. I am by no means convinced that the Building Societies Commission will be any better than, if as good as, the present system in protecting the savings of people in societies where something goes wrong.

[Mr. Eric Cockeram]

There is a second aspect of the Bill which disturbs me. It is expensive for a building society to print, envelope, dispatch and post annual reports to hundreds and thousands of its members. The Bill proposes that a depositor with a holding of £100 or upwards shall be entitled to receive an annual report. I think that the sum chosen is too low and that it should be £250. A depositor who puts money into a bank does not receive a copy of the bank's annual report. A depositor can take his money out at any time. I see no reason why building societies should be under an obligation to send reports to depositors with comparatively small deposits. Of course, any depositor is entitled to demand a copy of the annual report, which should be available in any branch of the society.

I fear that the Bill could lead us into a phase where we see many people being proposed for directorships of building societies and a substantial number of contests. The qualifications required for a director of a building society are experience and ability. I do not want to see what may be likened to political canvassing. I refer not to canvassing by politicians but to canvassing for seats on a building society's board. The public, including depositors, want people with experience and ability; they want people in whom they have confidence. I hope that the limited personal details which have to be circulated, and of which I approve, are limited to that which is proposed. I believe that the Bill goes a little too far in the scale of the details that are enabled to be circulated.

Finally, I support the comments of those who have addressed themselves to the proposals for unagreed mergers. The proposals do not amount to the sort of legislation that I would expect from a Conservative Government. The number of building societies has contracted substantially since the end of the war. About 80 per cent. of them have been subject to merger, and some no longer exist. For every five societies that we had at the end of the war, there is only one left now, and that contraction has been accelerating of late. I do not see that there is any cause to provide a further catalyst to encourage the swallowing up of the smaller regional societies, but that seems to be the purpose of the Bill.

The principle of unagreed mergers in mutual institutions is unprecedented. I do not believe that the Government have made out a case for it. The obligation of societies to make available their register of members to outside inquirers is an abuse of confidentiality and will be seen to be so shortly after the Bill, if it reaches the statute book in its present form, is enacted. Insurance companies and other financial institutions would be glad to get their hands on a list of registered members of a building society. They would use it to canvass those who are known depositors in a society. That is not to be encouraged. I do not believe that depositors wish that role to be undertaken by societies.

We should not permit steps to be taken that will encourage the takeover of the smaller regional society by the larger society. The consumer has a wide choice. The individual can make his deposit in a large national society or in his own regional society. Many people make deposits in more than one society. It is not necessary for us to provide a catalyst for further mergers. It should not be made easier to distribute the reserves of a society after an unagreed merger than would be the case with a corporate conversion, but that will be one of the effects of the Bill.

I support Second Reading. Like others, I hope to be a member of the Committee which considers the Bill. I give notice to my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary that there are parts of the Bill that I should like to see amended in Committee.

6.38 pm

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): I do not know how many Second Reading debates I have heard introduced by various Ministers over the past 11 or 12 years. I listened to the speech of the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and it was clear. The Minister was articulate, and it was obvious that he had given much thought to the Bill. However, when he resumed his place I was unaware of the Government's aim in introducing the Bill. I have heard Ministers introduce Bills with aims with which I agreed and there have been Bills introduced with aims with which I have disagreed. In this instance, the Minister seemed to have no real aim. He was not claiming that reform was required to retain building societies in our nation.

The Economic Secretary advanced a number of reasons for the Bill, some of which were amusing. Many Members smiled when he talked about balloting for mortgages. That did not seem to be a strong enough reason for introducing such an enormous Bill. The reasons that he gave for changes being required are hardly ever heard mentioned, or are never mentioned, by the societies.

During the time that I have been in this place I have rarely found myself more in accord with the speech of the Opposition spokesman. The hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) seemed to share my feeling about the Bill. The building societies movement is working extraordinarily well. There may be a case for some changes, but are we not digging up the roots, which have provided life for so long, to see whether we can make the plant grow quicker when we probably cannot achieve that end?

Of all the institutions that are of real value to our constituents—let us declare that they are of interest to us—it is difficult to think of one that has served us better individually, collectively and on a constituency basis than the building societies movement. The building societies have done a superb job, and it is right to put that on record. In considering the details of the Bill, I shall look with a jaundiced eye on anything that casts even a shadow of doubt on the building societies' successful role.

Some hon. Members have referred to the takeover system which, to put it mildly, seems to be rather peculiar. Clearly, there is a case for allowing building socities to merge if they wish. I do not want mergers to continue until all the small societies have been eradicated. Some of the building societies serve a useful purpose in their local communities, as at least two hon. Members have said I do not see why we should make this compulsory unless building societies are or are likely to be in financial difficulty. As I understand it, a small building society which is doing no one any great harm can be taken over against its will by one of the massive building societies, with all of its capacity to advertise and argue. That small building society can be forced to hand over a list of all its members and depositors to enable a ballot and direct mailing to take place. With some limitations, details of which I find difficult to interpret, the large building societies would be able to offer a bonus to the depositors in the small building societies to obtain their votes. Some years ago, Parliament outlawed the practice of offering

financial inducements to obtain votes. I have honest doubts about this measure, but I shall listen to the detailed arguments before I condemn it absolutely.

My sole criticism of the building societies is their endless desire to increase the size of their empires and set up offices in every town. It is not uncommon when travelling to any part of the country in a political or other role and talking to local people about their town to hear people say that everything has been taken over by the building societies. That is not unique to Cornwall or to Northumberland. There is a general feeling that the building societies have been a little too anxious to increase their empires and to think, for prestige reasons, that they must have branches everywhere.

The Bill could provide a new method by which the building societies could expand their empires. That might be done even more cheaply. I suspect that the capital value of the properties owned by the smaller societies is much more, in terms of hard cash, when placed under the auctioneer's hammer than the book value. I remain unconvinced, although I am not paranoid about this issue.

Hon. Members have received a brief from Abbey National stating that the society believes that it should be able immediately to start lending up to 10 per cent. of the money deposited with it and that the amount should be increased to 20 per cent. "in due course." I suspect that "in due course" means "quickly" if the Bill is passed by the House.

I can see that there is some advantage in having another avenue through which people can obtain credit by way of competition. They would be able to obtain the best deal they could find. I wonder about the thoughts behind this proposal, when a building society the size of Abbey National tells us that it wants one fifth of the hundreds of millions of pounds in its care to be used for the purchase of refrigerators, washing machines, beds, Japanese television sets, and so on. The building societies claim that that will allow them greater freedom, but they do not say that there will be a great economic advantage to the country. I can go along with the idea that extra freedom will be provided, but I am worried about the proposal to increase the proportion to 20 per cent.

Mr. Tim Smith: The 20 per cent. limit which Abbey National wants would cover not just unsecured lending, but all the other new activities envisaged by the building societies. If building societies are to invest in those activities, a considerable amount of capital will be tied up in them. I do not think that anyone is suggesting that the whole lot will be used for unsecured lending.

Mr. Penhaligon: I realise that. I have some time for the other activities in this category. I have found that the societies seem to be interested in the direct credit proposal. They will be in the fortunate position of being able to select with more skill than most the very best of credit-worthy customers to whom to lend money. One suspects that they will be able to gather unto themselves some of the best businesses in a particular area. I have gathered from my conversations with building societies that some see themselves going in for consumer credit in a big way. I do not know what the legal definition of "consumer credit" is. I am not arguing with the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) about what politicians would call "consumer credit."

I listened with interest to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell). I recognise his valuable work, but I am not sure that he has reached the correct conclusion. I am an engineer by training, which perhaps makes me as independent as I can be. I am neither a lawyer nor a financier, which is perhaps an advantage in this debate. I am not a lawyer, so I just listen. The hon. Member for Great Grimsby argued for the general expansion of conveyancing, which I applaud. It is proposed that the building societies will offer a portfolio of services but will not be able to offer all the services themselves. They will, in effect, be forced to send a person who comes to borrow money for the purchase of a property elsewhere for conveyancing. The logic behind that argument is that people could obtain independent advice.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby accurately said that one of the new phenomena resulting from 64 per cent. owner-occupation—a wonderful statistic—is that many of the people who buy houses are not prepared to do so by family tradition and advice and perhaps by what the hon. Gentleman calls "middle class expectations". In that case, it is important for the people who are buying a property for the first time—when there is little easily obtainable advice around them — to be able to obtain some genuinely independent advice. The hon. Gentleman's point was that some of the advice that they now obtain is not independent because of the unofficial link between building societies and solicitors. There may be some truth in that. Unless the Bill includes a clause to that effect, any hope that independent advice will be provided for the most vulnerable section of buyers will cease. The Government have a considerable amount of logic on their side.

In my community there is the phenomenon of Mundic block houses—concrete block houses built in the 1920s when tin mine waste as opposed to clay mine waste was used. That waste contains a chemical that attacks cement over 20, 30 or 40 years. The simple hard-nosed truth is that properties built with that product can fall down because it turns to dust. It is difficult to find anyone who will take responsibility for one of those properties. When a house is declared "Mundic", it is the kiss of death. If that label is put on a property, a zero can be knocked off the value.

I am well aware that independent advice is crucial to people who are making what is usually their biggest ever financial transaction. By all means let us have competition and freedom, but let us ensure that ordinary, honest people can obtain the best opportunity at the most opportune moment.

I believe that we will all receive many more briefs from the building societies during the Bill's passage. I should appreciate it if the Minister would again go through that part of his speech in which he outlined the aims behind this substantial piece of legislation. I hope that the Government are not going to contract the biggest of all parliamentary diseases — that because something has not been legislated on for a long time, now is the moment to do so. I look forward to a further description of the Government's aim.

6.49 pm

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): My approach to the Bill is different from that of other hon. Members who have spoken. I should like to start by extending a general welcome to the Bill and in the process to pay tribute to the building societies for the service that they have given to both lenders and borrowers over a long period. In the mind of the ordinary person, they have brought about a perception of integrity and probity. It is

[Mr. Robert McCrindle]

only fair to say that a number of financial institutions have been rather less successful in that regard. However, it is now time to update the basis upon which the building societies operate, to allow them to make a greater contribution to solving the housing problems and to enable them to operate wider financial services than they are permitted to do at present. The underlying caveat to all that is that they should be permitted to do so in fair competition with others.

Speaking as a building society investor and an erstwhile borrower, I welcome a good many aspects of the Bill. By a tidying-up process, I hope that we can look forward to such improvements as an end to early redemption penalty clauses, as I believe they are called. Such clauses, it seems to me, make the transfer of a mortgage more difficult, and make flexible lending just that little bit more difficult than it need be.

Speaking as the parliamentary adviser to the British Insurance Brokers Association, an interest which I now readily declare, I think that the provision of all financial services by the building societies which they are now being enabled to engage upon should be subject to the same stringent controls as is the rest of the financial sector.

It is significant that we are debating the Second Reading of the Bill on the same day that the Financial Services Bill has been published. I think that it is crucial that the same level of protection be extended to the consumer when the building societies are enabled to move into the insurance broking sector. I believe that the very trust which people have placed in building societies, and to which I referred at the beginning of my speach, tends to lead to an assumption of expertise which in my experience is not always present in insurance at the average branch office of a building society. I very much accept and welcome the development of organisations providing a range of financial services and, in the interests of the consumer, I hope that the House will agree that they must be subject to appropriate regulation in relation to the individual services.

With regard to insurance services, the only regulation current in operation which places considerable responsibilities upon practitioners is the Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act 1977. In the proposed financial services legislation, self-regulatory organisations are to be created, which, if anything, will toughen the requirements under which insurance broking is undertaken. Under the Bill, it appears that the building societies are not to be subjected in this field of endeavour to the same level of consumer protection that is now expected of the Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act, or that will be expected of them if and when the Financial Services Bill is enacted.

Can the Minister tell me why the Green Paper proposal that new insurance services should be subject to the existing regulatory regime for insurance broking—that is to say, the provisions of the Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act — has been dropped? I wonder whether the very high repute in which the building societies are held will tend to lead people who now are likely to purchase insurance to a greater extent through their local building society branch to expect a level of consumer protection which is not necessarily involved in the Bill as drafted. I look closely at the proposals in the Bill for protection of building society investors. Unlike some of my hon. Friends, I take no exception to what is proposed, but it seems to me that the level of protection offered to customers in the ancillary services into which the building societies are now being encouraged to move is less substantial than the protection offered to those who place their money only as investors in the building societies.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My hon. Friend is suggesting, I think, that there would be less supervision on building societies carrying out functions for insurance agents and so on than there would be on others in the same market. That is not the case. Building societies would be subject to the same provisions of the Financial Services Bill as anyone else.

Mr. McCrindle: That is a good assurance to have. I have to confess that I have not had the opportunity which my hon. Friend clearly has had to wade through the 165 clauses of the Financial Services Bill. If he is giving me the assurance that, after both Bills are enacted, an insurance broker and a building society offering insurance broking services would have to provide the same level of consumer protection to the customers, that is the assurance which I am seeking. If that is what he is telling me—he appears to be indicating assent—a good deal of the concern that I have been expressing can, indeed, fall away. What I seek is fair competition, adequate control, appropriate expertise and proper redress. If those exist when insurance is purchased through a broker, and if my hon. Friend is telling me that they will similarly exist when insurance is purchased through a building society acting as an insurance broker, that is reassuring.

Mr. Christopher Hawkins: I do not know whether I am correct, but from what I have been told, I believe that the Financial Services Bill does not cover people buying private insurance for a house or motor car. My hon. Friend might like to bear that in mind when accepting the assurance.

Mr. McCrindle: Yes, indeed. One of the things that I noticed—indeed, it was the basis of my intervention in the Minister's speech—is that, although it is a happy fact that there is to be no conditionality in relation to the provision of a mortgage—in other words, a building society will not be allowed to require a customer to place an insurance through the insurance broking subsidiary of a building society—there is no such undertaking in regard to the other areas into which the building societies are being encouraged to move.

I have to say to my hon. Friend the Minister that, although I welcome his intervention, which allays some of my anxieties, there remain some areas in which the fair competition for which I have called seems to be not entirely to the fore. In this area, amendments may be expected in Committee.

I wish to draw to the attention of the House a remarkable omission from the Bill. Nowhere in its pages can I see any reference to the creation of an ombudsman. A noticeable development in recent years in several spheres of financial services is the evolution of the office of an ombudsman. In insurance there has been an ombudsman for a considerable time, and I pay tribute to its enormous success. There is to be an ombudsman in banking also. If I have a choice of effecting my mortgage through a building society, a bank or an insurance company, it is remarkable that in two cases I am to have

access to an ombudsman, but in relation to building societies I am not. I wonder whether some consideration might be given to the desirability of this system. It appears to be here to stay, it has now been proven, particularly in insurance, and it is now trusted. That is why it is being extended to banking, and I believe that building society customers should have the same right.

I repeat that, in general terms, I welcome the Bill. My single reason for addressing the House was to see whether the same level of competition was being encouraged on insurance being sold through insurance brokers, through insurance broking subsidiaries or through building societies. I am grateful for the partial assurance that my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary has given, but there are still points to be covered, to which I shall return in due course.

7.0 pm

Mr. Ken Weetch (Ipswich): The Bill contains few surprises because all the principal issues in it have been well canvassed over a long period in both Government policy and discussion documents and in two recent speeches by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury.

The Bill is long overdue, and for a number of reasons. In the first place, building societies have long outgrown their current legal framework. The Act that governs them is the Building Societies Act 1962. There was nothing new in principle in that Act, because it was based on the same set of principles as the Building Societies Act 1874. Now, in 1985, even in terms of self-help, we are a world away from what society was nearly 100 years ago.

In the second place, the market in which building societies have had to operate has changed because the current financial market place is much more fiercely competitive than ever before, both in the supply of mortgage finance and in the competition for savings. In addition, the structure of financial institutions has altered. Until now, there has been a highly structured system with clear lines of specialist demarcation. We now see many more multi-purpose financial conglomerates emerging. All this has been aided and abetted by the Government's policy on fiscal neutrality between financial institutions. The world has altered and therefore the Bill, which will be on the statute book before summer, is long overdue.

One of the reasons why I look as I do is that I have read every building society debate that has taken place in the House since 1874, and they all have one thing in common. I am sorry to say it, but building societies have always been regarded with a completely uncritical eulogy in which I do not join. I agree that they have done wonders for home ownership, and all credit to them for that, but for far too long they lived in a sheltered world where the only attention that they wanted was of that uncritical eulogy. It was a closed world in which directors did not need, and were not equipped with, entrepreneurial skills of any kind. They were also a self-perpetuating oligarchy with well-used procedures of co-option from among golf club cronies. They usually reserved their energies to keep new blood off the board. I have fully assessed that close interest. In the past, the Anglia and the Nationwide, to name but two, manipulated the rule book to keep genuinely elected members off the governing body, and thereby made a mockery of mutuality.

For many years, the cartel set borrowing rates and lending rates and boards sat comfortably in between. For a good many years, any rocking horse could have been a director of a building society—all they had to do was to avoid financial risks and to keep the books straight. In the cases of the Grays building society, the Wakefield building society and others, the directors did not even have to do that, so weak were the financial procedures.

That is a matter of history, and I make no comment on it. The building societies failed to use their considerable financial clout on behalf of their customers because they connived in and underwrote some of the worst professional restrictive practices in the housing market. However, that is history, times change and the more modern generation of managers and directors have, to their great credit, tried to come to grips with the modern world.

What are we saying about the Bill? Subject to the detailed process of scrutiny and amendment in Committee, the Bill should be supported in principle, because its major aim is right. It is to allow building societies, subject to proper safeguards, to provide a greater range of services for their members, and that is a correct strategy. It is also prudent to do this while keeping the building societies' purpose in the main stream of mortgage finance and owner-occupation.

The legislation is not concerned with what the Government, the bank or the building society directors want. What the punters want is the main point at issue. Building society members want and would welcome an expansion in the range of services. Over the years, as I have gone down to my constituency surgery every Saturday I have seen the queue of people waiting for money transmission services in front of the building society grow and grow. Many people want more money transmission services in building societies.

Building societies have the capacity and confidence of the public that enables them to develop such services. Many consumers look forward to the opportunity of having a package of housing services from under one roof. However, I must say a couple of words of warning to the Government. At this stage of the argument the warning is one of principle that the caution that they have rightly used may be overtaken by events in a rapidly changing financial world. I am speaking particularly about the merger provisions in the Bill and the controversial question of building society takeovers, and even more particularly about the takeover of small building societies by larger ones. The matter could go even wider if public limited companies are formed and normal commercial company practices are not followed.

I was pleased to hear the Economic Secretary offering some additional safeguard. At least he is prepared to do so. The implication of what he said was that he would speak further on these issues in Committee. The last thing that we want to do is to unleash any speculation that would make small building societies pawns in a financial game. That would be bad.

Building societies have always had a deserved reputation for soundness, respectability and public confidence. We do not want the seemingly sleazy edges of current City financial morality to invade sections of the building society movement. Are the safeguards in the Bill adequate? Outside the House there is a lot of doubt about that.

East Anglia is the home of small building societies which have a few branches but which have a lot of local knowledge and flexibility. They do a great service for the local communities in the difficult area of accumulating savings. My hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Dr.

[Mr. Ken Weetch]

McDonald) used the quotation which I intended to use from the *Financial Times* of 7 December when the deputy general secretary of the Building Societies Association, Mark Boleat, warned that there were predators in this area of activity. Many smaller building societies in Britain are worried about the future state of the movement. I quote from a strongly worded letter from the Ipswich building society, which is one of the smaller building societies:

> "It will give access to the register of members to any other building society and this we consider will create a dangerous situation. It may well be that where a small society has high reserves it would enable the much larger society to make offers to members of bonuses as an incentive for a merger and one can see a situation quickly arise where no matter what restrictions are placed on the type of takeover that they would be insufficient to provide any safeguard."

I emphasise to the Minister that that same warning would be given by most smaller societies in Britain and I hope that he will take it seriously. Does the Minister have any vision of the future shape of the building society? Has he any idea of what he wants it to be? It is not in the interests of the building society movement to be dominated by a small number of large societies. It would be unhealthy and would reduce the competitive framework of the movement.

The building society framework should have as much variety as possible. I am not averse to some building societies converting themselves into public limited companies. If we do not try that form of organisation, we shall never know whether it has any advantages. Some societies could remain firmly rooted in the mutuality principle whilst other large societies could evolve new ideas. Some societies—not very many, I hope—could evolve into public limited companies.

The building society movement will run into difficulties right from the start because it is entering a new area of financial management of which it has had no experience. It will be difficult, in the short run, to recruit the financial expertise to cope with the new skills demanded within the new areas of risk that some societies will undertake. Is the Minister optimistic that the building society movement will be able to recruit the necessary expertise as it enters into engagements and activities in Europe? Will such recruits be able to undertake this type of business successfully, especially in the short run? There are doubts about that.

I pay tribute to the registry and the current registrar for the improvements in supervision and control which have been brought about in recent years. I have been a Member of Parliament for 11 years and in that time I have taken a close interest in the registry and how it supervises building societies. There have been occasions when its supervision has been amateurish and not of the professional standard to which we are entitled. I hope that the new commission will be adequately funded and that it will not be a dustbin where all the old lags can find jobs. I hope that the registry will be a highly professional and commendable organisation when dealing with new areas where there will be new problems. The investors' protection scheme will need considerable improvement.

It is encouraging that the Minister has been given a fair wind for his Bill on Second Reading, but a difficult voyage lies ahead in Committee.

7.16 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) after his thoughtful and interesting speech, based on much historical research.

It is good to know that he gives the Bill a general welcome. However, the hon. Gentleman's overall criticism of building societies being out-of-date is unfair. Many of the societies have competent management. I agree that among the 190 building societies there are bound to be some black sheep. The dramatic fall in the number of building societies in the past 10 years from over 400 to 190 may be due to the disappearance of those societies which, in the view of their members, were not well managed. The hon. Gentleman asked how many building societies we would have but that is anybody's guess. The rate of decline in the number of building societies has dropped, and I should be surprised if the figure did not settle down.

I declare an interest in a building society and I certainly welcome the Bill. It pays a warm tribute to the building society movement, which is one of the successes of the century and which has brought home ownership to millions of people. It is right that the Government should move forward with the Bill. Societies should have an opportunity to evolve and adapt to rapid financial changes and the Bill enables them to move forward much faster than under present legislation.

In introducing the Bill, my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury showed the value of detailed consultation. My hon. Friend has worked very hard in the past two years and he has met many societies and the Building Societies Association. For this reason we now have a Bill that has received general welcome throughout the House.

The Bill has four main themes. The first is the removal of many restrictions on lending. The second is a widening of the range of services to bring in Europe, cheque cards, insurance, and the management of land and houses, which will bring the societies into a much closer relationship with the housing associations. We should commend the building societies that have made a special effort to provide accommodation. For example, Abbey National has done much restoration work in Edinburgh. Other societies throughout the United Kingdom have done much to raise the standard of building and show what can be achieved with competent management. The third theme is a strengthening of the safeguards within which building societies will operate. The fourth gives new rights to members and the opportunity to play an active part, which I am sure will raise the eyebrows of many building society managers.

Those are all highly commendable objectives. There is no doubt that, with a Bill of 120 clauses and schedules, the Committee stage will be a gargantuan task. However, the welcome that it has received so far should mean that the Committee stage will not be intolerably long, although many matters are bound to be discussed.

One matter that causes some anxiety is the freedom for market competition. Any competition with the banks must be seen to be fair. Building societies and banks will operate in the same market, yet the building societies will be restricted at first to using no more than 5 per cent. of their total assets. I know that the figure is likely to be increased to 10 per cent. in the foreseeable future, but even

that is too low. Perhaps on reflection the Government will consider starting at 10 per cent. and working up to 20 per cent. Only then would we reach something approaching fair competition. If we do not have such competition, a bull point of the Bill will fall by the wayside.

The freedom to convert to company status is likely to occur only rarely. I do not envisage a flood of applications to change from society to company status, unless the restrictions on the societies are far too tight for them to operate in the changing world of the 1990s. The Government recommend a procedure in the Bill, but the major societies believe strongly that the voting requirements for their millions of members are unrealistic. If that is the only route to company status, surely a simple majority of two thirds of the investors and borrowers in a society would be more appropriate than the complicated system in the Bill.

The key clause deals with the freedom to manage, because the key to a successful building society is the quality of its management from the top down to the counter staff. Many societies have introduced computers, cash dispensers and different business management processes, but at the end of the day building societies thrive because of the personal service that they provide to their customers. That management skill must not be put at risk because of a little coup dreamed up at an annual general meeting, where a small group of members could elect someone unsuited, unqualified and lacking in experience. Management could be at risk if we accepted the proposal in the Bill for a minimum investment of £100 and the support of 10 other members to nominate a candidate. Those figures should be substantially higher—perhaps £300 and 50 members—so that no inexperienced or bizarrely qualified candidates can be nominated or elected.

I welcome the Bill and hope that it progresses quickly through Committee. But during its passage and in the future, we must remember that the Government must continue their economic policy with the prime purpose of keeping down inflation. If they do, we shall have lower interest rates, which the building societies want. After all, lending for house purchase is their prime objective. The lower the interest rates, the more likely they are to achieve that objective.

7.25 pm

Mr. Jim Craigen (Glasgow, Maryhill): As the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) said, this is a sizeable Bill. He may be over-optimistic about the time that it will need in Committee, because it is a big Bill about a movement that has had a large influence in the shaping of the social condition of our citizens and the housing conditions of our communities. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch), who is not known for his uncritical approach to building societies, that we must overhaul the current legislation. However, I am wary about the methods and means of doing that and the likely outcome of some changes.

Like most hon. Members, I am a borrower and an investor in a building society, and, with my right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes), I should declare that I am an honorary vice-president of the Building Societies Association. That post is not financially remunerated.

With the hon. Member for Dumfries, I hope that the importance of mortgage interest rates will be highlighted in Committee. The liberalisation of existing building societies legislation should offer the prospect of cheaper mortgages. It is not simply a matter of improving arrangements for house purchasers; at the same time, we must help members of building societies by the extension of services available.

On classes 2 and 3, I part company with the hon. Member for Dumfries, because I am worried that liberalisation may result in an exodus of resources for house purchase in the United Kingdom as against the availability of such resources in Europe and elsewhere. I can understand people wishing to go to the Continent because of our unemployment problem and our general economic climate. But I hope that not too many holiday homes and retirement homes will be financed from building society deposits that might otherwise go to the regeneration of our inner cities and to the fulfilment of the hopes of those who simply wish to purchase properties in the United Kingdom. The European Community directive on the harmonisation of mortgage credit is forcing the Government in a certain direction. However, I am wary about the exodus of funds from the United Kingdom. The Economic Secretary to the Treasury referred to the primary purpose of building societies and suggested that the legislation will lead to diversification. But the primary purpose of building societies is to encourage home ownership. I hope that that primary purpose will not be deflected becauuse some societies believe that they can get a higher return on capital by investing in high risk areas. If too much speculation of that kind takes place, the Building Societies Commission will be very busy.

I share the misgivings of the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) about the rationalisation of building societies. In some circumstances, larger societies can provide larger services on a more economic scale if they are well managed, but there is nothing to prevent smaller building societies from providing an excellent service for their members. This is a remarkable period. We are living in a takeover society. Private sector takeovers now occur on a very considerable scale, but they do not help to improve the productivity of industry. They merely increase the profitability of some of those private companies that are engaged in takeovers. I hope that competition will not be squeezed because of rationalisation and the considerable cannibalisation of existing building societies.

I know what has been said by all the leading lights about mortgage interest relief. That is not a matter for this legislation, but the availability of mortgage interest relief creates the general climate in which building societies operate. The Fowler reviews of housing benefit, the cuts that are to be made in social services and the pressure that the Government have exerted on rent levels have swung the balance very much against those who, perforce, have to rent property. Instead of exhibiting fiscal neutrality, the Government constantly display fiscal partiality in favour of the home owner.

It is right that those who pay the standard rate of income tax should be eligible for mortgage interest relief. However, it is quite wrong that those who pay a higher rate of income tax should benefit above that from mortgage interest relief. If the Government were to move in that direction it would reduce house prices and thereby increase the opportunity for people to purchase their homes. The Government may find that their social security policy leads

[Mr. Jim Craigen]

inescapably to the logic of doing away, over a five or 10-year period, with mortgage interest relief for those who pay higher rates of income tax.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich referred to the accountability and control of building societies. I need not, therefore, deal with that point, apart from saying that the Building Societies Commission may have to spend more time dealing with the small building societies simply because the larger building societies have larger audit departments. Although many building societies began life as local societies in, say, Halifax, Woolwich or East Anglia, their activities now spread from Lands End to John o'Groats. That leads to special problems about mutuality. It also leads to the problem that shareholders may be unable to attend the meetings of public limited companies held in London or elsewhere, although they would like to take part in them.

The Government have published a Green Paper on home improvements. I am glad that it relates only to England. I hope that the Secretary of State for Scotland has forgotten all about publishing a Green Paper on home improvements in Scotland, because I do not particularly like the contents of the Department of the Environment's Green Paper. My impression is that the building societies were not involved in the Green Paper consultations. I hope that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment will dispel that misapprehension.

The building societies have a considerable role to play in the regeneration of the inner city areas. I hope that the development of partnerships between building societies and local authorities for the regeneration of the inner cities will be encouraged. People do not simply buy their homes; they buy a stake in their community. They are concerned about their immediate environment as well as about a roof over their head. Therefore, it is important that the building societies should be able to play a full part in helping communities to improve the environment. Home owners should feel proud of their environment.

Will the Under-Secretary of State say why Scotland is excluded from the provision for conveyancing services in clause 101? Scottish lawyers need to be watched just as much as do English lawyers, so I hope that the Under-Secretary will refer to that point.

Reform and overhaul of the legislation that governs building societies is now overdue and the Committee stage will be crucial. We must ensure that the right kind of development is encouraged and that social conditions and housing standards are improved. We must beware of some of the fashionable distractions that have emerged from certain quarters. They seek to divert resources that ought properly to be invested in bricks and mortar and in the environment.

It is all very well that the building societies should be able to do this, that and the other, and it is all very well that we are blurring the distinctions, but there is much to be said for knowing that a building society is a building society and not a bank, a financial society or something else. There comes a point when the distinction becomes so blurred that nobody is very clear about what is meant. During the Committee stage we shall try to pin down the Government in order to ensure that what emerges is better than what we already have.

7.40 pm

Mr. John Watts (Slough): I was concerned, before the publication of the Bill, about the basis on which building societies would be allowed to undertake conveyancing work. I feared that a conflict of interest could arise if an employee of a society was also allowed to undertake conveyancing work on behalf of the borrower from the society. I am pleased that building societies are to be permitted to compete for this work, but it is right that they should be excluded from undertaking conveyancing for those who borrow from them. The right hon. Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) asked where a conflict of interest could arise, and his hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) pooh-poohed the idea that any conflict could possibly arise.

After a lengthy meander along the Cornish country lanes, I found myself in agreement with the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon), who made the valid point that if we were not careful the package could be so comprehensive that the most vulnerable in house purchase might never receive any truly independent advice at any stage.

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): Does my hon Friend accept that advice is seldom of the best or the most impartial or most helpful if it comes from someone who is at the same time lending the money?

Mr. Watts: My hon. Friend makes a powerful point. The right hon. Member for Halton wondered where a conflict could arise. He said that the building society and the purchaser had the same interest in establishing good title to the property, and he described that as self-evident. I immediately began to wonder about the terms of the mortgage advance—the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Ottaway), who referred to the severe penalties which some societies impose for the early redemption of mortgages.

Does the right hon. Member for Halton or the hon. Member for Great Grimsby believe that a solicitor employed by a building society would point out to a borrower that the terms on which he was being offered the loan were onerous and that he should consider looking elsewhere? That is only one example—I am sure that I could think of others — where a possible conflict of interest could arise. The Bill gets the balance right on that point.

I did not intend to concentrate on the question of conveyancing. Like my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), I welcome the Bill because it permits building societies to make an even greater contribution to the development of a property-owning democracy in Britain. The creation of such a democracy is a long-standing Conservative objective. It has been a slogan from the 1950s onward. The Conservatives, since being elected in 1979, have done the most to turn that dream into a reality for hundreds of thousands of people. We need look no further than the right-to-buy legislation to realise the truth of that. Nearly 900,000 new home owners have moved from council and other public sector tenancies into home ownership. I welcome the further proposals for extending or improving the right to buy to the sale of flats.

The concept of a property-owning democracy does not centre solely on home ownership. The programme of privatisation and the encouragement of wider share ownership are also important in this context, and a

provision of the Bill will allow building societies from their high street shops to offer some facilities for the sale and purchase of shares. That is a further welcome improvement, although it is a small part of the Bill.

There is no doubt that home ownership remains central to anyone's idea of what a property-owning democracy is about, and policies that encourage the further growth in home ownership are in tune with the wishes and aspirations of the vast majority of our citizens. It is interesting to note that since 1979 the level of home ownership has risen by 1·5 million, including those who have become home owners under the right to buy. Continuing to provide further means of promoting wider opportunities for home ownership should remain at the forefront of our housing policy.

While there has been enormous and commendable progress in facilitating the conversion of council tenants into owner-occupiers, there has been a gap in the total strategy, for the right to buy is not of itself a comprehensive home ownership policy. The gap exists because there has been no effective help available for those not privileged enough to enjoy a public sector tenancy which they can convert into home ownership—people who do not have the means of getting their foot on to the first rung of the ladder of home ownership.

I concede that the figures for the growth of home ownership outside the public sector show that there are still substantial numbers of individuals and families who are able to move into home ownership without any further assistance. That is not to say that it is easy for them or that they can do it without accepting a period of financial hardship. It was ever thus. No doubt most hon. Members have been through those early years of bearing the heavy burden of a mortgage.

My concern is for those who aspire, with the vast majority of their fellow citizens, to home ownership but whose incomes are too low to finance a conventional house purchase—those who find home ownership just outside their grasp at every stage. As their incomes and savings rise, so do the prices of houses, which are always just that bit ahead for them ever to turn their aspiration into a reality.

One of the best solutions for that group, for whom conventional purchase is difficult, is the further development of shared ownership. I speak from personal experience about that, from my six years as leader of the London borough of Hillingdon, where in 1978 we inherited a building programme of 900 houses and decided that our priority was to extend opportunities for home ownership. We offered those houses under construction for sale, with priority to our existing tenants and those on the waiting list who wished to become home owners, and we gave the option of shared ownership.

Over half of those houses were sold on shared ownership terms. The scheme was so popular that queues began to form outside the civic centre in Uxbridge two or three weeks before the date on which the properties were to be released. To avoid the difficulties and hardships of such long waits, we moved to a balloting system—ballots not for mortgages but for houses—as the only equitable way of determining who should benefit from the limited supply of houses that were available under the scheme.

We found almost without exception that purchasers opted to buy the maximum that they could afford. Even though we allowed a minimum of a 50 per cent. stake in a flat or as low as a 30 per cent. stake in a house, people bought the maximum that they could afford. They did not look on shared ownership as a means of paying a minimal premium to get themselves into rented housing. They showed that they wanted to become home owners, and that scheme—part buy, part rent—enabled them to achieve it.

Shared ownership schemes continue to be offered by some local authorities and building societies, but on nothing like the scale that is needed to meet the potential demand. I was sorry to see the demise, because of lack of funds, of the do-it-yourself shared ownership scheme, which operated on a pilot basis a few years ago. It is right that the priorities for public sector housing investment should be improved maintenance and improvements to bring properties up to a better standard, not necessarily in new build or shared ownership, although those are imaginative schemes. I would hold a slightly different view if it were essential that funding had to come from the public sector, but that is not the case.

The Bill makes a major contribution to the development of shared ownership by empowering building societies to participate fully in such schemes. I hope that societies will take full advantage of their new powers, thus extending opportunities for home ownership to a large and new market of potential home owners.

Slough has a housing shortage that arises as a consequence of its economic success. Our unemployment rate is only 6·8 per cent.—the ninth lowest in the country. Skill shortage is the major problem facing companies in Slough. In a recent survey, 82 per cent. of local companies reported difficulties in recruiting skilled labour. Skill shortage is acting as a brake on the further economic growth of companies in my constituency. Slough has had skill shortages in the past. The traditional solution has been to import skilled labour from other parts of the country, but that solution is no longer available, principally because of constraints on housing.

The wider availability of shared ownership schemes and index linked and equity mortgages provided by the Bill could provide substantial help for unemployed skilled workers from other areas who are at present prevented from seeking available jobs in Slough and in other parts of the Thames Valley because of their inability to find a house to rent or to buy. I have in mind especially those who face the substantial gap between the value of a house in, for example, Newcastle and the price that they would have to pay for an equivalent or smaller house in my constituency. Shared ownership is one way in which that problem could be overcome. It could facilitate moving to where the jobs are and where business needs those skills. That would be good for business and for the unemployed.

It is right that the Bill establishes at the outset a limit on the proportion of lending in the non-traditional areas. I welcome the fact that the Building Societies Commission has the power to raise the ceilings. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench will not be slow to amend the legislation, should that prove necessary, when we have had some experience of the legislation in practice. I believe that such amendments could be necessary, because shared ownership will become an increasingly popular form of tenure for first-time buyers and for those who are forced to move round the country for employment reasons.

By increasing access to home ownership a substantial new market will be opened up for house builders. Far more

[Mr. Watts]

opportunities could be created under that scheme than through the old-fashioned and discredited policy of pumping more and more money into public sector housing.

The Bill provides for the hopes and aspirations of thousands, if not millions, of would-be home owners to be met by the private sector through the magic of the market.

7.51 pm

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): The hon. Member for Slough (Mr. Watts) referred to the shortage of housing in his constituency. That is not a problem in Burnley, where there is a surplus of housing stock in the private and the public sectors. That does not imply that we do not have a housing problem — insufficient finance has created one. The growing divide between the north and the south is illustrated by the empty housing stock. So many people are leaving the area, as they did in the 1930s, because of the lack of employment prospects.

I shall follow the general tone of the debate. Most hon. Members have broadly welcomed the principle of the Bill. However, like many hon. Members, I have reservations about aspects of it. Unfortunately, unlike some hon. Members, I will not be able to serve on the Committee because I am already serving on the Standing Committee that is considering the Gas Bill. However, I shall be closely watching the progress of the Bill. I intended to consider it on Report and on Third Reading. I believe that some changes are needed and I would support some of the changes that have been proposed, but I would be unhappy if other changes were made in Committee.

I accept that building societies need to make changes and it is important that they should meet the demands of the customer. I accept that there is a need for building societies to move into the area of unsecured loans. I am not averse to the 5 per cent. limit in the initial stages, which has the ability to rise to 10 per cent. Many hon. Members may forget how recently high street banks went into unsecured lending. When I first left school and worked in a bank more than 30 years ago, most banks did not lend on an unsecured basis. The Midland bank, for which I first worked, was the first bank to introduce personal loans. I recall that when the Midland bank went into personal loans, which was the biggest growth area of unsecured lending—long before the days of credit cards —the other banks frowned upon that departure and the financial institutions in the City condemned it. Noticeably, the other banks rapidly had to follow the example set by the Midland and made personal loans available.

The need for a limit to be fixed does not arise from the fact that building societies would get into financial difficulties, because they will have to consider carefully any application for unsecured loans. My worry is that, if too much money is used for unsecured lending, there will not be enough funds available for their main function—extending home ownership and assisting people to buy their own home.

My constituency has a long tradition of building societies, which is one reason why home ownership in Burnley is well above the national average and above the figure of 64 per cent. that has been mentioned this afternoon. Building societies have had a long tradition of service to the country and they have played a major role in extending the growth of home ownership. That is shown clearly in my constituency. Until two years ago we had the headquarters of the Burnley building society of which we were very proud. Many people in Burnley regretted the merger of that society with the Provincial building society to form the National and Provincial building society at the start of 1984.

Indeed, many people were opposed to that merger—for two reasons. The town became known throughout the nation from the advertising of that society. The building society, along with Burnley football club, promoted Burnley throughout Britain.

Mr. John Mark Taylor: Would the hon. Gentleman's constituents have objected to that amalgamation if the new building society had been called the Burnley?

Mr. Pike: I am sure that the people of Burnley would have been much happier if it had been named the Burnley and Provincial, the Provincial and Burnley, or some such name. The people of Burnley were opposed to the merger and may well have been tempted to vote against it for that reason, but people in other parts of the country would not have done so because they viewed that change in the same way as people will view this Bill. In other words, they were most concerned about the stability of the building society and the features that we all wish to protect, which we hope will be adequately safeguarded by this legislation.

The Burnley building society was known to the people of the town as the Burnley and they regarded it as their bank. Many people in northern towns do not have bank accounts. It is only relatively recently that people have begun to open accounts with the joint stock banks.

The position of the Burnley building society also highlights the problem of non-agreed mergers with which the Bill deals. If that merger had not been voted for by the members of both societies, it would have been wrong for it to be forced through. I have strong reservations about the proposal in the Bill that gives draconian powers to override the wishes of the people whether it be in relation to a relatively small building society or not.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) made the point that East Anglia has a large number of local building societies which, like the Burnley, have a fine local tradition. The same applies in many other parts of the country. If people do not want a merger, there should be no way in which it can be forced through.

We need a Bill which will ensure the safety, security and stability of building societies. We must make sure that the Bill protects the interests of the members, whether they be borrowers or depositors. We must also protect the interests of the staff. There is sometimes a reluctance to remember that the staff's interests must be taken into account. We must be mindful, at a time of technological change, that staffing requirements in building societies are changing rapidly. We must be aware of their concern in that direction.

Given the changes that have taken place in building societies over recent years, it is surprising that, when one looks at adverts, whether in newspapers, on hoardings, on television or in the windows of the building society, one rarely sees share accounts being promoted as share accounts. One sees "liquid gold" accounts, accounts combined with a credit card and higher interest accounts. The different building societies have a wide variety of names to choose from. I am a little worried as to why the share account appears to have been demoted. Certainly it has been played down.

I hope that, as has already been mentioned, when the Bill is passed arrangements will be made for a building society ombudsman. There could well be a need for such a person. The insurance industry has had one for a number of years. Banking is to have one and that has been relatively recently announced. I hope that that will be considered as the Bill progresses. If such an ombudsman were recognised by all the building societies and had real authority in resolving disputes, it would take a lot of work away from the commission and enable the commission to concentrate on its most important task—the supervision of societies. That is important.

I am worried about the views expressed by the Abbey National building society. I have strong reservations about the prospect of a building society changing to a public limited company. It will completely change the concept. Just as I spoke against the Trustee Savings Bank Bill, so I have the same opposition to this principle. Building societies have grown on a mutual basis for many years, and that should not be changed. However, if that provision goes through, it will mean that building societies can be taken over by any bank. I am aware that Citibank of America has said that it is looking for 350 outlets in Britain and a public limited company building society could well provide the outlet that it wants.

The voting requirements need to be strong. My objection to the Abbey National's proposal, and the reason why I would if anything want to go even further than the Bill proposes, is that it wants a simple two-thirds majority. Certainly I support the proposal in the Bill rather than that of the Abbey National, which I could not accept. We need the type of safeguard which would give not only investors but also borrowers a vote. I would welcome that, because they have a right to be involved.

On the question of the freedom to manage and the requirement of deposits for people who stand, I accept the figure of £100 in the Bill. I would not want to see it go up to £250, the sum that the Abbey National is talking about. We must have democracy there. My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich referred to the self-perpetuating system in the past. We do not want to move in that direction.

The staff have strong reservations about the Bill. I met the Federation of Building Society Staff Associations which represents the majority of building society staff. I believe that the Halifax and the Leeds Permanent building societies are not in it, but most of the other big building societies are. It recognises the need for change. Its members wished to make the point that they are not Luddites and they accept that the Bill should go through.

One aspect that the federation would particularly like to see included in the Bill relates to matters affecting staffing and the future of societies. It believes that some consideration should be given to include compulsory consultation, without the power of veto for the staff of building societies. I always support the view that the staff of any organisation should be consulted. I shall be consistent and say that that is a fair point, and I hope that it will be taken into account in Committee. If there is any way of providing such a safeguard, I would welcome it.

I generally support the Bill and will seek to ensure that the safeguards that are in it remain and, if anything, are strengthened. I hope that the one or two points on which I have reservations will be dealt with satisfactorily.

8.8 pm

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): Any debate which calls into question the immortality of the Lord Chancellor is bound to be a nourishing and interesting one. When it also quotes from none other than Clive Thornton, it is clearly a wide and catholic debate, too.

My remarks will not be uncharitable to the building societies. This is no time for being uncharitable, least of all to an organisation which has made a great virtue of borrowing short and lending long. Indeed, it has made a great success of an admittedly privileged and dominant position in a particularly historic market. After all, building societies lend in fairly safe circumstances—with belt, braces and form-fitting trousers, one might almost say. Usually they lend with the security of 105 per cent. or more of the amount of money that they lend, and with the benefit of a mortgage protection policy for which the borrower has to pay, secured by a valuation for which the borrower also has to pay. When we recall that building societies have enjoyed, by statute, certain historical privileges regarding taxation and stamp duty, it is not difficult to see how they have reached their dominant position in the home loans market.

Building societies have been able to benefit greatly from high interest rates. With the dominant position of the societies, usually the home buyer reconciles himself to a society's terms. There is not much variation between one society and another. It is no more than Hobson's choice for the borrower who buys his home. He is consoled, as has been said, by tax reliefs which make him less discriminatory, in looking at the interest rate that he has to endure, than the customer on the other side of the building society's activities, the depositor, who discriminates very keenly as to the institution with which he places his money. It is because building socities have been able to lend money expensively that they are correspondingly able to attract deposits by high interest rates.

Therefore, without being unfair, one can say that the societies have thrived on a high interest rate regime. In the process they have taken a considerable amount of money out of the economy. Of course, they have helped people to become home owners. One would not doubt the virtue of that for a moment. It would not be stretching anyone's credulity too much to say that if any hon. Member had the good fortune to acquire a few thousand pounds that he had not expected—perhaps through the death of an elderly aunt in Australia—and had the choice of investing that money in an engineering company in the midlands or putting it in the Halifax building society, it would not take him long to decide.

There is an absence of symmetry in the workings of building societies. They can offer very good terms to depositors while at the same time lending money quite expensively to borrowers. That absence of symmetry is also shown when interest rates rise. When that occurs, the person who has borrowed money on a mortgage finds that his interest rate rises immediately and automatically, whereas the person who has deposited funds with the society often finds that, to participate in the new higher rate, he has to give notice, close his account and open a new one.

The role of the building societies—certainly in the 1970s, when house prices climbed so dramatically—is

[Mr. John Mark Taylor]

one more reason from the recent past why most fair-minded people will welcome the Bill, and welcome reform within the building society movement. In the 1970s, as many of us remember rather painfully, building societies were still operating on a basis which was such that at one stage in the year they were starved of cash, while at another time they would be bursting with funds and lending uncritically on an inflating property market which they were actually helping to inflate. It is like a shallow tray with liquid in it: if it is tilted a little one way, all the liquid goes to the other end. The system governing building society rates was not them a very discriminating instrument. I think it has improved in recent times.

There are now so many building society branches that some of the high streets in our constituencies are heavily peopled with them. It is a mortmain on the freehold on each of those individual sites. In many constituencies, the high street is decreasingly owned by local people and increasingly owned by institutions from outside the town, with no prospect of those sites ever going back into local private ownership.

The building societies have indeed come a long way from their collectivist origins. Many changes have taken place during that long journey, and we are due for a review. The Bill is a substantial one and a serious attempt to carry out a comprehensive review. I welcome it.

8.15 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): This is, in a sense, a rather nostalgic occasion for me. My family have had much to do with the building society movement in the past century. The Abbey National building society was founded by my great-grandfather, William Cash, and his cousin, John Bright. But we now have to move into the 20th century.

I welcome the Bill. It provides an opportunity, in an intelligent and good framework, to ensure that the young people of tomorrow — and, I hope, those of the immediate future—will be able to get access to funds, which they have had some difficulty in doing. It is of the greatest importance that young people should be able to acquire homes for themselves. The Bill should go a long way towards helping them so to do.

My first point concerns competition. I raised it when the Administration of Justice Bill was going through the House last year. We could be moving into a situation in which we have effectively four main clearing banks which control a series of services, many of which are set out in the Bill. Incidentally, the Bill has to be read closely with the Financial Services Bill, which was released today and forms a kind of kaleidoscope of legislation in this field.

There is no definition of investment in the Bill. That is extraordinary, as there is an extensive definition of investment in the Financial Services Bill. I should be grateful if the Minister would consider that point.

I am slightly concerned about clause 32(2), which enables the Treasury, by order, to vary the power to provide services

"by adding to or deleting from it any description of service or any provision or by varying any description of service".

Will the Minister consider whether that is going too far? Will he let us know in due course exactly what is intended by it? As it is related to financial services, it would seem that the Treasury would have the power to extend to almost anything the services that a building society could provide. I shall be grateful for some indication of the direction in which the Minister thinks that the power is likely to be used.

Clause 86 relates to the transfer of business to a commercial company. The 20 per cent. restriction — given that there is the power to do the conversion — should be much more easily obtained than by the 20 per cent. rule that is being imposed. Given that building societies are to be enabled to do it, I have some reservations as to whether the cost is justified in the circumstances.

The press note that was published on 6 December says that comments to the Treasury are invited by the end of January. I understand, therefore, that that is part of the consultative process of Second Reading. I ask the Minister if he will look at the matter. I understand the reasons for including the 20 per cent. rule, but I feel that if it is to be done it will be done at great expense by a few of the building societies and I wonder if it is as important as has been claimed.

I wish to refer again to the subject of competition. When I was studying the material for the Administration of Justice Bill 1985 I came across a speech by Sir Gordon Borrie about the provision of competition in conveyancing. He said that it was important to have an element of weed killer that he would liberally supply, if given the opportunity, to make sure that there was competition in the provision of conveyancing services as and when provided by the main institutions. As we move into this new era of competition between the banks and the building societies, I ask the Minister to make sure that we do not end up with the banks having such a stranglehold over the system that the consumer at large finds that without that dose of weed killer he is faced with cartels which have a tremendous amount of monopoly power in terms of land tenure, stock jobbing, insurance, brokerage, estate agency and conveyancing services. I am concerned that there might appear to be competition but, although justified in international terms, from the consumer's point of view there is a near monopoly.

Perhaps the Minister will have an opportunity to explain those matters in Committee. I welcome the Bill and I look forward to hearing the Minister's comments.

8.22 pm

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): Like many right hon. and hon. Members this evening, I must declare an interest in this matter, although it is a negative interest. If it were a theatrical performance, the programme note would carry an item that read "Mr. Viggers appears by courtesy of the Portsmouth building society."

I join other right hon. and hon. Members in praising my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury for introducing the Bill and for all the work that I know he has put in in the many months since its gestation began. He has taken great care in consulting many people, building societies and others, and it is a great tribute to him that most of the debate has been criticism of points of detail. Broadly speaking, the Bill has the support of both sides of the House.

I support the modernisation and liberalisation of the building society movement, but I am concerned about three clauses. Clause 84(2) gives a building society access to the list of members of a building society which it may wish to acquire or merge with. I am concerned for several

reasons that another building society should have access to a target building society's list of members. The list has considerable commercial value. Larger societies might try to pick off smaller societies for various reasons. The new commission will have the power to regulate the reserves of societies and it may be that a society which has insufficient reserves will find it an attractive proposition to approach another society that has more adequate reserves in an attempt to merge.

Some hon. Members have referred to rationalisation in building societies. It has been pointed out that the number of building societies has reduced from 400 to 190 in 10 years and it is likely to reduce further. I quote from Mr. Peter Birch, the chief general manager of the Abbey National building society, who was interviewed on television on 8 December 1985:

"there are far too many Building Societies — in some High Streets there are 25 Building Society Branch Offices. The number of societies must reduce dramatically in the near future"

There will clearly be a desire on behalf of some managers of building societies to merge with others and I think that the reduction in numbers in the past 10 years has shown that building societies are receptive to mergers. I do not think that it would be a good idea to open the door to contested mergers.

Unfortunately, I have some experience of a contested takeover, not among building societies. I am the director of a small oil company. By oil company standards "small" means about £70 million market capitalisation. We were subject to an aggressive takeover about a year ago. It took about £500,000 of legal fees, accountancy fees and circulars to beat off that unwelcome takeover bid. That did not include the cost of any advertising. We must think of the problems that would occur if one building society were to approach another and seek to merge with it against the wishes of the target building society. The money deposited by investors in the building society would be used in a contested bid. That is not what the money is there for.

My hon. Friend has taken great care to build restrictions into the Bill which will prevent building societies from being taken over. I respect the fact that he has included a provision so that the members of the target company have to pass a resolution in terms of borrowers and depositors. There are restrictions on the minimum number of people who can vote in the meetings of the building society to approve a merger and so on. My argument is that we do not want to be involved in that area at all.

Mr. John Fraser: I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman will explain something that has always mystified me. Why do smaller building societies — I think the Portsmouth building society is one of them — tend to place their mortgages through brokers who take commission from borrowers and tend not to use panel solicitor arrangements? That increases the cost to borrowers. Why is that more prevalent in smaller building societies than large ones? Is that one of the things that they are sensitive about in relation to takeovers?

Mr. Viggers: The hon. Gentleman is an experienced Member of the House and, I think, a practising solicitor. I think that he is probably in a better position to answer that than I am. I cannot speak on behalf of the smaller building societies with whom I have no connection other than that which I have disclosed. The smaller building societies with whom I have had discussions and who have informed me of their position appear to be extremely successful in their rate of growth and in the service that they provide to their customers and depositors. Other than that, I cannot answer the hon. Gentleman's question.

My second concern is clause 82. It is a question born of interest rather than a concern of substance. Borrowers are to be given voting rights for the first time in the Bill. It is interesting that that should be the case. I cannot see that a borrower from a building society should have any more right to vote over the future of the building society than a person who has an overdraft from a bank. One may think that a borrower from a building society is in a more stable position than a person who has an overdraft at a bank. However, the average mortgage lasts approximately seven years, whereas a bank customer is usually there for life. It is a staggering fact that a young person is more likely to get a divorce than to change his clearing bank. Therefore, there is more stability in overdrafts than in borrowing from a building society.

Mr. Christopher Hawkins: That figure about the average mortgage lasting seven or five years is an illusion because that is how often, on average, people move. They then take out another mortgage or transfer the mortgage to another house. The building societies continue to quote that figure and it is terribly misleading.

Mr. Viggers: I accept my hon. Friend's point. I do not have any figures, and I do not know whether any hon. Member has, as to the number of people who return to the building society which they were previously with. I suspect, as my hon. Friend said, that they frequently return to the same building society. I accept his point.

My third point relates to my anxiety about clauses 11, 12 and 18, which refer to the restriction of the building society's right to lend on premises which are defined as

"for a person's residential use".

The inter-relationship between those clauses means that a mortgage can be granted on freehold and leasehold estate, provided that it is not more than £60,000 to any one borrower or limited company. The restriction is intended to apply so that not more than 10 per cent. of the amount lent by a building society will be for premises other than those which are for the residential use of the borrower. To find the definition of

"residential use of the borrower"

we have to go to other clauses.

The question then arises whether premises are exclusively owner-occupied. In areas such as that which I represent there are many guest houses, rest homes, hotels, flatlets, bed-sits, and shops to which loans are made. It may be that 40 per cent. of those premises are not occupied exclusively by the owner. Large parts of those premises are in common use. I am worried that building societies might be unduly restricted if they have to make 90 per cent. of their loans on premises which are occupied exclusively by the owner. Will my hon. Friend consider that point, which has been made in writing? I hope that he will take it into account in Committee.

8.31 pm

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): This is the first entirely new legal framework for the building societies movement since the Building Societies Act 1874, and it is right that it should be debated at some length today. Much has changed since then, with societies wishing to extend their range of services. In considering the Bill, the House is modernising and strengthening the operations of societies,

[Mr. Conal Gregory]

including the establishment of a Building Societies Commission and a new statutory investor protection scheme.

I fully support extending investor choice, commensurate with adequate safeguards. The conversion procedure should allow those societies which wish to develop beyond the present legislation to evolve to the benefit of their members. However, we should not lose sight of the raison d'etre of the building societies, which is to facilitate the purchase of homes. Everything else is ancillary. Widening the package of services to include estate agency, valuations and survey work may be helpful, but it may be a grey area where there is a conflict of professional loyalty between service to the society and those seeking funds.

The management of residential land and the operation of services in other European Community states can be seen as useful adjuncts to the societies' overall role.

Building societies have greatly assisted individuals and families to become home owners. They serve about 25 million people. It is right, therefore, that the Bill restricts 90 per cent. of lending to owner-occupiers with first mortgages. After all the Conservative party encourages saving and investment, fosters home ownership—now about 62 per cent. of the population—and promotes improvements in housing standards.

I believe the members of the Building Societies Association to be honourable, and I am proud that Yorkshire is the home of no fewer than 11 such societies —seven giants in the form of the Bradford and Bingley, Halifax, Leeds and Holbeck, Leeds Permanent, National and Provincial, Skipton and Yorkshire; and four fine, if smaller, societies: Barnsley, Beverley, Scarborough and Sheffield. All 11 of those Yorkshire-based societies give greater protection to investors than other non-association building societies by Government designation as eligible for trustee investment status, and by being members of the Building Societies Association's investors' protection scheme.

However, there are 32 building societies nationally which do not belong to the association. I seek assurances from my hon. Friend that investors will be adequately safeguarded. Some of the societies have sizeable liabilities —the Century with over £6·1 million, the Foresters with over £1·7 million, Kidderminster Equity whose liabilities exceed £2·7 million, Louth, Mablethorpe and Sutton with over £3·3 million, Merseyside with over £2·7 million and Thrift with over £9 million. Three societies in the group are based in Yorkshire—the Capital and Counties of Sheffield, Kirklees of Dewsbury, and the Ecology of Keighley which has some admirable aims in revitalising older property. The liabilities of all those non-association members exceed £60 million. Those societies include some with enticing names such as the British building society, the County of London building society, and the United Kingdom building society, and, one might add, the Immigrants building society which might well appeal to ethnic minorities.

Investor protection under the Bill must be more beneficial than that of the association which is less than 100 per cent. The Bill suggests a level of protection of only 75 per cent. That is much less than should be acceptable to those who entrust their savings to the building society movement. Why should less than 100 per cent. be set in statute?

On the plus side for investor protection, I welcome the hope that societies that are currently outside the scheme will come within the range of the Building Societies Commission and safeguard funds deposited with them.

Whilst I have drawn my hon. Friend's attention to the need to protect the investor through the full range of institutions that seek the status of a building society, the greatest omission from the Bill is in respect of protection for the borrower. I give three telling instances. The first is the differential rates of interest, the second is portability, and the third is penalty clauses.

On differential rates of interest, the societies are quick to respond to market forces for investors but slow for borrowers. There is such a wide turn that societies could assist by reducing their management charges which are about £1·19 for each £100 of assets managed.

With regard to portability, societies should not make it difficult for borrowers to transfer their mortgages. Portability is an important factor in job mobility. Penalty clauses should be outlawed. For example, societies should not seek to impose three months' penalty interest if a mortgage is redeemed within three years of its commencement.

Whilst the authorisation regulations ensure that building societies have to maintain a minimum liquidity ratio for trustees' funds, clause 19 does not continue that requirement, but it sets an upper ceiling. There is no minimum reserve ratio as presently set out.

It will surprise many inside and outside the House that societies have allowed their liquid assets to rise to about one-fifth of total assets—20 per cent. plus. That is excessive. It goes beyond a reasonable buffer level of, say, 8 per cent., but the Bill permits an increase to 33·5 per cent. If the primary role of building societies is to assist home owners, their funds should be invested substantially in bricks and mortar.

I echo the warmth expressed already for the friendly and helpful attitude of building societies' staff. I know that those in York are held in high regard and enable many citizens of all ages to have a solid stake in a property-owning democracy. More competition and freer financial services will benefit all who seek to own a roof over their head and build up a small nest egg for the future. The Bill takes us further towards those objectives. I commend it to the House.

8.40 pm

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): I welcome the Bill, as far as it goes. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary on the work that he has put into producing it over the last two years.

The Bill is really the product of an agreement between the Treasury and the Building Societies Association. As a result, I find it unduly cautious and unduly conservative. Of course, no one should underestimate the major contribution that building societies have made to home ownership, but I am always a little suspicious when people get up, one after the other, and tell us just how wonderful something is, and when they are generally euphorically ecstatic about it.

The myth that building societies are the only institutions that could contribute to home ownership was destroyed quickly when the clearing banks moved into that

market four or five years ago. As I said in an intervention, they are now very big in that market and service a large number of people. Therefore, it is not only the building societies that are making a major contribution.

Today, the financial services market is changing rapidly, and building societies are well placed to take advantage of the growth and the proliferation of financial services. That growth has, in part, been stimulated by the Government's policy initiatives on the extension of share ownership and on personal pensions, all of which is to be welcomed. The building societies are well placed because of their branch network and their prime positions in many high streets.

If we allow building societies to compete, they will do so on an equal basis with the clearing banks. For too long, the clearing bank cartel has been left untouched. At the top end of the market there is fierce competition for business. The Americans are falling over themselves to lend to the likes of ICI. But at the bottom end of the market there are four stodgy old clearing banks with little to choose between them. It is the small business man who is the loser. Of course, he is partly to blame because, when he asks to borrow money, he is so frightened of being turned down by his bank manager that the last thing that he asks about is the rate of interest.

What bank ever rang a small business man and offered to lend him money? What clearing bank employs people as salesmen? For too long the clearing banks have had it too cosy. As a result, the cost of borrowing is far higher for the small business man than it need be.

There are only two solutions to the problem—first, the clearing banks should be broken up, or, secondly, they should be subjected to more rigorous competition. I cannot envisage any Government agreeing to breaking up the clearing banks. Indeed the Labour party wants to nationalise them, so competition would be completely eliminated. The solution must be more competition. However, effective competition can be provided only by institutions that already have a branch network. In practice, it must be the building societies.

The Bill is too restricted to allow that to happen. That is because of the deal to which I referred between the Building Societies Association and the Treasury. The association is unduly cautious because most building society general managers have never worked anywhere other than in a building society and are frightened of radical change.

One man who does not fit that category is Mr. Peter Birch, the chief executive of the Abbey National building society. On the competition point, he says that societies have to compete with their hands tied behind their backs. The Abbey's total assets are about £20 billion. The 5 per cent. restriction means that it will be limited to lending no more than £1 billion unsecured, rising to £2 billion. That sounds a great deal of money, but we need only look at the clearing banks' figures to put it into perspective. Mr. Birch believes, and I agree, that the 5 per cent. and 10 per cent. figures should be doubled.

Then there is the question of incorporation. My view is that the Bill should require all societies to incorporate and become subject to banking supervision within 10 years of the passing of the Bill—that is by the end of 1996. We could then do away with the two separate bodies of law and the two separate regulatory structures designed to regulate two groups of institutions that should, in due course, be competing as equals.

Mr. Birch does not go as far as I would. He simply states, and I agree, that the proposals for voluntary conversion are so restrictive as to be unachievable. In particular, the proposal that 20 per cent. of depositors should vote for incorporation is wholly unrealistic. The Halifax would need 1·5 million votes in favour and the Abbey National would need 1·6 million votes.

We must remember that votes are not weighted as they are in companies. If I have £1 invested in a building society, I have one vote. If I have £20,000 invested, I still have only one vote. It is an absurd voting structure.

Mr. Christopher Hawkins: Why?

Mr. Smith: That is self-evident. Building societies have millions of investors and they must treat them all as equals. They must send out millions of copies of the annual report and accounts. Most people do not put their money into a building society because they want a copy of the report and accounts, because they want to make the building society accountable, or because they want to participate in the reserves. They do so because they want security for their money.

The voting structure is nonsense. We could overcome the problem of incorporation if we recognised that large depositors should have more say than someone who invests 50p. The system is a nonsense. Only a tiny majority of depositors actually take any interest in the affairs of the society in which they invest. They do not invest to become members of the society; they are probably not aware that they are entitled to shares in the reserves. They invest for security, accessibility and convenience.

I once went into a building society and asked for a copy of its annual report. The counter clerk had no idea of what I was talking about. The return had to be obtained from head office. That is how often investors ask about a society's affairs and that is how much interest they take in the society. Therefore, why are we intending to make it so difficult for societies to incorporate?

In a relatively protected business environment, building societies have been a great success. They have marketed their limited but expanding range of services effectively. Their high street branches are much more attractive and inviting than those of the clearing banks. This Bill offers a great opportunity to allow them to take on the monolithic clearing banks. If they are to succeed, as Mr. Birch said, they must not have their arms tied behind their backs.

8.46 pm

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): Like other hon. Members, I must declare an interest as a borrower and a lender, and, of course, as a solicitor. It is only right that I should declare the latter. My hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) is not here, but some matters involving solicitors evoke great passions. It is almost as though Mr. Eddie Shah had undertaken to do his own journalism, and also to sub-contract for others as well.

I can quite understand why these matters will be debated with great passion. There needs to be an occasion on which that single issue can be discussed by the House. There needs to be an opportunity to vote on that issue alone. The issue has been raised not only by my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby, but by other hon. Members.

[Mr. John Fraser]

I have to make a second declaration, which is not one of interest but one of affection and love. Like many other hon. Members, I am a fan of the building societies, and even more so of the principle of mutuality and of the non-profit making structure that building societies represent.

Of course, building societies are not without their blemishes, although it is very difficult to find many serious blemishes on their record during the past couple of hundred years. Even when blemishes have arisen, the movement has rallied round. For example, it did so when the South London building society was at risk; the Woolwich building society assumed its obligations and came to the rescue. In broad terms, the building societies have fulfilled the functions that they set out to fulfil when they were formed 200 years ago. They provide finance for housing at reasonably cheap rates.

It is worth while reflecting for a moment upon the success of building societies. On the whole, they have been efficient organisations. I have found them personal and free from the mystique and fear that the banks impart to people wanting to borrow money. They do not engage in the excessive pontificating and remuneration associated with the top bankers. The building societies' operating margins have been extremely keen compared with other private sector lenders and Government organisations. Above all, the building societies have been patriotic. I agree with the Economic Secretary to the Treasury that building societies exist to provide housing in the United Kingdom. Broadly speaking, they should continue to fulfil that function.

I have recently been in correspondence with a bank, although I do not know why it circularised me. I opened a letter one day in which one of our leading banks told me that I should now invest in Germany and in German growth. I dropped it a note about patriotism, which I assume it dismissed. The following month I received another note from the bank telling me to invest——

Mr. Penhaligon: In Japan.

Mr. Fraser: The hon. Gentleman is correct; he must know which bank I am talking about. The same bank is fairly heavily committed in Argentina and I do not suppose that there are many countries in which it would not put its money if it thought that it was possible to turn a penny for its shareholders.

I do not wish to spend time castigating the banks, but there is a strong distinction between banks and building societies. The banks, because they think it is in the interests of their investors and their shareholders, are ready to push their money into any part of the world, without morals or remorse. The banks believe that it is their function to make the maximum profit by any form of operation and the bank rate tribunal some years ago revealed the full depth of these operations.

In contrast, the building societies are patriotic bodies —partly because the law does not allow them to be anything else. I hope that the building societies continue to provide the £100 billion for investment that is largely sunk in Britain. If there is a choice between providing money for people who are badly in need of housing, whether in Brixton, in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mr. Craigen) or in any other area, providing money for jobs or lending money to buy second homes on the Costa del Sol, I would want the money to be invested in Britain, in our future and our jobs. No aspect of building societies legislation should weaken the building societies' long-standing tradition of investing in this country.

Building societies are proof that the profit motive is not the only motivating force. They have shown that social ownership in a competitive environment can be a roaring success. That has been such a success that the building societies have written their own White Paper — the Government did not write it—for reform. That is why the Bill is before the House today. The last thing I want to see is the building societies turning into a capitalist institution modelled on the banks. I admire, and the Opposition want to preserve, the principle of mutuality, based usually on one person, one vote. We would like to add to that principle the principle of accountability.

If there is to be any change, there should be legislation to make the banks into mutual organisations rather than to turn the building societies into public limited companies. I welcome the Economic Secretary's comments about the greater accountability of building societies to their members.

The Opposition are wholly opposed to the proposal that building societies should be able to convert themselves into public limited companies. The Treasury proposals are very much constrained. Massive constraints are built into the idea that a building society can convert into a public limited company. I realise that the clause relating to that is a dummy clause. I hope that the Government, like a baby growing up, will throw the dummy away and remove the proposal to convert to public limited companies. I have some reservations about the practices of some of the smaller building societies, but it would very much divert the energy of the building society movement if it were to start becoming involved in contested takeovers. There is a good case for dropping those provisions.

It is suggested in the building societies' document of February 1984 that the movement should be able to lend overseas, especially to EEC countries. I think that it would be a pity if that were to happen. It would be a drain on investment. There is enough money pouring out of Britain already to invest in industry elsewhere without the building societies joining the queue.

As I understand it, it is proposed that the building societies should be enabled to invest comparatively small sums in subsidiaries, which will then raise funds for lending on the purchase of property outside the United Kingdom. If that is done by a subsidiary which raises its funds locally—there can, of course, be a link with the United Kingdom society—that is all right. If it means a flood of funds leaving the United Kingdom, I am opposed to it.

I do not believe that it is necessary for building societies to place their mortgages via brokers. It should not be necessary for a borrower to have to pay a broker. He will have to pay the broker for finding a mortgage with one of the smaller building societies and, in effect, he will pass on a substantial commission to the broker on the arrangement of life assurance. A society's lending policy should be open and known and not a vehicle for others to make a profit out of the house purchase transaction, which is not necessary.

We need a strong consumer voice in the running of building societies. In the past, this has asserted itself through the National Consumer Council. There have been changes in policy, so that borrowers now have a choice of

insurer for their fire insurance. A good deal of pressure has widened the system of panel solicitors, which has reduced the cost to the borrower.

I want to see a strong consumer voice on the Building Societies Commission. I understand that it is intended that there should be between four and 10 members. When the Minister replies, I hope that he will tell us how many of the members will be consumer representatives.

There is no need to be afraid of an open discussion between the Building Societies Commission and the building society movement about the development of building society policy. For instance, the commission and the movement should not be afraid to ask building societies about their redlining policy. I know that that policy has diminished considerably and that societies such as the Abbey National have done a great deal to help in the purchase and renovation of properties in the inner cities. However, I hope that the consumer members of the Building Societies Commission will press for openness of building society policy on lending in the inner cities, which were called redline areas. I hope also that they will encourage building societies to develop policies that bear on the categories of borrower, so that there is a fair spread of lending covering those at each end of the income range. I trust that the spread will include lending to those from different ethnic origins and to women as well as to men. Much more information should be provided to members as well as consumers.

I hope that building societies can be encouraged to take a public view on their proposals for unsecured lending. I understand the societies' argument that, if they are to run current accounts and guarantee cheque systems, there is always the risk that someone may run into overdraft and need to have unsecured lending provision. On the other hand, for building societies to lend as much as £20 billion unsecured, for purposes unassociated with housing, would be a great departure from the traditional role of building societies, and one that I would regret.

I should like to see the societies using their powers for unsecured lending—which is limited to 5 per cent. of their lending — for top-ups on repairs, for example, when someone is short of money, cannot afford to repair his home without borrowing and does not want to go through all the formalities associated with a further advance. Unsecured lending could well be used for other forms of housing expenditure instead of using that provision for entering into competition with the banks.

The hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) wants to see the building societies with the shackles taken off as the big competitors of the banks. That is a perfectly honourable aim. If I had to choose between the building societies having the shackles taken off to provide more money for housing and the building societies having them taken off to provide more competition with the banks, I know where the Opposition's priority would lie—in the provision of housing.

We believe that legislation should codify the best voluntary standards to protect investors. It is wrong to have a doctrine of equality of misery with the banks. The guarantee to investors should be at least 90 per cent., and preferably 100 per cent., which would make the large building societies more careful about the activities of those who might be at risk.

At the moment, building society lending is almost exclusively for owner-occupation. We should not be too starry-eyed about this, because the Bank of England calculated in one bulletin that about half the money that was being lent for the purchase of homes was leaking into other forms of financing, such as for use in borrowers' businesses, in trading up to get the advantages of capital gains and in purchasing consumer goods. One must not make too light of this. There has been a series of commentaries on this matter, including "Faith in the Cities" and the reports of the Duke of Edinburgh, and even commentaries from building society organisations. There is concern about the use of subsidised money which is not going primarily in the provision of housing but is being fed through the system of house mortgages for other purposes.

There is an overwhelming demand for private housing to buy, which is being satisfied by the building societies movement, but the overwhelming need, as opposed to the overwhelming demand, is for low-cost housing to rent, or to buy, or for mixed tenure. I should like the building societies to put more money into meeting the overwhelming need for housing as well as the demand for funds simply for house purchase. In some ways, the Bill does not go far enough in giving the building societies movement flexibility to lend for different kinds of tenure.

I am not certain that it is right to restrict building societies to 90 per cent. lending for class 1 assets when they could be lending or investing more money in, for example, shared ownership schemes. They could put their money into many other types of schemes—for example, for the purchase of property for the elderly. Many elderly people want to get out of their large houses, to realise their capital and move to a combination of renting and purchase so that they can release some of their capital for their old age. I should like building societies to encourage such an operation. I want them to put money into shared ownership schemes and towards housing to rent. Within the primary purpose of providing money for housing, I think that building societies may be too restricted in the percentages laid down for lending for house purchase.

Improvements and repair are another aspect where we could do with some experimentation in the way in which building societies help housing. The repair and improvement policy is in an absolute shambles. Because of the way in which housing investment programmes have been cut, many local authorities, whether Labour or Tory —there is no longer any political distinction between Labour and Tory authorities — have had to cut their house improvement and repair programmes arbitrarily. That is to the great distress of many individual house owners and, in the long term, is to the disadvantage of our housing stock.

It might be a good idea if the Government were to look at ways in which the building societies — I am not excluding the local authorities in any way—might help a great deal more in housing repair and improvement rescue operations. Some subsidy might be channelled through building societies. They are well equipped to react quickly to borrowers' needs. We have these new powers to provide for unsecured lending. I am sure that is worth exploring at a time when there is a virtual famine of money available to the poorer owner-occupier for housing and repair. Many of the Bill's provisions will help the building societies to compete with the banks for housing funds on fairer terms. As a result of the Bill, I hope that even more money will flow into the provision of housing, which is still one of the country's greatest needs.

In so far as the Bill fulfils those purposes, we welcome it. In so far as the Bill contains aspects which may weaken

[Mr. Fraser]

the general thrust of the building society movement, we should examine them carefully in Committee. With those reservations, we support the Second Reading of the Bill.

9.5 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sir George Young): The debate has been a little like a mortgage—it has lasted somewhat longer than was envisaged at the outset—but it has been a good one, and bodes well for consideration of the Bill in Committee. My hon. Friend the Economic Secretary and I have made notes of the detailed points raised in the debate.

Hon. Members have shown considerable allegiance to small local building societies and have spoken of them in affectionate terms normally reserved for their football teams. I shall say a word about smaller societies later.

The Opposition motion says

"That this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill".

There seems to me to be a slight discrepancy between that and what the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) said in his closing remarks—indeed, what every Opposition Member said, apart from the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald). I think I can say without distorting the facts that, almost without exception, Opposition Members welcomed the broad thrust of the Bill and the general principles behind it, although, of course, with reservations about one or two aspects that will be examined in Committee.

I thought that the speech of the hon. Member for Thurrock was a rather conservative one. The reality is that the building societies now operate in a changing world. The legislative framework which may have been right 100 years ago is no longer appropriate. If we are to harness the energy and resources of the building societies in the ways explained by the hon. Member for Thurrock, we must look at the framework and modernise it. There was a general consensus, I think, that the Bill proposes a package of sensible measures that will enable those objectives to be achieved.

My hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) was anxious that the traditional role of the building societies should remain. As I believe he knows, at least 90 per cent. of their business will be devoted to their traditional function of mortgage loans for house purchase. I give him the assurance for which he asked on any necessary changes to the conversion procedure. I commend him on his successful campaign on index-linked mortgages. I think that he is right to juxtapose the measures in the Bill giving access to index-linked mortgages with the existing entitlements under the right to buy. It may well be that a number of local authority tenants, when they re-work the sums, will find that with an index-linked mortgage they are better off buying council houses with a discount than remaining tenants.

The right hon. Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes)—one of the many vice-presidents of the Building Societies Association who spoke in the debate—made what I thought was a realistic contribution. He outlined what was in it for the building societies. It is of course the case that the Building Societies Association has welcomed the Bill.

There was quite a lot of debate on unagreed mergers. An unagreed merger is one that is unagreed by the board, not by the members. If one is to follow the principle of mutuality, which is control by the members, it is right that decisions about the future of a society should be taken by the members. As the law now stands, a building society board can effectively veto any merger proposal it happens not to like simply by refusing to circulate the proposal to members. This may be for reasons that are in the narrow interest of the board rather than in the broader interests of the society as a whole. I do not see why building society boards should be accorded this privilege.

That having been said, we recognise the fears expressed by hon. Members which reflect the concern of the smaller societies. Without some safeguards, it might be possible to abuse the procedures. The new merger procedures in the Bill embody a few safeguards. For example, no small society can merge with a much larger one without the consent of at least 20 per cent. of those eligible to vote. My hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) said that that was rather a hurdle to overcome, particularly in the larger societies with a fluctuating membership, and limits will be placed on cash bonuses to members, so preventing one socieity from buying off the members of another with large payments from its own reserves. At the moment, there are no such restrictions, so that will be an additional safeguard.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Cockeram) made a point about the costs of the annual report and drew an analogy with bank depositors, who are not entitled to receive an annual report. I am sure that he will recognise that the analogy is not fair, because a bank depositor is not a member in the sense that a depositor in a building society is.

The hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) suggested that the Government did not have much serious legislation to get through the House and had produced a 207 page Bill to keep Ministers, the House of Commons and civil servants happy. He said that he did not know why we were introducing the Bill. I suggest that he rereads in *Hansard* tomorrow the speech made by my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary. It sets out clearly what the problems are in the building society movement and how one needs an up-to-date framework to tackle some of the problems that remain in housing. I assure the hon. Gentleman that Ministers, Back Bench Members and everybody else have enough work to do without, just for the hell of it, engaging on a rather comprehensive exercise just to fill what he may see as a gap in the legislative programme.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle) made some points about early redemption penalties and the ombudsman, and we shall have a look at that. The hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) asked what perception the Government had of the future of the building society movement. In the moving peroration to his speech, my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary set out how we see the building society movement developing.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mr. Craigen) echoed an aspiration that we all have, that of cheaper mortgages. There is a tradeoff here between cheaper mortgages and the availability of mortgages. For the past few years, there has been no mortgage famine such as that which we used to have, although the price may have been the slightly higher mortgages. Speaking as a housing Minister, I would prefer to see the ready availability of mortgage funds, albeit at a slightly higher price, than the famines that we used to have at a slightly lower price. The hon. Member for Norwood asked about the exodus of

funds and recognised that my hon. Friend had dealt with this in his opening speech. It is our contention that money sent overseas should be raised overseas.

We are now in the consultation period of the Green Paper on improvement grants. We are absorbing the comments that were made on it, such as those made by the Building Societies Association, which has responded. Scottish conveyancing is under consideration. As the hon. Member for Norwood will know, the system in Scotland is different from ours and for that reason it is not appropriate to be dealt with in the same way.

My hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Mr. Watts) demolished the arguments put forward by the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell). I am sorry that the latter was not here to listen to what my hon. Friend said about the real conflict of interest that can emerge when a building society solicitor also acts for the chap who wants the mortgage. He gave one example of a problem that might well crop up with the loan. The borrower might be better advised to go to another lender. It is not the case that the building society's solicitor would so advise him because he has a duty to his employer. The solicitor would have to divulge to his employer anything that might affect his willingness to make the loan, so the client might feel inhibited about seeking confidential advice about the change in his financial circumstances. There is a genuine issue about the conflict of interests over which the hon. Member for Great Grimsby slightly glossed.

The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), like other Labour Members, welcomed the broad principle of the Bill and my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) asked some difficult questions. He asked what services would be covered by the Bill and said that he could not find that information in the Bill. My hon. Friend the Economic Secretary, who knows the Bill backwards, advises me that schedule 8 will give the answer.

With regard to the investor protection scheme, we are increasing statutory protection, but it is open to the building societies and the BSA to continue the existing level of protection if they so wish. There is no detriment in what we are proposing. For the first time, investors with building societies will have the protection of a similar statutory scheme which depositors with banks enjoy. The BSA does maintain a scheme on a voluntary basis and it shall be free to continue that. The 100 per cent. protection is not the same protection as that which is given to bank depositors and one has to put them on the same basis.

The point was raised about the disclosure of a list of members in a disagreed merger. The Bill is clear on this. A list of members can be disclosed only for the purpose of circulating merger proposals and not for recruiting people to societies or any other purpose.

The hon. Member for Norwood seems to have a reputation with the banks as someone with a high disposable income ready to be invested in Japan, Germany or anywhere else. I must say that no one on this Bench receives letters from clearing banks inviting him to invest in this country or elsewhere. There is a slight inconsistency in what the hon. Gentleman said about being in favour of mutuality and yet against conversion. Conversion can take place only if the society members wish it.

Finally, I wish to comment on the housing aspect of the Bill which is my ministerial interest. The Bill gives building societies an opportunity to own and develop land as a commercial asset. This will enable them to offer a form of entry into home ownership which has been both effective and popular—shared ownership or buying in stages. Until now, shared ownership has been achieved through housing associations or local authorities. Building societies have been involved in many of these projects as providers of finance. In future, they will be able to play a more direct role as the owners of the residual rented portion of the house. They will also be able to provide accommodation for rent which the hon. Member for Norwood was anxious they should do.

Index-linked mortgages provide scope for housing associations to obtain funds on terms which allow repayment to start low and increase over time by reference to an index. This matches their income from increased rent on shared ownership schemes. I hope that the good link between building societies and housing associations will be developed.

As Minister with responsibility for housing, I have taken special interest in such services, which play an important role in stimulating renovation work which otherwise might not be carried out. Two days ago I opened a new project in Gloucester which had been put together by the neighbourhood revitalisation services arm of the National House-Building Council and with the active co-operation of a local building society. Building societies have played an important part in these schemes, but there have been restrictions on what they are able to do. They have not been able to offer agency services. This Bill will enable them to do this. Anyone who has an interest in urban area housing will welcome these new powers.

We want to encourage the building societies to become much more closely involved in the revitalisation of our run-down council estates. Several societies are almost actively helping in this area by providing finance both for the redevelopment of estates and mortgages for the new owner-occupiers. In the Wirral, the local authority has teamed up with a builder and, with finance from a building society, tackled a council estate's rotten core. That area has been transformed and there has been a dramatic spin-off effect on the rest of the estate.

We want to see much more similar work with the building societies taking a prominent, active role on run-down estates. The Bill gives building societies the flexibility they need to do so. The building society movement has a unique status in this country, both legally and in the public mind. They are rooted in their mutual tradition and they take their social responsibilities seriously. But they have a responsibility to act prudently, and we do not want building societies to act as social agencies at a loss. But our proposals sit well with their traditional activities. They have been associated with housing associations and housing trusts and will be able to do much more by setting up subsidiaries as housing trusts, which they cannot do at present. We want to do more to simplify house buying. Again, the Bill makes a contribution to that, because the societies will be able to offer estate agent, surveying and valuation services, which will benefit house buyers and sellers.

The Bill will bring many benefits to housing. Home ownership will be made easier for many. New efforts can be put into solving the many problems of our inner cities, and we can do all of that without altering the traditional image of the building societies. We are building on an enviable reputation—substantial achievements for many years—and I believe that the founders of the societies would be pleased with the new opportunities that we are offering.

[Sir George Young]

Amendment negatived.

Main Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 41 (Amendment on Second or Third Reading), and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 42 (Committal of Bills).

BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL [MONEY]

Queen's recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purpose of any Act resulting from the Building Societies Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of—

(1) any expenses incurred by the Building Societies Commission established by that Act which are attributable to that Act; and

(2) any expenses incurred by the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies which are attributable to any functions of his or any of the registrars of friendly societies under the Act.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

WAYS AND MEANS

BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL

Resolved,

That, for the purpose of any Act resulting from the Building Societies Bill, it is expendient to authorise—

(1) the levying of annual charges on authorised building societies towards the expenses of the Building Societies Commission established by that Act;

(2) the imposition of charges to corporation tax by provisions relating to the treatment for the purpose of the Tax Acts of payments made to building societies by the Building Societies Investor Protection Board established by that Act;

(3) The payment into the Consolidated Fund of any sums falling to be paid into that Fund in pursuance of that Act.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Legal Aid

9.20 pm

The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I beg to move,

That the Legal Advice and Assistance (Prospective Cost) Regulations 1985 (S.I., 1985, No. 1840), dated 28th November 1985, a copy of which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.

I understand that it will be for the convenience of the House if I deal at the same time with motion No. 5 on the Order Paper:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Legal Advice and Assistance (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1985 (S.I., 1985, No. 1879), dated 3rd December 1985, a copy of which was laid before this House on 5th December, be annulled.

The regulations are much more valuable than they are simple. To explain the affirmative resolution, I must say something about the other two associated sets of regulations. The subject of the affirmative resolution, the prospective cost regulations, alone does no more than establish an initial upper limit of £90 on the work a solicitor may undertake on his authority in some cases where people are arrested and held in custody. They must be taken together with the other two sets. The Legal Advice and Assistance (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1985 make several important improvements for suspects in police stations. They make those improvements in the usual conditions for green form advice and assistance, and they provide most of the framework for the two-tier system that was announced last July. The process is completed by the Legal Advice at Police Stations (Remuneration) Regulations 1985, which also prescribe forms and rates of remuneration. Hardly less intregal is the Legal Aid (Duty Solicitor) Scheme 1985, in which the Law Society has made arrangements for a 24-hour duty solicitor scheme. All four documents form part of a complete system and are fully interdependent. They represent one of the most significant developments in legal services for years. For the first time, special arrangements will be made for legal advice at police stations.

The right to legal advice for suspects already exists in the judges rules, but they have not been fully satisfactory and will be withdrawn. The police have been under no obligation to inform suspects of their rights, and only the tiniest proportion of suspects seems to have known about them or chosen to exercise them. That is why the Philips Royal Commission recommended a clearer and safeguarded right. But it understood the possible resource implications of that and suggested that it should be confined to suspects who had been held for six hours or more.

When the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 comes into force on 1 January next year, it will fundamentally change the present position. All those who were arrested will have a statutory right to advice. They must be informed of that right and how it might be exercised. They must sign their custody records to acknowledge that that has happened and to note their decision. Except in cases of urgency, the police may not interview further, once advice has been requested, until the client has seen a solicitor, if one is available.

The code of practice confers a right to advice for all those who are voluntarily helping the police. The code was approved by the House on 5 December. Both the commission's research and pilot studies conducted by the

Law Society suggest that about 20 per cent. of suspects will now seek legal advice. What is more, the tighter timetables that the 1984 Act imposes on the police by virtue of section 40, review of custody, mean that many of these requests will arise out of normal working hours.

The Act therefore includes powers for the Law Society to make arrangements for a 24-hour duty solicitor scheme. That will operate through the committees which already run duty solicitor schemes in magistrates courts. When a suspect is told of his rights, he will be told how to get a solicitor. If he opts for the duty solicitor, the police will telephone the commercial regional telephone service which has details of the duty solicitors in the region. The service will be responsible for finding a duty solicitor for the area and contacting him with details of the request. That should ensure that duty solicitors get to the police station within the timetables. The solicitors and others who under the duty solicitor's directions will work under the scheme will be selected for relevant experience and general ability to advise at police stations. The framework for all that is contained in the society's scheme.

Three factors have weighed in the preparation of the scheme. First, only about a third of suspects, on the basis of the society's pilot schemes, will ask for a duty solicitor. The others will ask for their own, and we have sought to avoid limiting freedom of choice. Secondly, we have had to make a number of improvements in the legal advice and assistance scheme — the green form scheme — to take account of the special circumstances at police stations. Thirdly, there is the need to secure value for money. The Lord Chancellor has had to consider the availability of Government finance, and all the competing claims upon it, and to ensure that the funds which are available are used effectively and without waste.

May I first take the two-tier provisions. Under the standard green form provision, a solicitor may undertake work to the value of £50 on his own authority without obtaining the permission of the legal aid committee, but if it appears likely that more than £50 will be required he must obtain a prior extension from the Law Society before proceeding. The new regulations therefore provide a new upper limit of £90 when a solicitor is advising a suspect who has been arrested in connection with a serious offence —an "arrestable offence" in the language of section 24 of the 1984 Act. That means, putting it broadly, where a sentence of imprisonment of five years or more can be imposed.

In such a case, a solicitor may need to give prolonged advice. He may also need to be present for a substantial period. The upper limit can accordingly be extended retrospectively where urgency is required in the interests of justice. But the Lord Chancellor is firmly of the view that it would not be right to make this exceptional provision for every case. For offences other than section 24 offences—the lower tier cases—the standard green form cost limit of £50 will apply, and it may not be exceeded.

On the basis of the society's pilot schemes, this amount should, very broadly, allow a solicitor to visit the suspect in the police station and provide the average period of advice that is required in cases of all kinds where average travelling costs apply. Of course, in the case of either tier it may be possible for the solicitor to give advice over the telephone. There are a number of further improvements to the usual green form conditions——

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): The hon. and learned Gentleman has just mentioned the provision of advice over the telephone. One can envisage many cases in which advice might be given over the telephone by a solicitor to a client in a police station. However, will the hon. and learned Gentleman assure the House that facilities will be made available in police stations to enable suspects to talk in complete confidence, and without supervision by police officers, to their solicitors? If they cannot be provided with that facility, it is quite useless for them to talk to their solicitors over the telephone.

The Solicitor-General: I am sure that it is desirable that suspects should be able to talk in confidence to their legal adviser. I shall draw the hon. and learned Gentleman's point to the attention of my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor.

There are a number of further improvements to the usual green form conditions, and they are important. The green form means test and the contribution provisions will not apply; applications by telephone will be permitted; the society's prior approval is normally required if an application is taken direct from a child, but that will not be necessary here; and a case can be handed from a duty to an own solicitor or vice versa. Those important improvements apply to cases in either tier and whether a duty solicitor or the suspect's solicitor is requested.

I will not go into many details of the remuneration arrangements for police station work, which are contained in the regulations, but it may be helpful if I comment on the basic structure. A duty solicitor will be given a standby payment of £60 for 24 hours, or pro rata. Any work that he may do in that period will be paid for at scale rates under the regulations, but, however much he does, he will never get less than half the standby pay in addition.

He will be paid at the rate of £27 an hour, for all work, except that out of normal office hours, and that will be enhanced in upper tier cases by one third to £36 an hour. A flat fee of £10 is introduced for advising over the telephone, together with a charge of £1 for routine telephone calls — for example, to the telephone service or to establish contact with the client. Where necessary, accommodation costs will be met.

The provisions for own solicitors are more similar to the existing general green form arrangements. They will be paid at the rate of £27 an hour for giving advice and £17 an hour for travelling and waiting. The same telephone fees will be available. Both kinds of solicitors will receive travelling expenses to and from their client.

The expression ABWOR — assistance by way of representation — applies to many of our constituency cases. Both duty and own solicitors will be involved in advising and representing suspects in connection with hearings before magistrates' courts for warrants of further detention. Again, these are important improvements on the standard conditions for assistance by way of representation.

Legal representation will always be necessary and the usual requirement for prior approval of the representation by the society will not apply. Nor will the means test requirement apply, nor the contribution liability. The usual remuneration for this work will be paid, except that duty solicitors who do it out of usual office hours will be paid rates enhanced by one third.

These arrangements are a systematic and workable fulfilment of the Government's undertaking to provide an

[The Solicitor-General]

effective right to legal advice, balanced against our need to bill the taxpayer only with what is necessary. But this is a new area and we must be ready to adjust the scheme if, in the light of experience, that seems necessary. The Lord Chancellor has undertaken to keep it under review. I believe that in no other country will such extensive rights for the individual be available, and I commend the regulations to the House.

9.33 pm

Mr. Nicholas Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): It is right that the House should debate the regulations and the Opposition prayer together. Indeed, it would have been difficult for us to have debated them separately because they inter-relate. The Solicitor-General helpfully took the House through that inter-relationship, and I shall not repeat much of what he said. I agreed with the emphasis that he placed on the importance of the new procedures that will be adopted at police stations.

Our objections are specific, and I would not like it to be thought that we objected to the 24-hour duty solicitor scheme as a whole. The regulations establish an initial limit of £90 on certain work which may be undertaken under the new 24-hour duty solicitor scheme, and separately there is established a limit of £50 on the amount of work that may be undertaken with volunteers, and by "volunteers" I mean people who are at police stations helping the police with their inquiries but who have not been arrested.

The 24-hour duty solicitor scheme had its origins in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. That Act took up some recommendations from the Philips commission. Whatever the Opposition's reservations to that Act, we strongly support the 24-hour duty solicitor scheme. Our prayer is directed solely at the capping of the amount of money which will be paid for certain categories of work. I appreciate that the Lord Chancellor has said that his mind is not closed on that issue. In that context I welcome the research that is to be undertaken by the Home Office into the functioning of the scheme and, in particular, into the different categories. The implication behind the Lord Chancellor's statement and the Home Office review is that the Government are willing to reconsider the issue on the basis of practical experience. I take comfort from what the Solicitor-General has said tonight on that.

As I said, our objections are solely to the establishment of ceilings on certain types of work. We are not objecting to the rates of payment and certainly not to the scheme itself. We have several specific anxieties. The first has already been touched on. The private telephone conversation with the solicitor which is envisaged in section 58 of the Act should be an administrative matter. The Solicitor-General said that he was sure that it is desirable. It is a bit more than desirable. I think that it is a legal right, although I am willing to be corrected if that is wrong.

I am sure that in a case such as drunken driving—an obvious and perhaps seasonal example—it is envisaged that advice will be given over the phone. I do not see why in the average drunken-driving case a solicitor should go to the police station. I am sure that a telephone call would be appropriate. But the right facilities should be provided for genuinely private conversations in police stations between the detained individual and his solicitor. I hope that the Solicitor-General can say something more than that it is desirable. The House is entitled to know what arrangements are being made to ensure that that will be the case. I have not seen the inside of many police stations, but I suspect that many do not have facilities for members of the public to make private telephone calls, yet that is something to which they are entitled.

However, the main thrust of our objective concerns the two-tier arrangement and the anomalies to which it gives rise. In particular, a real conflict must be posed for a solicitor who is advising a volunteer. What advice has the Solicitor-General for the solicitor who is with a client helping the police with their inquiries in a police station on a complex matter when the £50 limit on the work allowed by the scheme has been reached? There are only a limited number of options. The solicitor could encourage the police to arrest his client so that he could continue to be paid, but that does not seem desirable. In many cases it will almost certainly not be in the client's best interests, in the interests of justice or even, taking the Solicitor-General's point, in the Treasury's interest.

Alternatively, the Solicitor-General could advise the solicitor to say that the time is up, the money has run out and that if he is not going to be paid he will go home. What advice would the Solicitor-General then give to a solicitor who was charged with professional misconduct or even sued for negligence? I know that most solicitors would not take that attitude. They would stay and see their professional duties through. But there is clearly a conflict because nobody likes to do work for which he will not be remunerated.

If the solicitor did go, what would happen if the police then introduced new points? Would it be possible for the detained individual to make another telephone call and perhaps call the solicitor out again after he had just arrived home or perhaps call another solicitor out? Alternatively to those pretty objectionable possibilities, the Solicitor-General could advise a solicitor to work on for no pay on the swings and roundabouts principle. In other words, the cost of doing that work for nothing would have to be borne by the solicitor's other work. That does not seem to me to be a fair or acceptable alternative.

I have had put to me the case of a solicitor who spent six and a half days with a client of no personal wealth who was helping the police in a fraud case. The client was not arrested. It was obviously not in his interest that he be arrested, nor was it in the police interest. The police interest was to get to the bottom of the case. Yet the solicitor involved, under these rules, would be paid only £50.

In many cases what is proposed here is more restrictive than what happens now. I am thinking in particular of cities such as Birmingham where the local branch of the Law Society operates a much praised voluntary 24-hour scheme. It fears that this will be destroyed and be replaced by something less effective.

In addition, there must be a fear that the most vulnerable people in our society—the mentally retarded, those who do not speak English very well, and young persons — may not be effectively advised under the present scheme. The Confait case is one that is always quoted in this context. The point is that volunteers, who were completely confused, were misled into making false confessions. There is surely at least a case for taking

volunteers in more serious cases out of the lower tier, and similarly to do the same for vulnerable categories of people such as the mentally deficient.

I do not always find myself in agreement with the Law Society in legal affairs debates, but I have never argued that it should not be consulted in matters of this kind. The Law Society has objected most strongly to me and to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) that the Lord Chancellor announced the two-tier basis of the arrangements in July 1985 without prior consultation with the Law Society. Given the emphasis that the Attorney-General put on consultation with the society during the course of the Adminstration of Justice Bill, I looked forward to hearing the Solicitor-General explain why the Law Society did not have to be consulted about these regulations.

There is widespread concern in the profession about the practical workings of the 24-hour scheme. In theory it is to be operative on 1 January 1986, but I have to put it to the Solicitor-General and to seek a specific assurance that the scheme will be operative in the north London area. The Home Secretary promised, on the Second Reading of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, that the Government were going to put public money where their mouth was. We are asking for neither the money nor the mouth, although the former Home Secretary often encouraged Opposition Members to do just that.

It is our contention that a modest reappraisal of the regulations would not only facilitate the better administration of justice but would specifically lead to a more effective use of resources, because the effective intervention of a solicitor at the early stage of an inquiry should assist in reducing the acquittal rate.

I conclude by quoting from the introduction to the guidelines for solicitors prepared by the Law Society's criminal law committee, entitled "Advising a suspect in the police station". In the section headed "Serving the public interest" it says:

"A solicitor's presence and advice will assist the truly innocent to give an account of their activities under suspicion and help to relieve them of pressures which can induce false confessions and cause miscarriages of justice. A solicitor will advise the guilty of the weight of evidence against them and, if they be truly guilty, of the substantial mitigation advantages of admitting guilt at the earliest opportunity, of assisting the recovery of stolen property, and of clearing up outstanding inquiries. The presence of a solicitor in the police station means that justice is better secured for the individual; it also leads to savings in police, court and judicial time so that quicker and more economical justice is secured for the community at large."

9.43 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): The introduction of a national duty solicitor scheme is very welcome. However, unfortunately it is under-funded. The Solicitor-General, quite apart from his physiological dissimilarity to Scrooge, has only just escaped summoning up the ghost of Christmas past by his undertaking that the scheme will be kept under constant review. I greatly welcome that observation, which he made a little earlier.

There are going to be clear anomalies because of the two-tier nature of the scheme. The fact that a person is helping with inquiries does not mean that he is not in serious trouble. People frequently help the police with their inquiries, as the quaint phrase goes, then find themselves being charged with murder, serious fraud, arson and so on.

In my view, it is clearly wrong that the solicitor who is asked to advise a person helping with inquiries under the duty solicitor scheme should be able to claim only at the lower rate. Even the higher rate is inadequate because it is intended to include the travelling time taken by solicitors who often live some distance from the police station.

One of the problems that police forces, particularly in the larger cities, have sometimes experienced is that when solicitors have been asked to come to the police station in the night it is in fact only the shabbier clerks of the dingier solicitors who have been prepared and detailed to do it. Welcome though the scheme is in general terms, I fear that the financial limits imposed will lead to the shabbiest clerks of the dingiest solicitors continuing to go out in some areas.

The scheme as funded will depend for its success not upon reasonable remuneration to the solicitors, because that is not available, but upon the good will of solicitors and the interest which solicitors around the country have already shown in duty solicitor schemes. We have already heard the voluntary scheme in Birmingham mentioned. There is a real fear that not only in Birmingham but in Portsmouth, Southampton and other less well known and smaller places existing voluntary schemes will be replaced by something worse as a result of these regulations.

In the Second Reading debate on the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 the then Home Secretary said that arrangements were needed for solicitors to be available at all times when legal advice might be sought. That was welcome, but I fear that the Government have not completely fulfilled their promise to put public money where their mouth is. They have put some money in, but the mouth still has a substantial void.

I am particularly concerned about telephone advice. As I said earlier in an intervention, there will be many cases in which it would be unnecessary for a solicitor to turn out from his home in the middle of the night and attend a police station to give advice. However, if the telephone advice scheme is to be truly effective there must be an assurance that in all police stations facilities will be provided for private calls to be made by suspects to their solicitors.

Above all, the practice of eavesdropping on those calls must not be adopted. We know that in the past, sometimes legitimately, police officers have eavesdropped on cell conversations between prisoners. That has often provided proper and powerful evidence in the case against those prisoners when they go to trial. It is very much to be hoped that the police will be discouraged from eavesdropping on telephone calls because there is a danger that, even if the eavesdropping does not come out in court, conversations between suspects and their solicitors, which should have the stamp of confidence, would become a subterfuge for obtaining evidence about the matter under investigation.

9.49 pm

The Solicitor-General: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) and the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile). They lost nothing in content or cogency by being succinct. The hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East began with a welcome for the scheme. I entirely understand the reasoning that lies behind the prayer. The Opposition welcome a duty solicitor scheme and their anxiety relates to the various matters that he mentioned.

[The Solicitor-General]

Privacy in a telephone conversation in which a solicitor is giving advice is desirable. I am reminded that section 58(1) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 provides that a suspect arrested and held in custody

"shall be entitled, if he so requests, to consult a solicitor privately at any time."

It is therefore important that there should be no eavesdropping. That was mentioned by the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery. Anxiety about that matter should not appear to be dismissed. My noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor is aware of it. Solicitors are already advising clients satisfactorily over the telephone. Nothing will change with the regulations except the number of occasions upon which that will happen. The right to consult a solicitor privately is for the first time enshrined in a statute and eavesdropping would be a contravention of that right. I am pleased that the matter has been raised.

Vis-à-vis the two-tier system, the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East asked what will happen when the £50 limit in lower tier cases is reached. A solicitor's duties have always been limited by the extent to which he is retained. There is no question of his being in breach of professional duty if he withdraws when the limit is reached. Naturally, a solicitor will wish to do his best. In a case such as that which has been described, a solicitor will know the time in which he has to seek his instructions and give his advice.

In the case of someone who has not been arrested and who is at the police station as a volunteer, the solicitor can always put the matter to the test by inviting his client to say that he wishes to leave the police station. That then puts the police to their election as to whether to arrest.

I was asked whether volunteers should be taken out of the lower tier. There are some misunderstandings about the position of a volunteer in those circumstances. He has not been arrested. Sometimes it is not clear whether the offence of which he is suspected falls within the upper or the lower tier. I do not believe that the advantage of the provisions under the regulations relating to someone arrested for an offence that comes within the upper tier are necessary in respect of a volunteer.

There is a clear distinction between a case which has progressed as far as an arrest and one which has not. There is no need for upper tier advice. It is often wholly unclear in such cases whether an offence is involved and, if so, what. The vital element which makes it clear which tier is involved is therefore missing.

The undertaking of my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor to keep the working of the scheme under review is relevant to that point, and we shall see how it develops. No one is supposing that the present form shall, in every instance, be regarded as having been set in concrete, or anything like it.

As to the question of consultation, the scale of the problem was not known until we had had the research on the pilot schemes carried out by the Law Society over last winter in Birmingham and Kettering. That became available towards the end of the first quarter of this year. Although the Lord Chancellor announced the decision in July, we have been prepared to listen sympathetically to further proposals from the Law Society, and have been greatly helped by its suggestions.

I was asked to give an assurance that the scheme would be in operation in north London on 1 January. If the regulations are approved, the framework for the scheme will be completed. The telephone service will be ready and the Law Society has briefed the committees throughout England and Wales on the steps that they need to take. Now we must look to the profession itself — that is where success will lie—to use the framework provided.

I understand that the first signs are that the profession is showing itself willing to join the rotas. I very much hope that that will be the case. It would be a very great shame, especially in the light of the Lord Chancellor's assurance, if solicitors—especially with their honourable record in many voluntary schemes — were to hold back from joining in the rotas. I am confident that that will not happen.

The hon. and learned Gentleman said that the scheme was under-funded. That is all very well, but the original estimate was £6 million. That appears sadly to have been rather low. The Law Society now estimates the costs of the scheme to be £23 million in a year, which is by no means chicken feed. One could always say that we could spend more, and indeed we could. But we must ensure that the taxpayer is not given a bill for more than is necessary. We must see how we get on.

I do not believe that it will be the shabbiest clerks from the dingiest solicitors who take part in the scheme. That does not do justice to the way in which the profession deals with its responsibilities under the voluntary schemes. I do not believe that that is the way that it will happen under the present scheme.

I think that I have dealt with the question of confidentiality and with the other points raised during the debate.

This is really not a scheme and these are not regulations that put one in mind of "A Christmas Carol". I would refer to them as "Great Expectations".

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Legal Advice and Assistance (Prospective Cost) Regulations 1985 (S.I., 1985, No. 1840), dated 28th November 1985, a copy of which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 79(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.)

Terms and Conditions of Employment

That the draft Employment Protection (Variation of Limits) Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.

That the draft Unfair Dismissal (Increase of Limits of Basic and Special Awards) Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

Question agreed to.

PETITIONS

Sunday Trading

9.58 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory). My hon. Friend organised the petition together with ministers of all the York churches — Roman Catholic, Anglican and Non-Conformist. It has been supported by 3,263 of my hon. Friend's constituents, and gathered together over just three Sundays. After the Christmas recess, more petitions on behalf of my hon. Friend will be presented.

While accepting that there are certain restrictions regarding Sunday trading that should be clarified, the overwhelming view in York is that the essentials of life, such as urgent medical prescriptions and mobility through petrol sales, should continue, but that, basically, Sunday should be retained as a day of family life set apart from the rest of the week, and including worship. Together with my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy), I support the sentiments of the petition.

The petition reads:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of Mr. Conal Gregory MP and the citizens of York, sheweth that whilst acknowledging the need for the removal of the present anomalies in the Sunday Trading Laws, we urge that Sunday remain a day of worship, rest and relaxation for the benefit of family and community life.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House reject the need for any other deregulation.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray, etc.

To lie upon the Table.

Dog Fighting

10.2 pm

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I have the honour to present to the House a petition on dog fighting. Dog fighting rightly raises real concern, and my petitioners seek to show that this cruel activity is inadequately discouraged under statute law. The petition was organised by Miss H. E. Redshaw of York and carries 47 names and is addressed to

The Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble petitioners sheweth:

(1) that under the protection of the Animals Act 1911, the penalties for causing or procuring animals to fight are not commensurate with the barbarity of such illegal cruelty.

(2) that there is no restriction on the importation, sale or advertising of dogs favoured by those involved in dog fighting.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House will take all such measures as lie within their power specifically

(1) to substantially increase the penalties for those convicted of causing, procuring or assisting the fighting or baiting or any animal. (Protection of Animals Act 1911, section 1*(c)*.

(2) to introduce mandatory disqualifications of ownership and custody of any animal for those convicted of such offences.

(3) to ban the importation, sale and advertising of Pit Bull Terriers

(4) to prohibit the advertising of any Bull Dog's 'fighting qualities', 'gameness' or other descriptions which might attract dogfighting enthusiasts.

To lie upon the Table.

Greenbelt (Hertfordshire)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

10.4 pm

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): I thank my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for coming to answer an issue that has generated a great deal of enthusiasm, heat and anger in my constituency and in the other Hertfordshire constituencies. I would like my hon. Friend to imagine that I have beside me, as I know I have in spirit, all the other Hertfordshire Members. I am pleased to see a more physical manifestation in the shape of my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy).

The subject of the debate is of concern not only to hon. Members for Hertfordshire, as other hon. Members have approached me and offered their support. Councils from outside Hertfordshire have written to ask me to support their interests over the green belt.

I do not intend to deal with the history and justifications behind the creation of the green belt. Regular consultations take place as part of that process, and in January 1985, the Hertfordshire structure plan review consultation document was published. The document was generally well received. There was strong opposition from the housing and construction industry, which believed that the review of the county structure plan needed to make provision for at least a further 12,500 to 22,000 units.

For this and a variety of other reasons, it was felt that further consultation should take place, and that took place in April of this year, on the new development options. It concerned incremental and major growth, all of which involved taking considerable acres from the green belt for housing development. The people of Hertfordshire were asked for their views on the building of about 72,500 homes in the county before 1996, an increase of 20,000 on the figure that was put forward earlier in the year. There has been a high level of response to those consultations and to date replies have been received from 336 groups and 1,072 individuals. All but about 50 have been against the proposal. Of the 50 who have written in in support, most have expressed qualified support.

In addition, the individual Hertfordshire Members have received representations directly themselves. I have been inundated by concerns and queries from my constituents, especially from those living in the village of Bovingdon, which is in the heart of my constituency. I understand from the consultation document that there is the possibility of about 700 homes being constructed there. If the proposal were implemented, it would destroy the environment and the character of the village. In the end, I had to beg my constituents to stop writing to me on the issue, especially from Bovingdon. I contacted the parish council and asked it to tell everybody that I had the message and that I would be supporting what they were saying, which was that 700 homes should not come into the area.

In addition, I consulted the two district councils, the borough of Dacorum, and Three Rivers district council. The Dacorum council resolved that it was not satisfied that the levels of dwelling provision contained in the new issue consultation document had been adequately justified and requested

"the county council to make a thorough examination of the Department of the Environment and the SERplan household forecasts, taking into account the importance of maintaining inner city policies.

That it would be opposed to further development in the green belt as currently defined and would seek to maintain a policy of containing developments within urban areas.

Finally, to inform the county council that the location of any further development should be established by the borough council through the local planning process."

That was a clear-cut and unequivocal reply to the new consultation document.

Three Rivers district council was concerned to resist the efforts to nibble at the green belt and was worried about pressures that might flow from circular 14/85, headed "The Green Belt", and circular 15/84, headed "Land for Housing". There are obvious conflicts in the advice that is given in the two circulars. Three Rivers council is concerned especially about paragraph 4 of circular 14/85. I shall not go into the paragraph in detail, but it seems to avoid the realities. It points the way to the development of the white line, which in turn will bring it hard up against the urban edge, which in turn will produce greater pressures to re-draw the green belt. The routeing of the M25 through my constituency will inevitably create the temptation to make it the natural limit of permissible development. That is of concern.

I hope that the House will excuse the pun, but I do not believe that the green belt should be set in concrete for ever. There must be a little flexibility. Allowance should be made for building lines to be straightened and for sensible and regional density infillings, but not to the level suggested. It is possible that 2,000 of the 20,000 homes for Hertfordshire will be located in Dacorum. People chose to live in south-west Hertfordshire because of the environment. Many people say that more development should be permitted to allow local people the chance of getting a home. Unless there was a vast increase in planning permission, the cost of land would not decrease substantially to allow that wish to be fulfilled. I do not believe that I have been elected by my constituents to see my constituency covered in tarmac and concrete.

I do not blame those in the housing and construction industry for seeking permission to build more houses. They have a business to run. Of course it is easier to build on a greenfield site. In the past few months, we have heard much about the state of our inner cities. We have had the panoply of the Church of England putting pressure on us to do something about the inner cities. In anything to do with development, it must be the duty of authorities to restore, renovate and rebuild the inner cities rather than develop the greenfield sites. I point as a hopeful sign to the redevelopments on the docklands. We can build on that example.

I return to the question of flexibility and the idea that there can be some tolerance around the edge of the green belt. I have a suggestion. I know that it is not new and I put it forward without having consulted either of my two local councils, so I might be out of order with them. I suggest that there could be merit in considering the idea that, while housing development should be concentrated in the towns, the rate of housing development in rural areas should not be allowed to exceed the rate of 0·5 per cent. per annum of existing housing stock. This could be administered through and by local district councils. I know that this was not approved in 1979 by the Secretary of State

because of representations by district councils on that structure plan, but I believe that it would give flexibility to local councils and might merit reconsideration.

I understand that the results of this consultation process will be considered on 13 January by the county planning committee, which will look at a draft structure plan to put to the Secretary of State. I sincerely hope that the county will firmly reject the idea of adding another 20,000 homes to the original January 1985 plan.

I should like my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State to confirm the Government's support for the green belt, to enable me to reassure my constituents. I should like him also to reassure my constituents in Bovington that they will not see 700 houses springing up beside their homes. I should like to take back some reassurance to my two local councils, so that they know that the Government are firmly behind them when planning matters are considered and large inroads into the green belt are proposed.

10.14 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Richard Tracey): May I first congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) on tabling this motion on the Adjournment debate. I also welcome the attendance of my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy). There has been a good deal of concern about pressures for development and the future of the green belt in south-west Hertfordshire and, indeed, in other areas. I welcome the opporutnity to set out the Government's position. As a Member of Parliament with some green belt in my constituency in Chessington, Surrey, I am pleased to be able to speak in the debate.

Green belt policy in England has been one of the most successful planning initiatives since the war. Unlike some other planning ideas, it has not been affected by changes of fashion which might have sought to re-interpret its objectives and the means of achieving them. Successive Governments have continued the original policies in essentially the same form.

The policy on green belts was first set out in a circular in 1955, and it remains the same today. The importance which the Government attach to green belt has been confirmed in several recent circulars. The essential characteristic of green belts is their permanence. The Government's policies are aimed at defining detailed long-term boundaries so that they can be fully protected from unsuitable development.

This Government have a particularly good record in moving towards this objective. An area of 4·5 million acres, which is roughly the size of Wales, now lies within the green belts around London and our other big cities. In 1979, when we came to power, the green belt picture was patchy, to say the least. It depended upon the application of a hotch potch of old development plans. Under half of it had been fully approved. Since then, in just six years — and it is a shame that there are no Opposition Members present to hear this—all the rest of the green belt land has been formally approved by this Government.

The green belt around London now extends to 1·2 million acres, an area greater than the whole of Hampshire. There is a green belt around Nottingham and Derby of over 200,000 acres. An extension around Sheffield and other south Yorkshire towns has added 800,000 acres. The west Midlands green belt now covers 650,000 acres and the Tyne and Wear green belt has been more than doubled to 200,000 acres. All this represents significant progress, for which the local authorities concerned can share the credit.

Within green belts, as elsewhere, each planning application has to be decided on its merits, but there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. My hon. Friend illustrated that well in his speech. Inside a green belt approval should not be given, except in very special cirumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings other than for a very limited range of purposes. We would all accept that clearly some development does take place in green belts. They are not intended to be museums, so for example development for agricultural or recreational purposes may be appropriate and, as my hon. Friend pointed out, in towns and villages within green belts some strictly limited infilling or rounding off may be acceptable.

The Government's concern to protect green belt land is part of a wider policy of protecting and enhancing the environment, including national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and conservation areas. But we must also ensure that there is an adequate supply of land for new development, for industry, for housing and for other needs. Our future prosperity and quality of life depends as much on sustaining a strong economy as it does on protecting our heritage. These objectives are not incompatible, but they do require careful planning and sensible development control.

With this in mind, the Department's circular on green belts issued in July last year reaffirmed our commitment to the long-term protection of green belts and gave advice to local planning authorities on defining green belt boundaries. We want to ensure that detailed boundaries are clearly defined, so that people can see exactly what areas are included in the green belt. Once those boundaries have been defined, we are anxious that they should be altered only in exceptional circumstances.

The Government's aim is to ensure that as much new development as possible takes place within existing urban areas. I give this assurance to my hon. Friends. We have, for example, asked local authorities to ensure that full and effective use is made of land within urban areas for housing. In some cases, good housing can be provided by converting or improving existing buildings without the need for any new land. There is also scope for building on neglected, unused or derelict land. We have also reminded local authorities that full use should be made of potential sites and existing premises in urban areas for industry. This emphasis on the full use of urban land can help to promote economic and social regeneration in older urban areas. It can also assist the preservation of agricultural land and conservation of the countryside and maximise the use of existing infrastructure.

We should not be too pessimistic about the scope for meeting present housebuilding requirements from land in built-up areas. Preliminary analysis of recent data from the ordnance survey suggests that nearly half the land being used for housebuilding is coming from previously developed land, including land already in residential use, or from other vacant land in built-up areas.

My hon. Friend suggested that housebuilders should have their attention directed to the city centres. He will be pleased to hear that only last week my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State encouraged housebuilders to concentrate more on the development of small infill sites

[Mr. Richard Tracey]

which were popular with clients and were more acceptable to those already living in the area. He welcomed the House Builders Federation's announcement of an impartial investigation, to identify ways of overcoming the obstacles to housebuilding in the cities.

The Government have developed a range of policies to encourage development in urban areas. Since 1979, some £1,900 million has been channelled through the urban programme into thousands of projects intended to encourage enterprise, improve the environment and pilot new ways of tapping voluntary effort and meeting the needs of ethnic minority communities. More than £300 million in new private sector investment has been attracted into the inner cities through urban development grant. We have introduced land registers to identify areas of land in public ownership that could be put to better use.

Earlier this year, city action teams were introduced in the major inner city conurbations to pull together Government programmes, which are aimed at stimulating local economies. They look after programmes worth £270 million a year. Some 25 enterprise zones are now operating in the United Kingdom. They have created and safeguarded thousands of jobs, largely by easing restriction on business development.

Our derelict land programme is particularly important. The use of derelict land grant to create development sites out of run-down urban land helps to stimulate economic activity and to ease the pressure to find building land in the green belt. The Government have greatly increased the resources available for reclamation through derelict land grant. In 1979-80 this stood at £23 million. This year it was initially £76 million. We have just increased it to £82 million.

We have also changed the way in which this money is spent. The main priority for derelict land grant is to improve our towns and cities, by opening up new areas of attractive. Clean modern development, making them better places in which to live and work, and more attractive to private investment and private housing. This is how to create jobs and prosperity. We have increased more than tenfold the amount of grant going to inner cities and have encouraged the reclamation of land for housing, commerce and industry. Six years ago only 6 per cent. of this reclaimed land was used for housing or commerce. Now it is 60 per cent.

My hon. Friend is concerned that large-scale significant housing development may be permitted in the green belt in south-west Hertfordshire. I understand his concern. He has in mind proposals for additional housing provision included in a consultation document issued in the autumn as part of Hertfordshire county council's draft structure plan review. This is a purely consultative document produced by the county council. It has made it clear that it is in no way committed either to the principle of accommodating more housing growth in Hertfordshire, or to any of the individual proposals in the document.

When Hertfordshire county council has considered all the responses to its consultation, it will be for the council to decide what to include in the final proposals that it intends to submit to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for his approval early next year. When its proposals are submitted, there will be an opportunity for objections to be made to the Secretary of State. Before reaching his decision on the proposals, the Secretary of State will take into account all the representations received, and may decide to hold an examination in public. I can assure the House and my hon. Friend that all representations received will be carefully considered before any decision is reached on the review.

My hon. Friend referred in his excellent speech to proposals for development at Bovingdon. I assume that the proposal to which he refers is one on which the public have recently been consulted as part of the structure plan review. I do not know whether this proposal will form part of the county council's final proposals to the Secretary of State. If it does, it will of course be carefully considered by my right hon. Friend. At the time proposals are submitted to the Secretary of State my hon. Friend will have an opportunity to make representations to my right hon. Friend about the county council's proposed alterations to the structure plan.

My hon. Friend has criticised those who say that, if there were more residential developments house prices would fall and, consequently, local people would be able to afford them and to remain in the area. This is a difficult issue. House prices are determined by a number of factors of which land availability is only one. I have no reason to believe that an increase in housebuilding in Hertfordshire would necessarily lead to a fall in house prices. If prices were to fall in any area, there could be no guarantee that the houses would be bought by local people.

I was interested to hear my hon. Friend's suggestion that local authorities should be given a tolerance—I believe that was how he described it—which would allow them to develop 0·5 per cent. of the green belt each year if they wished. Our present policy on the control of development in the green belt allows local authorities the proper flexibility, which is preferable to the application of more rigid rules.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, I am grateful for this opportunity to spell out in some detail the Government's commitment to the green belt. As I said, I have some green belt land in my constituency. I hope that I have reassured my hon. Friend on the matter before he starts his Christmas recess.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at half-past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 20 December 1985

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITIONS

Chief Inspector Brian Woollard

9.35 am

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): I wish to present a petition

To the Honourable the Commons in Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled. The Humble Petition of Chief Inspector Brian Woollard of the Metropolitan Police.

Sheweth

That as a Detective Chief Inspector in the Metropolitan Police Public Sector Corruption Squad of the Company Fraud Department, I was engaged in investigations into, inter alia, corruption in the Permanent Miscellaneous Street Properties (P.M.S.P.) contracts for the renovation and decoration of street properties of the London Borough of Islington. When these inquiries began to indicate a connection between corruption and Freemasonry, I was removed from the inquiry, then from the Company Fraud Department and the Criminal Investigation Department, by officers who were themselves Freemasons. As a result of my transfer to the Uniformed Branch in April, 1982 my career has been effectively shelved. All attempts to complain about this treatment, to secure the renewal of the inquiry by an investigation entirely independent of the Metropolitan Police, or to rectify the injustice to myself and my own career prospects within the Police Service, whether made to the Commissioner of Police, Home Secretary, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and Prime Minister, have merely been referred back to the officers against whom the complaint was made in the first place. There is no provision for any genuinely independent review of complaints from within the Police Service and no independent inquiry free of Freemasonry associations . . . has been proposed—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but he should summarise the petition and the material allegations in it.

Mr. Mitchell: I come to the burden of the petition:

All other means of redress have been exhausted since February 1982 to the present date and my only hope for protection and redress, therefore, lies with Parliament itself.

Wherefore your petitioner prays that your Honourable House will institute an independent inquiry into his case, his treatment by the Metropolitan Police and the frustration of his inquiries and career by the influence of Freemasonry and make provision for the introduction of an independent complaints procedure for internal complaints within the Police Services for England and Wales, so that complaints by serving members and those conceived to have been constructively dismissed, shall not be frustrated by the senior officers against whom complaint is made.

The petition is signed by Brian Woollard.

When all else fails, it is the responsibility of Parliament to provide justice. Chief Inspector Brian Woollard has waged a gallant campaign to secure it and I hope that the House will provide it.

To lie upon the Table.

Social Security Reform

9.38 am

Mr. Alfred Dubs (Battersea): I wish to present a petition on behalf of 2,000 or more residents of my constituency and others who live or work in the London borough of Wandsworth. The petition has my full support and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox), but, alas, it does not have the support of the hon. Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor). The petition says:

We believe that the measures proposed in the green paper "Reform of Social Security" are an affront to the principle established by Beveridge, of the prevention of poverty by paying benefit as of right without a means test.

We protest that the abolition of payments for special needs; including heating additions for the elderly, disabled, sick and young will force poor families further into poverty.

We deplore the proposed cuts in housing benefit, the abolition of the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme and the withdrawal of maternity grant, death grant and widows allowances.

We call on the Government to withdraw these proposals and introduce new plans to develop the social security system for the benefit of all by redistributing wealth away from the rich.

To lie upon the Table.

Consumer Protection

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn—*[Mr. Sainsbury.]*

9.39 am

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): I am grateful for this opportunity to debate the operation of consumer protection legislation regarding insurance contracts and so to draw the House's attention to the state of the law and to how it is working to remove rights from people who take out insurance just when their need for cover is greatest.

I shall discuss the operation of the law in general and then speak of the case of Mr. Tony O'Shea, the young disabled man from Birmingham whose life has been wrecked by Lloyd's, and who is a constituent of the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth). This is not a party political matter but one of humanity, justice and decency. The hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood and I have worked together on this case. The hon. Gentleman is in the Chamber and I hope that he will catch the eye of the Chair.

The law states that every contract may contain exclusion clauses but, thanks to the Supply of Goods (Implied Terms) Act 1973 and the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977, exclusions that are unreasonable are generally void. The 1973 Act deals with the sale of goods and the 1977 Act covers the supply of services, not least insurance. Thanks to the strength of the insurance lobby, however, insurance contracts are excluded from the purview of the Act, so exclusion clauses in insurance contracts remain as binding and effective as they ever were, however unreasonable, unjust, unfair and unconscionable they may be.

There is an ancient rule that, in insurance contracts as opposed to all others, the person who wants the insurance has a duty to inform the insurers of any facts that they may find material when deciding whether to grant insurance and, if so, on what terms. Thanks to the so-called "doctrine of material non-disclosure", if a person does not disclose what the insurers regard as a material fact, then when a claim is made the insurers can say, "You did not tell us." It is no answer for the insured to say, "I paid my money. You never asked me. There was no question about it." He can be ruined as a result of not answering a question that he was not asked.

That wicked rule, that evil doctrine, has been denounced by a series of commissions, but it remains in force. Reputable, decent and honourable insurers do not in general rely on their rights in exclusion clauses, and still less on the archaic and wicked doctrine of material non-disclosure. I regret to inform the House that Lloyd's, that famous and once so honoured name, has seen fit to rely on such a clause, as I shall detail.

Exclusion clauses in insurance contracts remain valid and effective. It is the Government's duty, and especially that of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, to warn the public of these dangers. When entering an insurance contract, the public should be aware that every clause in it will be effective, irrespective of whether it is fair, reasonable or just. It is irrelevant that the clause might be totally incomprehensible. The fact that it is not possible to get insurance on any other terms is also irrelevant.

If one of my constituents goes on holiday over Christmas and takes out travel insurance, as like as not the travel agent will take out the policy and the insured will not see the form. If there is a claim and the insured has not revealed previous travel claims, however long ago and even though he has not been asked, the insurers are technically entitled to repudiate liability. Of course, decent insurers would generally not do that, but I regret to tell the House that I have had to take up a series of such cases on behalf of constituents.

People have been literally on the verge of destruction as a result of insurers relying on this doctrine, which should have been repealed long ago—the doctrine that an insurer, but nobody else, can rely on an exclusion clause. The insured person is meant to inform the insurer of any material fact, or any fact which the insurer might regard as relevant. In practice, the doctrine is entirely on the side of the provider of insurance. I am surprised that successive Governments have allowed that doctrine to remain effective.

The need for the Government to warn people is made plain by the tragic case of Mr. Tony O'Shea, aged 34, and a sufferer from spina bifida, who built up a small business as a craftsman making jewellery in Birmingham. He had only one blemish on his character—many years ago he was charged with receiving a stolen camera. He was convicted, having pleaded not guilty, and he maintains to this day that he was innocent. In any event, he was not asked about that when he obtained insurance from Lloyd's.

I have a copy of the proposal form with me. There is no question asking, "Have you any previous convictions?" I believe that Mr. O'Shea did not fill in the form but that it was completed by brokers and signed by him. There is one wrap-up sentence which runs:

> "Are there any other circumstances within your knowledge or opinion not already disclosed, affecting or likely to affect the proposed insurance?"

The answer is "No," because Mr. O'Shea thought that the question was irrelevant—a belief with which I agree.

Disaster struck. Mr. O'Shea's workshop was opened and cleared out. Some £40,000 of stock was stolen. Not surprisingly, he asked the insurers to pay. I suspect that the House will be disgusted to learn that, relying on the doctrine of material non-disclosure, Lloyd's of Lime street, London EC3M 7HL — that once so honoured name in the insurance world — saw fit to repudiate liability. That act was brought to the attention of the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood. I learned of it through the BBC programme "Watchdog" and its Mr. Allan Sharpe, to who I pay tribute. He published the facts, and Lloyd's have seen fit to report him to some BBC committee for so doing. I applaud and salute the programme for bringing these facts to my attention and to that of the public.

I took the normal step in the circumstances and spoke to the top person in the insurance organisation. Almost always, the chairman or managing director says, when such facts are brought to his attention, "OK, we made a mistake. I am sorry. Let's put it right. Legally we may not have to, but morally we do. We will pay ex gratia." In this case, the insurers offered the derisory sum of £10,000—less than 25 per cent. of the actual loss—and said, "Go away." I spoke to the chairman and to the deputy chairman of Lloyd's—Mr. Coleridge. At first, he did not know much about it, but he looked into the matter and said that it was a matter not for him but for the chairman, who was away.

I then spoke to the chairman, Mr. Peter Miller, whose name is not now unknown to the House. This morning's debate is not concerned with those major scandals that have been raised in the House in recent weeks, but this individual disaster is just as important and far more poignant that the alleged major frauds. As ancient wisdom has it, "When you save one life, you save the world." Certainly, when you wreck one life, you destroy one world. The person doing so should be held up to hatred, ridicule and contempt. That this hateful, ridiculous and contemptible doctrine has been used by Lloyd's to destroy the life of Tony O'Shea is a nastiness that is not the result of mere bureaucratic bungling, but a carefully contrived, designed and deliberate act of destruction of which Lloyd's and all those connected with it should be deeply ashamed. I hope that, as a result of the debate, Lloyd's may yet change its mind and restore life and hope to Mr. O'Shea.

I have a letter from Mr. Peter Miller, the chairman of Lloyd's, saying that he has now discussed the matter with the junior deputy chairman. Mr. Miller said:

"Lloyd's has a jealously guarded reputation for its determination and willingness to pay legitimate claims."

When I spoke to Mr. Miller, I asked whether he was suggesting that dishonesty was involved in Mr. O'Shea's claim. I am pleased to inform the House that the police are quite satisfied that the robbery that deprived Mr. O'Shea of everything was genuine and that there was no dishonesty by Mr. O'Shea. Lloyd's is not alleging that there was any dishonesty on his part. I told Mr. Miller that if it were alleged, he should say so, and give Mr. O'Shea the opportunity to clear his name and to sue Lloyd's. If Lloyd's does not allege dishonesty, it must pay the claim. Lloyd's may be in the right legally, but morally it is wrong.

Lloyd's is saying that, although it is not alleging dishonesty, it is refusing to pay the claim by relying upon the antique, wicked, evil and ancient doctrine of material non-disclosure. Lloyd's deserves the evil publicity that I hope it will receive for the disgraceful way that it has handled Mr. O'Shea's claim.

In his letter, Mr. Miller attempts to justify non-payment on the ground of material non-disclosure. He refers to the "Watchdog" programme and complains that "Watchdog" did not put Lloyd's side of the case. I do not believe that there is another side to the case. It is simply a matter of Lloyd's saying, "This is a jeweller's claim. This man has a criminal conviction from years and years ago, and although it is nothing whatever to do with this claim, which is an honest and proper claim brought by a disabled young man who has built up his business, we will not pay it."

The underwriters, without in any way admitting liability, made an inadequate offer, and Mr. Miller says that it is a matter for them. If it is, I call from this House on all underwriters in Lloyd's to try to wipe out that blot on the good name of their institution by demanding that the chairman should either change his decision or resign, together with the senior deputy, the junior deputy or any other responsible officer who has been party to this terrible decision.

The chairman said in his letter:

"it is apparent from a review of the matter that underwriters have behaved both properly and reasonably."

Properly in law—probably yes; properly in morality—no; reasonably and fairly—certainly not. He said:

"I do not feel it appropriate to intervene in this matter."

I suggest that it is now for the Government to intervene, that it is for the Minister to intervene, that it is for the underwriters to intervene, that it is for the public to intervene and that this is a scandal of proportions as great as those of the major frauds now being alleged in this House. The fact that it strikes down only one individual in no way reduces the scope of the wickedness involved.

The law stands. I undertake to seek to introduce a Bill to change that law. It may be a long campaign, but I shall introduce that Bill this Session. We cannot call for a change in the law while taking part in an Adjournment debate, but we are entitled to say, "This law is bad, this is what it does, this is how it has destroyed a life, this is how we can ruin the lives and the Christmases of countless honest decent assured people." We call on the Government at least to join in denouncing the way in which Lloyd's has used the law in the case of Mr. Tony O'Shea.

9.56 am

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): I congratulate the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) on so ably securing this debate today, and also on his persistence in a matter that I know is close to his heart. I know that he has shown great tenacity when developing his argument over the years.

My constituent, Tony O'Shea, will be grateful not only for the hon. and learned Gentleman having spent so much time this morning alerting the public and the House to the circumstances surrounding his case, but also for the way in which the hon. and learned Gentleman has sought to help him.

The key to the case is the 1979 conviction, when Mr. O'Shea was found guilty of handling stolen goods. That sounds a very serious crime, but we should consider what lies behind it. The fact is that a good customer of Mr. O'Shea's came into his shop and said, "Things are a bit hard at the moment and I am trying to raise a bit of dough. I have a camera, which is not very expensive, which you might like to buy." Mr. O'Shea bought the camera for £70 for his own use, and not to sell to anyone else. He was not trying to make a quick profit. He purchased that camera to replace his own Instamatic. He later discovered that he could have purchased the same second-hand camera for £45.

It is upon that conviction that the whole case hangs. It does not hang upon the events surrounding the robbery on the night of 8 March 1984, when £41,000 worth of stock was stolen. Robbers entered Mr. O'Shea's home and, knowing him to be disabled and therefore unable to defend himself, took his keys from him at knifepoint. Who is to blame him for surrendering the keys? I suspect that many able-bodied Members would have done the same, let alone were they afflicted with Mr. O'Shea's disability.

Yet it is not because of the events surrounding that crime that Lloyd's underwriters are refusing to pay the claim. I emphasise that no charges have been preferred against Mr. O'Shea arising out of the robbery on 8 March. Indeed, the police officer investigating the case has absolved him of any complicity. We therefore return to that conviction in 1979.

When Mr. O'Shea signed the proposal form prepared for him by an apparently competent broker, there was no question on the form asking him whether he had any previous convictions. Instead, Lloyd's underwriters have relied upon the catch-all clause

[Mr. Gerald Howarth]

"Are there any other circumstances within your knowledge or opinion"—

this is important—

"not already discussed affecting or likely to affect the proposed insurance?"

Mr. O'Shea answered the question—in his opinion, the answer was no. He did not appeal against the conviction because of the costs involved. Anyone involved in litigation knows that there comes a time when one has to consider whether it is better to cut one's losses, and Mr. O'Shea decided to cut his losses and not engage in the expensive business of going to appeal. He said that in his opinion he had denied the accusation, as he denies it to this day, and that it had involved a camera for which he paid £70.

Perhaps Mr. O'Shea was naive and should have realised that that was, in the eyes of the insurer, a material fact. Naive or not, that should not absolve Lloyd's from its responsibilities in this matter. This case reflects no credit on the insurance industry generally. I believe that at the base of it lies the doubt of the underwriters of Mr. O'Shea's innocence and that they are falling back on this catch-all clause to wriggle out of their obligations.

My advice to the underwriters is to put up their evidence or pay up to Mr. O'Shea now, and, to avoid this situation recurring, to ensure that proposal forms include the specific question, "Have you any previous convictions? If so, give details." That is the very least that should be done.

I pay tribute to Mr. O'Shea who, throughout this terrible personal ordeal, has shown great fortitude and a sense of reasonableness. He has not been totally consumed by it and has maintained at all times a balanced and reasonable approach. I hope that, as a result of this debate, a remedy will be found for him.

10.2 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): I congratulate the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) on raising an important general matter and on relating it to the way in which one individual has been affected; and my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth), who has associated himself with the case.

I begin by dealing with the general points to which the subject gives rise, and I shall comment later on the case to which reference has been made. On the generality of the matter in relation to insurance contracts, there is a good deal of common ground between the hon. and learned Gentleman, who has taken a close interest in this subject for a long time, and the Government. We would not dispute that steps need to be taken so that the balance of interest between the insurer and the consumer provided by the common law of insurance contract is altered, although there may be something between us as to the best remedy to be adopted in pursuit of that objective.

In October 1980, the Law Commission published a report on insurance contract law. That report identified two main areas where, in the opinion of the commission, the law discriminated unfairly against the consumer. First, there was the common law duty of disclosure, to which the hon. and learned Gentleman referred. Under the present law, the insured is obliged to disclose all facts which a prudent insurer would regard as material, regardless not only of whether he was asked about a particular fact, but of whether he was acting in perfectly good faith in failing to realise its importance.

The second matter identified by the Law Commission was the question of warranty, to which the hon. and learned Gentleman did not refer and to which I shall not refer today.

The Government considered the recommendations of the Law Commission and accepted them. In 1983, the Government announced their intention to introduce legislation to implement them, with the important qualification that the reform of the law should apply to consumer contracts only. That was because there is not the same need for consumer protection in relation to business contracts, where the proposer can be expected to have a knowledge of the law and of his obligations under it, while extension to business contracts of a less strict duty of disclosure could seriously weaken the industry's international competitiveness.

The difficulty which the Government have encountered in endeavouring to deal with the problem by legislation is that a satisfactory definition of what constitutes a consumer as opposed to a business contract has proved singularly elusive. Indeed, a satisfactory definition of a revised duty of disclosure has given rise to similar difficulties.

Those were both areas in which it was important to have legal certainty if the revised law were not to create as many problems as the existing law, and it became clear as the Government considered the matter that such certainty would be extremely difficult to achieve. For that reason my predecessor announced in December of last year that he was embarking on discussions with the insurance industry to see whether changes to its statements of insurance practice might serve as an acceptable substitute for legislation.

Those discussions are well advanced and the Government are considering, in the light of the views that have been put to us by all the parties concerned, whether it is possible to achieve a satisfactory solution of the problem by revised statements of practice as a satisfactory substitute for legislation. If we were to follow that route, the situation would have to be kept carefully under review and the legislation would need to be reconsidered if that solution was found not to be working properly, and I hope to make a statement on that aspect of the matter shortly.

The other general point raised by the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West related to exclusion clauses and to the fact that insurance contracts were excepted from some of the legislation dealing with exclusion clauses, including the two statutes to which he referred, the most recent of which was the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977.

Those statutes pose specific and particular difficulties for insurance contracts, which must, by their nature, contain some exclusion clauses, and certainty of interpretation is essential to efficient insurance underwriting. If insurance contracts had been made subject to those statutes, that certainty would have been fundamentally undermined. The consequence of introducing such fundamental uncertainty into insurance contracts would have been an inevitable increase in premiums to all policy holders, as it would follow that there would have been a substantial increase in the number of potential and unforeseen claims which insurers might have been obliged to meet.

Thus, there are specific difficulties which those statutes would pose for insurance contracts. The Government have carefully considered whether those difficulties could be met and have reached the conclusion that it would not be right in all the circumstances to make insurance contracts subject to those laws.

Those are my observations on the generality of the points raised by the hon. and learned Gentleman. I come now to the case which he and my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood mentioned, that involving Mr. O'Shea. I say at once that, from the facts that have been disclosed to the House by hon. Members, it is difficult not to approach the case with a good deal of sympathy for the personal circumstances of Mr. O'Shea. I appreciate the reasons which have led the hon. and learned Gentleman and my hon. Friend to take up the matter, I understand the difficulties under which Mr. O'Shea labours and I understand and share the natural sympathy which they have expresssed for the predicament in which Mr. O'Shea finds himself.

Having said that, it is necessary to give careful consideration to the circumstances of the case, to the non-disclosure which occurred in that case and to consider to what extent, if at all, the facts of the case would have been affected by the recommendation of the Law Commission.

Before discussing the detailed circumstances of the case, I wish to place on record, lest it be thought that I had any kind of interest in the matter, that, although I was a member of Lloyd's, I ceased all underwriting in all the syndicates in which I had previously participated in Lloyd's when I assumed ministerial office in September of this year, fully in accordance with the Government's guidelines for the conduct of Ministers.

Mr. Janner: Does the Minister not consider that in the interest of manifest integrity, and to distance himself and presumably the Government from Lloyd's in the present and other unsavoury circumstances, he should relinquish his membership of that body so that it is abundantly clear that he has no interest in it or any part of what is happening to its bad name in these circumstances and in the allegations of fraud and other misconduct which have been referred to in the House recently?

Mr. Howard: I have made my position clear elsewhere. It is not possible, for good reasons resulting from continuing obligations and the right of Lloyd's to impose discipline on members where necessary, for a member normally to resign membership immediately. It is not possible normally, according to the rules of Lloyd's, for any resignation to take effect for a period of at least 30 months. In those circumstances, I have done what was proper for me to do, which was to terminate my underwriting and resign from all syndicates.

I wish to deal with the facts of the case——

Mr. Janner *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. The hon. and learned Gentleman must not widen the debate.

Mr. Janner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for a Minister to reveal an interest in Lloyd's without saying whether he has given the 30-months notice to resign his membership from the organisation?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand that the Minister explained his position the other night. In any event, it is not a matter for me.

Mr. Howard: I wish to deal with the facts of the case in the four minutes that remain to me. The Law Commission's report and recommendation can be summarised in this way:

"the duty of disclosure should be retained but it should be modified . . . A fact should be disclosed to the insurer by an applicant if . . . it is material in the sense that it would influence a prudent insurer in deciding whether to offer cover against the proposed risk and, if so, at what premium and on what terms; and it is . . . known to the applicant . . . and . . . it is one which a reasonable man in the position of the applicant would disclose to his insurers having regard to the nature and extent of the insurers cover which is sought and the circumstances in which it is sought".

As we have heard, Mr. O'Shea was a jeweller. He was seeking cover not for his house or personal possessions but for his business. I express no personal view, far less a view on behalf of the Government, as it would not be proper to do so in the circumstances. However, it is at least open to argument that the knowledge that Mr. O'Shea had a previous conviction for receiving stolen goods was a material fact likely at least to influence the premium and the terms which an insurer would be prepared to offer, if not an insurer's willingness to provide cover in the first place.

We have listened with great care to what has been said about the circumstances of Mr. O'Shea's conviction, but conviction it was and as a conviction it remains on the record. In the circumstances, the very fact that the Law Commission's recommendation would not necessarily cover the case may cause some to doubt—I express no personal or governmental view on the matter—whether the extreme language used by the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West was justified. Those are the circumstances, and it is open to argument whether the Law Commission's recommendation would have covered the case. It is open to argument whether it is reasonable for an insurer to take the view that the disclosure was material and might have affected the premium required.

The hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West asked me to intervene, and he asked the Government to intervene. He must know that neither I nor the Government have any statutory locus to intervene in such matters. Although I share the views expressed by the hon. and learned Gentleman on the need to improve this area of our law, and although I share the sympathy expressed by him and my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood for Mr. O'Shea's personal predicament, I cannot provide the intervention or Government assistance for which they ask in resolving the facts of a sad and unhappy case.

Afghanistan

10.15 am

Mr. David Atkinson (Bournemouth, East): As this is the first opportunity I have had to do so in the House, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State on his appointment, which is so well deserved and long overdue. I am delighted to see my hon. Friends the Members for Dorset, South (Viscount Cranborne) and for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) in their places, both of whose interest and experience in Afghanistan are well known. I understand that they may wish to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the course of the debate.

The House will know that next week marks the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Despite the United Nations proximity talks, there appears to be no sign of an early withdrawal of Soviet troops. This is an especially appropriate time for the House to debate Afghanistan because, in my view, there exists a distinct danger that the euphoria following the recent summit between President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev may tempt some in the west to compromise their original position over Afghanistan in pursuit of a return to detente, and possibly to encourage success at the arms control negotiations at Geneva.

It might be useful to recall the events leading up to 27 December 1979 when the West gave every sign of having been caught by surprise, which, if true, represents a major scandal. Western intelligence would, or should, have been aware of the growing Soviet influence in Afghanistan, with the application of the classic Leninist strategy of infiltration, subterfuge, sabotage and assassination during each of the successive regimes since the overthrow of King Zahir Shah in 1973, and especially since the role of the Soviet special forces, the Spetsnaz, in the murder of President Amin in 1979.

We now know from Soviet defectors since the invasion, and from Vladimir Bukovsky's book, "The Peace Movement and the Soviet Union", that the Kremlin took some sort of decision in September 1979 to invade Afghanistan, and, in anticipation of the end to detente that this would provoke, it decided also to reactivate the world peace movement at the so-called World Parliament of the Peoples for Peace conference in Sofia on 23 to 27 September.

Surely our spy satellites and intelligence sources would have picked up sufficient evidence of the movement of troops and armour during the weeks preceding the invasion itself, which would have alerted Western leaders to warn the Kremlin both in private and in public of the consequences of such unlawful aggression.

It should come as no surprise that the Foreign Office appeared to know nothing until it woke up after Boxing Day because we now know that our information gatherers were on strike at the time. In reply to a question from the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) on 30 July 1984, my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary said that between 20 December 1979 and 13 February 1980 there was industrial action by station radio officers at GCHQ Cheltenham in support of a pay dispute.

There had been previous action in June, July and September 1979. If we were caught napping because of such irresponsible action by those to whom we entrust the security not only of this country but of the Western Alliance, my right hon. Friend the Prime Ministr was wholly justified in seeking to end union influence at GCHQ. It is a pity that we do not remind the public more frequently of these facts.

The invasion was justified by the Soviet Union on the grounds of having been "invited" to send troops to counter foreign interference, just as it had been invited so to do by Czechoslovakia in 1968 and by Hungary in 1956. The reaction of the rest of the world was rightly condemnatory. The United Nations passed a resolution calling for withdrawal. The European Community approved the Carrington plan to negotiate for a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan. To his credit, President Carter led the world on sanctions against the Soviet Union, including the grain embargo—this has since been lifted on the ground that it was proving ineffective and hurting American farmers more — the ending of technology transfer, soft credits and SALT II and an American boycott of the Moscow Olympics.

All too predictably, within a year, Western sanctions began to disintegrate in favour of self-interest. For example, President Carter himself quietly approved licences enabling American firms to sell billions of dollars' worth of gas pipeline-laying equipment to the Soviet Union, which, as we now know, was to employ gulag labour to construct it.

But there has been no such feebleness in Afghanistan where the people have shown that they are more prepared to be dead than Red in supporting seven different ill-equipped, ill-disciplined groups of freedom fighters, who were all too often prepared to fight one another rather than the common enemy, who then became a far more effective united force — the Mujahidin, equipped with heat-seeking missiles capable of doing impressive damage to the remaining Afghan army and the Soviet forces.

I shall not waste the time of the House speculating on the reasons for the Kremlin's decision to invade. There are many theories. The report by the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs discounted the historic "warm water port" theory; but perhaps the grim Russian joke—that the best way of defending its border is to be both sides of it—comes closest to the truth.

There is no doubt that the decision by the ageing moribund Brezhnev regime to invade Afghanistan has proved to be one of the Soviet Union's costliest blunders in recent years. It immediately isolated the Soviet Union from the free Muslim world at a time when the United States had lost influence through its support for the Shah and was being embarrassed by the hostages crisis in Teheran. It has been seen to be responsible for causing the single largest refugee problem in the world, with more than 4 million refugees in north-west Pakistan, and 5,000 or more coming over every month, and a further million in Iran—although that is no humanitarian gesture by the Ayatollah, who is using many of them at the front in his war with Iraq and is using the opportunity to export his own Islamic fundamentalist revolution to Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. That is why the Soviet Union has hastily replaced its central Asian troops with less impressionable Russians and Slavs.

There is no doubt that the war is contributing to some unrest in the Soviet Union as more and more service men return wounded and ever more families suffer bereavement. That has led to increasing television coverage showing Soviet troops in action. The Soviet Union is never backward in making a fuss of its individual heroes who are assuming almost Rambo-like proportions.

Although this can in no way be compared to the way in which public opinion in the United States forced Lyndon Johnson not to seek re-election because of Vietnam, the higher profile of the war is beginning to take a heavy toll and to affect the country domestically. Rostislav Evdokimov, the Russian free trade union campaigner who is now in prison, told me, while I was in Leningrad to interview him for my report on the freedom of trade unions in the Soviet Union for the Council of Europe, about the growing public awareness of the direction that the war was taking as a result of the coffins coming home.

I do not wish to dwell on the detail of the war itself. Reports still appear regularly in the Western press. It appears that the action has escalated this year and, although the Soviet-backed Afghan army has recently scored some successes, the Mujahidin continue to be able to threaten the main avenues of communication out of Kabul, northward to the Soviet border and eastward to the Khyber pass, as well as to infiltrate the capital.

Disgraceful reprisals are taken against the Afghan population. The list of atrocities is horrific. With more than 180,000 dead, it amounts to genocide. Fortunately, this has not gone unnoticed by the United Nations, where a report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan was presented earlier this year which figured prominently in last month's General Assembly debate when the continued Soviet occupation was condemned by a record majority. The General Assembly adopted yet another resolution on human rights and fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan on 13 December.

For some time, efforts have been made by the United Nations Secretary-General to secure a Soviet withdrawal in accordance with the annual resolutions and his proximity talks in Geneva are still going on. While a number of points have been agreed, we have yet to see any breakthrough resulting from the October summit. We must reasonably assume that Mr. Gorbachev wants a settlement. He has said as much, but he has said also that he would, if necessary, put five times as many Soviet troops into Afghanistan.

Although we must, of course, fully support these negotiations, especially Pakistan's determination not to negotiate directly with the Karmal Government, because to do so would represent de facto recognition of another Soviet puppet regime, there are a number of concerns which are being overlooked as well as initiatives which we should be considering which I should like to draw to the attention of the House.

First, I do not believe that the West has fully woken up to the problems of the refugees. For a first-hand account, I recommend the recent booklet "Refugees from Afghanistan" by George Miller, published by the British section of the International Society on Human Rights. The plight of the refugees must be kept in the public eye. We need to draw new world attention to the plight of the Afghan refugees. We have seen the massive response to aid Ethiopia. I am sure that, if we encourage more aid to the Afghan refugees, this will help to generate contributions and aid to those bearing the burden of assistance, not least the hard-pressed Pakistan Government and the United Nations agencies. It would also put international pressure on the Soviet Union.

Last month, the standing committee of the Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted the report by my right hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Sir F. Bennett) on "The Deteriorating Situation in Afghanistan", including a recommendation urging the Governments of member states to increase the contributions to the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to all places that they wish to visit in Afghanistan. I hope that the Government will vigorously support that recommendation.

We should not ignore the destabilising effect that so many refugees are having on Pakistan, not just on the economy, especially in the Peshawar area, but on the local population which is already strained by the Pashtoon and Baluchistan separatist issues which are being increasingly exploited by the Soviet Union against President Zia.

There is now widespread evidence that the Afghan security forces, the KHAD, are attempting to exploit Pakistani resentment of the refugee presence and have been able to penetrate the resistance movement to the extent of causing the deaths of a number of Mujahidin leaders within the past year.

Secondly, the West has yet to face up to the problem of the 200 or so Soviet soldiers who are now prisoners of the Mujahidin, many of whom wanted to come to the West. For example, Vladimir Naumov has been in rebel hands since November 1983. His health is deteriorating. He wishes to come to this country but I understand that the Home Office has, on three separate occasions, refused to consider his case. I appeal to my hon. Friend to see that we agree a humane policy with our allies towards those Soviet prisoners who wish to come to the West.

Thirdly, the West, including all members of the European Community, must continue to insist on a Soviet withdrawal before it is prepared to return to any new detente which Mr. Gorbachev seeks. Afghanistan must become a free and independent state again—neutral and non-aligned if that is the express wish of its people. There must be no compromise on that, and every opportunity must be used to get that message across to the Kremlin. I hope that President Reagan did just that at Geneva.

There should be no normalisation of relations between the Community and Comecon. Talks on that matter were broken off in 1980 because of the invasion of Afghanistan. Earlier this year, Comecon asked for a resumption of talks, but it took several months for the Commission to decide against such talks being resumed. Why did it take so long? The answer should have been immediate and emphatic. A Soviet withdrawal must come first.

I question whether the West's current attitude will be sufficient to convince the Kremlin seriously to consider withdrawal. If half the pressure that the world is putting on South Africa at present to end apartheid were applied to the Soviet Union to get out of Afghanistan, I believe that it would be only a matter of time before it did so. For France and other European countries to grovel to Third-world, black, corrupt, debt-ridden dictatorships to pile on the agony for South Africa and at the same time actively to pursue increased trade with the Soviet Union whilst it remains in Afghanistan, and to accept Siberian gas, is sheer hypocrisy and double standards.

At this time, when the Mujahidin is showing, with great courage and self sacrifice, that it remains determined to resist Soviet occupation and is committed to producing the same results as the Vietcong did for the United States in Vietnam, we in the West are honour bound to ensure that they want for nothing by way of arms and equipment. I believe that then we might see, for the first time, a Soviet retreat which will in turn contribute greatly to the promotion of peace and prosperity in our world today.

10.33 am

Viscount Cranborne (Dorset, South): The House owes a debt of immense gratitude to my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) for the initiative that he has taken today. His timing, as so often, has been impeccable. He has raised the matter at a perfect moment in our parliamentary calendar because we are so close to the anniversary of the Soviet forces' invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

My hon. Friend was exceedingly eloquent, as we have come to expect of him. He has also been generous in allowing me a small slice of the limited time available to him. I should explain that my gratitude is all the greater because I have an interest to declare, not just as chairman of the Afghanistan support committee but as chairman of its associated charitable organisation, Afghanaid, which is dedicated to sending help inside Afghanistan rather than to the refugee camps in Iran and Pakistan. I am sure that my hon. Friends will understand that that task is difficult, complicated and dangerous.

My hon. Friend has covered a large and complex subject thoroughly. I should like to emphasise a couple of the points that he made. The first relates to the scale of the disaster inside Afghanistan. Let there be no mistake, that is where the humanitarian need is. The refugees need help but, by and large, they are adequately looked after. The real need is inside the country where, of course, politically and physically it is most difficult to deliver it. I am grateful to my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the help that they have given my organisation. I wish to express appreciation for the way that they have co-operated.

There has been an appalling disaster which is—dare I say it—greater in humanitarian terms than the disaster in Ethiopia. The difficulty is that we do not know about it. It is extraordinary that the report presented to the United Nations General Assembly on 5 November 1985 attracted far less attention than it deserved. My hon. Friend was correct to draw the attention of the House to it today. The problem is that there are siren voices that say that it is a matter of super-power aggression, and wonder how a bunch of rag-headed tribesmen can manage to fight a super-power. They say, "Would it not be better to let them die slowly and not to irritate the Soviet Union when the world is so anxious to pursue the quest for peace?"

I shall set aside the temptation to discuss appeasement. Those people who put forward that argument do not know the type of people that the Afghan Mujahidin are. They will fight whether we help them or not. It would be an excellent thing, would it not, if we were to ensure, in so far as we could, that their sacrifice was not in vain.

In that context, I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to assure us of three things when he replies. First, that he will continue to give inside Afghanistan the humanitarian aid that is so badly needed. Secondly, that he will ensure that as much publicity as possible is given to what is happening inside Afghanistan. The Central Office of Information does a fine job already, but we need to do more. Will he encourage the newspapers and propaganda organisations to act accordingly? Thirdly, will he ensure that political pressure is applied? Is my hon. Friend the Minister prepared to undertake that Her Majesty's Government will press for observer status at the United Nations for the alliance of seven Mujahidin organisations?

10.38 am

Mr. Colin Moynihan (Lewisham, East): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) for raising this important and timely debate today. As hon. Members will be aware, I leave this evening for the north-west frontier of Pakistan to highlight the problems associated with refugees. I hope, during a two-week visit, to assess in detail some of the critical issues that he mentioned, and upon which I believe the House must concentrate in 1986.

We must consider the critical issue of the degree to which the Government should give humanitarian assistance inside Afghanistan as well as in the refugee camps. I fully appreciate and share the view of my hon. Friends the Members for Bournemouth, East and for Dorset, South (Viscount Cranborne) that this is a difficult issue which needs careful handling.

Bilateral assistance is provided by humanitarian charities. The Save the Children Fund does humanitarian work in the camps and Afghanaid does outstanding work in Afghanistan. They should have the Government's full support.

I place on record the unremitting and outstanding work of one of the world's recognised experts Rome Fullerton. He has done so much important work in the Afghanistan support committee and, although I have no eyes to see or ears to hear, I understand that he is with us today in the House.

I regret that, while I shall be on one side of the border, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown), who as a Member of Parliament should support the democratic values of representative Government, should accept a Soviet invitation to visit Afghanistan as a guest of the Soviet-backed regime. If I see him across the border, I cannot say that I shall readily acknowledge him.

I wish to place on record that I believe that the West has not yet accurately assessed the best and most co-ordinated way of assisting the Mujahadin and ensuring that the Soviet troops get out of Afghanistan as quickly as possible. There are many strands that are yet to be drawn together into a positive and effective method of action by the West. I regret that we do not have that, and I hope that during the two weeks that I shall be in the north-west frontier I shall be able to address those matters in particular. It has been useful to hear the debate before I go, and I look forward to the contribution from the Minister who, I think rightly, has won the respect of the House as a passionate, thoughtful and highly competent Minister.

10.41 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) for giving me the opportunity to reply to the debate, and to my hon. Friends for joining in. I express some regret that no Opposition Member felt able to attend and listen to the debate or take part in it.

I said that I was grateful to my hon. Friend for raising the matter. That is because we are nearing the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. That anniversary falls on 27 December. However, it is also a repugnant task to reply to the debate because what is happening in Afghanistan is truly repugnant, sobering and chastening. My hon. Friend the Member for

Bournemouth, East has already spoken of the historical background to the position in Afghanistan, and I do not wish to expand on that because it is well known, except to point out that the war in Afghanistan has now been going on for six years. That is longer than the second world war.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South has said, it is an unsung, faraway and neglected war. Access is difficult. It is hard for the media to secure the facts and films which our communication systems crave. However, the truth can never be completely suppressed and I want to draw the attention of the House to the problems of human rights in Afghanistan. I do not want to be emotional, tendentious or propagandist; I simply want to tell the House the facts, because they speak for themselves. I do not want to produce Foreign Office facts. I shall refer to the report of the Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to the General Assembly of the United Nations. That report is in the Library of the House. It if is true that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) will be spending Christmas in Kabul at the invitation of the Soviet puppet regime, I make an offer to him. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will gladly make available as many as 100 copies of that report of the UN Commission on Human Rights. I look forward to meeting with him when he returns from Kabul so that he can tell me how far he got in his efforts to distribute those copies and the reaction to them of the regime and the people in Kabul. On the off-chance that he will not feel able to take up my offer, I shall tell the House something of what the report says. That document cannot be described as anything more than a sober and realistic analysis of the position in Afghanistan. It refers to the gross and systematic abuse of human rights in that country.

Some 115,000 Soviet troops are helping the regime in Kabul. The report found that "benevolent" administration guilty of torture, conscription of children aged 15, displacement of persons from their homes making them refugees in their own country as well as refugees in neighbouring countries, infringement of the right to self-determination, acts of brutality by the armed forces, bombardment and massacres of villages following reprisals, use of anti-personnel mines and, even more horrifying, the use of booby-trapped toys.

I shall briefly discuss each of the areas that were highlighted by the United Nations' document. There is no doubt that torture is currently commonplace and, to quote the report, torture

"has almost assumed the character of an administrative practice."

I do not need to detain the House on the horror of conscription of children.

The report refers to the creation of refugees——

"some regions are devastated, the population has had to flee and cannot return, the agriculture is completely destroyed."

In the course of operations against the opposition movements it appears that

"all kinds of sophisticated weapons, in particular those that have a heavy destructive and psychological effect, are being used. The target is primarily the civilian population, the villages and the agricultural structure."

The report goes on:

"whole groups of persons and tribes are endangered in their existence and in their lives because their living conditions are fundamentally affected by the kind of warfare being waged."

If that is not enough, the report writes of the merciless character of the warfare in that country. Perhaps we should not be surprised at the report's observation that in the treatment of prisoners the existence of the Geneva convention is simply not heard of.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East. The Government would like to see the International Committee of the Red Cross allowed freely to visit Soviet prisoners of war, the many Afghans taken in the fighting and the political prisoners — there are many of them—held by the Soviet occupying forces and the Soviet puppet regime.

However appalling the treatment of the prisoners of war is, it is a lesser tragedy than the calculated acts of brutality by the armed forces against the civilian population. The report says that the objective of the regime seemed to be to destroy the means of survival of the population assisting the resistance movement. I shall spare the House the full horror described in the report and take a typical example —a series of reprisal operations against 12 villages in one week in March of this year when 1,000 civilians were allegedly killed. These are not the Foreign Office's words. The report states:

"In the course of these operations, livestock was decimated, houses plundered and set on fire, women raped and some of them summarily executed, and several children locked up in a house were burnt to death."

What sort of regime is it that will consciously burn children to death? If we add atrocity to atrocity, the simple, chilling arithmetic says that, according to certain estimates, the series of incidents catalogued in the report "has resulted in the killing of approximately 500,000 Afghans since 1979, most of them civilians."

In only nine months of this year almost 33,000 civilians were reported to have been killed, almost 2,000 houses destroyed together with 74 villages, and well over 3,000 animals. With that goes the devastation and destruction of fields and livestock and, as the report says, the

"destruction of irrigation systems in provinces as a result of aerial bombardments which have prevented any repairs from being made and have completely obliterated agriculture in several regions".

I do not have to tell the House that if the people cannot farm, they starve.

Yet that is not the worst, regrettably. I referred to the use of booby-trapped toys. Let me tell the House what those devices are. Generally they are dropped by helicopter in zones that are presumed to be controlled by the resistance. They resemble pens, harmonicas, radios or matchboxes, or are shaped like little birds, but those so-called toys explode when they are picked up or stepped upon. The majority of the victims are children aged between 8 and 15 whose hands or legs are blown off. Many witnesses have testified that the use of those horrible devices now form, according to the report,

"part of a strategy aimed specifically at the civilian population of villages where a large military operation appeared to be under way."

At this Christmas season we should note the chilling words of the report:

"The situation of children in Afghanistan has been particularly affected, whether they live in Kabul or in the main cities or whether they cross the border as refugees. The majority of children who do not leave the country and who are not in the cities are helpless against the effects of high altitude bombing and shelling, starvation and disease, the disruption of families and the destruction of family life and the collapse of the traditional structure.

There is apparently no health cure for the majority of the population. As a consequence, the infant mortality rate has reached 300 and 400 per 1,000".

[Mr. Tim Eggar]

That is one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world.

I should like to illustrate by a further quotation that the regime attacks its own citizens not only physically but in their very spiritual beliefs, in a country where perhaps 99 per cent. are Moslems. The report states:

"The Special Rapporteur also wishes to emphasise two new factors which illustrate the range of the actions taken in the country: on the one hand, a policy described as one of humiliation and religious intolerance; and, on the other hand, bombings of civilians during funerals.

Indeed, according to a number of witnesses, mosques have been desecrated, religious books have been destroyed and in some cases even used as toilet paper, while members of the Islamic faith have been obliged to eat pork and to drink alcohol.

A number of witnesses stated that funeral processions accompanying the bodies of victims had also been bombed."

Faced with that litany of systmatic abuses of human rights, we should not be surprised by what the report calls "one of the biggest movements of refugees history has ever known".

It is estimated to be continuing at some 6,000 to 8,000 people a month. Again, I quote:

"it may be appreciated that the sheer volume of the refugees is per se a human rights problem."

Small wonder that between 1·5 million and 2 million people are now displaced from their homes in Afghanistan, refugees inside their own country, with a further 3 million refugees in Pakistan and another million in Iran.

My hon. Friends have referred to the importance of aid to assist those refugees. Last year we were able to give some £4 million to help refugees in Pakistan. I hope that we shall be able to give similar amounts next year. I paid particular attention to the remarks by my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South. We very much appreciate the work that is done by Afghanaid and we hope that next year we shall be able to be of assistance again.

Despite increasingly aggressive and more sophisticated tactics, and much heavier firepower on the part of the Soviet regime's forces, the resistance remains strong and resilient. I assure the House that we take every opportunity to encourage the resistance, to draw attention to its gallant struggles, and to give it what support we can in its efforts to liberate its country from the Soviet occupation and puppet regime of Babrak Karmal.

The tragedy is that none of that should be necessary. The presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan has been consistently condemned by the international community, most recently on 13 November this year at the United Nations, when a record 122 voted for the motion calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, with only 19 countries against. There can be no doubt that both the Kabul regime and the Soviet Union are, in Afghanistan, in breach of the Geneva convention and of the International covenants on Human Rights, of which both are signatories.

This week the Pakistan Government and representatives of the Kabul regime have been in Geneva for proximity talks under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General's special representative. Those talks have already reached agreement on the outlines of a solution, which would provide for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, full respect for Afghanistan's independent sovereign non-aligned status, non-intervention and non-interference from outside, leaving the country free to determine its own future, and the right of refugees to return to their homes in safety and honour.

There appear to be some signs of Soviet flexibility, but we need to have more than just the appearance. We need to have evidence of their willingness to come to terms and to withdraw from the country. Whatever the Soviet Union says, it is its willingness to negotiate a firm, fixed timetable for troop withdrawal which is the real test of its commitment to a settlement. Whatever may have been said at Geneva, we need to see concrete progress from the Soviet Union.

I confess that I find it difficult to understand why the Soviet Union has not learnt from the history of the region, from the proud tradition of the peoples of Afghanistan. There can be no victory against them, no militarily imposed solution. As my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East said, the key to peace remains the withdrawal of Soviet troops as part of a negotiated package. Nothing else can end the tragedy of Afghanistan and the suffering of its people, of whom, as we have heard today, fully one third are refugees either outside their country, in Pakistan or Iran, or within it. The Government are determined to do everything that they can do to assist those refugees and to ensure that the brave fight of the people of Afghanistan can continue to an ultimately successful conclusion.

I am sure that the whole House joins me and my hon. Friend in condemning unreservedly the activities of the Karmal regime and the Soviet Union. Over Christmas everyone in the House and the country will think of the brave Afghan people entering the seventh year of a war against a foreign aggressor. In particular, as our children and grandchildren open their toys, we may spare a thought for the children of Afghanistan who, when they pick up the toys that they see lying in the countryside, find, instead, a booby trap or a bomb, and lose limbs as a result of playing with those particularly fiendish devices left by the Soviet Union.

It being Eleven o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *interrupted the proceedings, pursuant to Standing Order No. 5 (Friday sittings).*

Gartcosh

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. George Younger): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement about matters relating to the steel industry in Scotland, and, particularly, about the Gartcosh cold-rolling mill and the Ravenscraig works.

On 7 August the Government announced the results of the strategy review which they had conducted with the British Steel Corporation. The most important outcome of the review was that steel making would continue at all five of the corporation's major sites, one of which is Ravenscraig, for at least the duration of the present planning period, that is until 1988, unless there should be a major and unforeseen downturn in demand. At the same time, the corporation announced as a managerial decision, and not subject to specific Government approval, that it intended to close from 31 March 1986 the Gartcosh cold-rolling mill. Gartcosh is about 10 miles from Ravenscraig, and draws its supplies of hot-rolled steel from Ravenscraig.

The corporation's decision on Gartcosh was the subject of controversy in Scotland. The Government were urged to intervene to prevent the closure, mainly on the ground that Gartcosh is an integral part of the Ravenscraig works, and that its closure would lead inevitably to the closure of Ravenscraig. It was argued that that would put in doubt the joint conclusion of the Government and the corporation that Ravenscraig should remain in operation. I have received a considerable number of written representations about the closure of Gartcosh, to which I have replied, and I have also met a number of deputations.

The most significant of the representations which I received were those from the Ravenscraig trade unions committee. On 9 October the committee asked me to meet it so that it could put to me its views on the matters I have just described. I agreed to do so as soon as conveniently possible, and we met in Edinburgh on 21 October. When the House resumed after the summer recess the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs began an investigation into the British Steel Corporation's decision to close Gartcosh. The two matters, the case put to me by the Ravenscraig trade unions committee, and the Select Committee's investigation, were and are quite separate, although obviously they relate to the same issue. Having considered the matter against the background of the Select Committee's intention to restrict its taking of evidence, and to report as quickly as possible, I decided to await the Committee's report before replying to the Ravenscraig trade unions committee. That remained the position until the beginning of this week.

There was then no certainty whether or when the Select Committee would report, and the already lengthy delay in replying to the trade unions committee began to appear discourteous, especially as the Christmas recess was imminent. I came to the conclusion that I could wait no longer, and my Private Secretary, therefore, wrote on my behalf to the Ravenscraig trade unions committee's convener on 18 December, conveying my views on the matters put to me by his committee. On 19 December, in reply to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher), a copy of the correspondence was placed in the Library of the House.

My conclusion was that the Government would not be justified in changing their view that the decision to close Gartcosh was a matter for the commercial judgment of the corporation, that the issues raised by the proposed closure are commercial, managerial and technical, rather than strategic, and that those issues are properly a matter for decision by BSC, not the Government. The corporation has satisfied me and my colleagues that the closure proposal is consistent with the strategy agreed for the corporation for the next three years, particularly in relation to continuation of steel making on the five major sites, including Ravenscraig.

On 18 December the Select Committee agreed on a report, and I understand that that report is expected to be available later today. As is the usual practice, the Government will in due course give their views on the Select Committee's report and recommendations.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): The Secretary of State will be aware of the widespread disappointment and anger at his insistence that Gartcosh can be killed off without damaging the rest of the Scottish steel industry. The Secretary of State, in his letter to Mr. Brennan, the shop steward convener at Ravenscraig, set great store on the BSC assurances. How can he do that with confidence, when bad news is pressing in on every side? Today the press has reported a story of a further 430 men being made redundant at the nearby Clydesdale tube works.

Does the Secretary of State genuinely believe that he can accept a policy which BSC openly says is based on an assumption that there will be no economic recovery or increase in demand for steel products during the next few years? Is it not naive to rely on such assurances about Ravenscraig when the top management of the BSC repeatedly call for closure of one of the major strip mills? Is it not extraordinary that the letter of 18 December was sent? It refers to the Select Committee's report and carefully states that the Government's response will come in due course from the Department of Trade and Industry. Why does the Secretary of State pre-empt that consideration by his right hon. Friend, and announce his damaging views on a central issue in the report?

It is the Select Committee's conviction that Gartcosh and Ravenscraig cannot be treated as separate entities, and that any guarantee extended to Ravenscraig should also cover Gartcosh. The Secretary of State must be uncomfortably aware that the report was endorsed by eight votes to two, and carried every Tory Member except two irreconcilable diehards. Does not the Secretary of State's letter to the convener kick his colleagues in the teeth, and suggest a lack of courtesy and a cavalier disregard for the Committee system? Has the Secretary of State seen the evidence offered to the Select Committee? If he has not, his repudiation of the link with Ravenscraig is even more indefensible.

I understand from what the Secretary of State said that to some extent he accepts that he jumped the gun with his letter to Mr. Brennen, although he offers some explanation. The statement contains an implied apology. Surely he accepts that to talk of discourtesy because of the delay in sending a reply is no alibi for the way in which he acted. I can promise him that the stewards would have been much happier with an explanation of the delay, and to be informed that the Secretary of State was prepared courteously to wait for the important Select Committee evidence, rather than be faced with this dismaying and damaging document, which is so ill-timed.

[Mr. Donald Dewar]

Is it not grossly unfair on the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who has still to reply on behalf of the Government to the Select Committee report? Will the Secretary of State assure the House today—this will be an important assurance—that, despite what he said in his letter, the Government's mind is not yet closed, and that there will be a genuine in-depth consideration of the Select Committee's evidence and findings?

This cannot be the final word on the matter. The fight will certainly continue in Scotland. Will the Secretary of State promise that the weighty considerations raised by the Select Committee's investigation are not being shelved or sabotaged by his letter to Mr. Brennan, and that they are still very much on the ministerial agenda? Neither the Government nor the BSC management must take irrevocable action to close Gartcosh during the recess. The Secretary of State owes that assurance to the House, certainly to the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, to the whole of Scotland, and to the courageous and responsible work force who have put a compelling case for their plant with force and dignity.

Mr. Younger: I appreciate what the hon. Gentleman has said, and entirely agree that the work force has worked hard and devotedly at Gartcosh. I am sure that he appreciates that the news about the large number of redundancies at Clydesdale tube works, which are extremely regrettable, has absolutely nothing to do with either Ravenscraig or Gartcosh. I am assured by the BSC management that they are due solely to a reduction in the demand for products which are made there. It is important that that should not be confused in any way with the controversy over Gartcosh and/or Ravenscraig.

I ask the hon. Gentleman to consider carefully the detailed responses given by the British Steel Corporation. They make extremely useful and interesting reading, and the hon. Gentleman will have to make his own judgment on the evidence submitted. Before then, he should not jump to conclusions about what his view might be.

We have been waiting for weeks to see whether the Select Committee would produce a report and, if so, what it would say. I have done some waiting, too. As I saw the shop stewards on 21 October, and as I have been pressed almost daily during the past month to say when my response would come, I thought that if I delayed my response until the recess it would be considered discourteous. I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) would have been jumping about in fury had I done so——

Mr. Dewar: Oh, no.

Mr. Younger: Yes; I have had this in the past. The hon. Gentleman would have said that I had delayed my response until the recess to avoid giving Parliament the opportunity to comment on it. The hon. Gentleman must be honest and recognise that that is exactly what he would have said. That is why I decided at the beginning of this week, as there was every likelihood that the Select Committee would not come to a conclusion, that I had to play fair with the House and ensure that I responded before the recess.

However, I give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that he seeks on the Select Committee report. I have not yet received the report or all the evidence given to the Select Committee, but we hope to receive it later today. If so, I assure the hon. Gentleman that we shall consider carefully everything that is said in the report and all the details of the written and oral evidence that was given to the Select Committee. We shall weigh everything carefully before the Government respond in the usual way in the new year.

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): Is my right hon. Friend aware that Conservative Members regret the prospect of further job losses in the Scottish steel industry? However, is it not a fact that the problems at Gartcosh and the problems reported this morning at the tube works are not due to a lack of Government investment, financial support or political support to keep the main steel works in Scotland going? Indeed, my right hon. Friend showed unusual commitment in obtaining a guarantee of three years' further production at Ravenscraig. Does he agree that there is a contradiction in accepting that the steel industry needs orders and that it must be competitive to achieve those orders, and yet fighting to retain loss-making plants?

Mr. Younger: My hon. Friend is right to say that the British steel industry, and the Scottish end of it, must be competitive in every way possible. Our consideration of such matters must be dominated by the crucial importance of Ravenscraig to the Scottish economy. We must consider every part of the evidence against the background of whether proposals would be to the advantage of Ravenscraig, which is so large and so important to Scotland. I have considered the matter with that in mind, and I suggest that hon. Members should do the same. By far the greatest danger to Scotland would be a threat to Ravenscraig's future.

I agree with my hon. Friend that job losses are extremely unwelcome at any time, but especially now. But they cannot be due to lack of Government support for the industry, because we have given hundreds of millions of pounds to keep the industry going through its difficulties. Indeed, the Government have made a firm commitment to keep Ravenscraig open during the present planning period.

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): The Secretary of State cannot seriously expect us to accept his explanation of threatened discourtesy to the trade unions for sending this ridiculous letter, when the trade unions were pinning great faith and hope on the Select Committee report and did not expect ministerial intervention before its publication. Moreover, is he aware that, on Scottish radio this morning, the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry, has been properly holding the line about no further Government statement on the matter until the Select Committee report is published in January? The Scottish Office should have adhered religiously to that line.

The Secretary of State must have recognised by now that it is generally believed in Scotland that the closure of Gartcosh in 1986 is bound to have a direct effect on the viability of Ravenscraig after 1988. There is no denying that.

Mr. Younger: The right hon. Gentleman completely ignores the fact that the Select Committee's deliberations have taken so long, and the fact that my response was to specific recommendations from the shop stewards joint committee. It is not a response to the evidence given to the Select Committee or to the Select Committee's views. Nor

could it be, since I have not yet received them. With that in mind, I believe that the right hon. Gentleman is being disingenuous. He, too, would have been angry had I made the announcement during the recess. Therefore, his remarks are unfair to me.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I am a member of the Select Committee to which much reference has been made. Is my right hon. Friend aware that those who wished to use the Select Committee to produce a political report have been found out? Anyone who examines carefully the evidence presented to the Select Committee —I have done a tremendous amount of work on this report—will be bitterly disappointed that the Opposition do not recognise that, on the basis of the evidence, the corporation's decision was clearly commercial, managerial and technical. The British Iron and Steel Consumers' Council said that its members — the customers—had a vested interest in an efficient and financially viable BSC. Were it not so, prices to the consumer would be affected.

The cause of the problems at the tube works is uncertainty in the North sea oil market, brought about by the fluctuating price of oil. The fact that the price is sinking has thrown doubt on further orders from the North sea sector. Does my right hon. Friend agree that, although all of those matters are disappointing for Scotland, the most disappointing aspect is how the trade unions have been led along by those who believed that they could engineer a political report, but were unable to do so?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate what my hon. Friend says. I shall make no comment on the Select Committee's work until I have read the report in detail. I should tell the hon. Member for Garscadden that we should respect the right of all members of the Select Committee to express their views and to be respected for them. I hope that we will not give the impression that we attach more weight to some than to others——

Mr. Dewar: It was the majority.

Mr. Younger: I think it is important to accord respect to the views of all members of the Select Committee.

As my hon. Friend said, it is perfectly correct for the BSC to decide the future of Gartcosh. What this controversy has outlined most clearly is that it is exceedingly difficult for people outside the industry to become mixed up in the complicated detail of running it, as I have discovered. Although it must be done, I believe that it is better to allow industry to make its decisions wherever possible. My hon. Friend was right to mention one group who have not been mentioned so far this morning—the customers. They are the most important people. They require products made in the best possible works at the lowest possible cost.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): Did the Secretary of State make any approach to the shop stewards asking whether they would accept a delay in his response until he had a chance to consider the Select Committee report? I believe that they received no such approach.

Is the Secretary of State aware that the finishing mills in the British Steel Corporation, with Gartcosh, are already at the bottleneck? Is he aware that the closure of Gartcosh would tighten the bottleneck to such an extent that, whatever the demand, in three years' time the BSC can close Ravenscraig without reducing the amount of finished steel that it can produce?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the BSC and Ministers have wriggled and squirmed in every direction to avoid giving their direct estimates or independent estimates of the effects of closing Gartcosh on the capacities of different stages of steel production, and thus on the viability of Ravenscraig after the closure of Gartcosh? Is he aware that it is totally inadequate for the British Steel Corporation to quibble about irrelevant details of other people's estimates while concealing its underlying strategy?

If, in three years' time, the Secretary of State, from whatever Benches, wishes to fight the closure of Ravenscraig, what arguments will he use? Does he acknowledge that the future of Gartcosh and Ravenscraig can be seen only in the context of the strip products group strategy as a whole, as other plants produce the same products and sell in the same markets? Does he condone the refusal by the chairman of the British Steel Corporation to give evidence on the strip products group strategy when, at other times, he says that that is the essential background to any decision on the future of Gartcosh and Ravenscraig?

Will the Secretary of State confirm that he has received from me a copy of a letter sent by me and other hon. Members to the Prime Minister seeking a meeting with her and other Ministers so that we can fully go into what I agree is a technical matter but one on which Ministers and the BSC have so far sought to conceal the underlying arguments?

Mr. Younger: I have seen a copy of the hon. Gentleman's letter to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. I am grateful to him for letting me see that. I assure him that it will be given careful consideration and that an answer will be sent to him as soon as possible.

I did not approach the shop stewards to ask their permission to delay further, because I thought that further delay would be undesirable and would certainly have been greatly disapproved of in Parliament.

I suggest that the hon. Gentleman, of all people, ought to be extremely careful about continuing to talk about the closure of Ravenscraig. It is not the case that, even if Gartcosh closes, Ravenscraig has to close also. It is terribly important that we should not go around giving the impression that it is. That is not so. Ravenscraig is far more important to Scotland than is any aspect of Gartcosh.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall endeavour to call all the right hon. and hon. Members who wish to ask questions, but I draw their attention to the fact that this is a private Members' day.

Mr. Roy Jenkins (Glasgow, Hillhead): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he has throughout given the impression of a pussy-footing approach on this important issue? Why did he feel confident yesterday, a few hours after the Select Committee report was published, to pronounce firmly that there was no link between Gartcosh and Ravenscraig, when the Select Committee, including the more respectable part of its Conservative membership, after weeks of taking evidence, was firmly convinced to the contrary?

I am not sure whether the Secretary of State's reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) meant that, with the Select Committee report, he is now willing to consider the matter afresh and, if necessary,

[Mr. Roy Jenkins]

reach a different decision about Gartcosh from that conveyed to the shop stewards yesterday. Is the right hon. Gentleman merely playing with words by saying that he is willing to look at the evidence? If his mind is not open, that is meaningless. Unless his mind is open, how can anyone have any trust in the future of Ravenscraig in his hands—if it be in his hands in three years' time?

Mr. Younger: The right hon. Gentleman will have to make his own judgment on that, on the basis of the record. The response that I gave yesterday had no relevance to the Select Committee report, because I have not yet received it. It was a response to the detailed recommendations and suggestions by the trade union shop stewards committee put to me on 21 October——

Mr. Jenkins: Is the Gartcosh decision open?

Mr. Younger: —to which I gave a very full reply yesterday. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to look at that very carefully indeed, because he will find that the arguments are extremely strong.

I assure the right hon. Gentleman that I and my colleagues in the Government will give the most careful consideration to everything said in the Select Committee report and all the evidence presented to it and we will look at that with an open nind.

Mr. Jim Craigen (Glasgow, Maryhill): Will the Secretary of State give us an assurance that, whatever else, Gartcosh will not have to close because of his well-known courtesy? Now that the Select Committee has reported, will the right hon. Gentleman take that report as an expression of Scottish opinion across the political spectrum, save one or two Conservative eccentrics? Will he assure the House that, as Scotland's representative in the Cabinet, he will have a change of heart, take on the Department of Trade and Industry and try to save Gartcosh?

Mr. Younger: As I have said already today, my overriding priority is the future of Ravenscraig. It is the largest part, the most important part and the central part of the Scottish steel industry. If I were convinced that the closure of Gartcosh would put Ravenscraig in greater danger, I should oppose that closure root and branch. But as, on the evidence presented to me by the shop stewards committee, I am not so convinced, I have to think of the future of Ravenscraig. It is clearly the opinion of the BSC management, and in the light of the shop stewards' evidence it is my opinion, that Ravenscraig is certainly no worse off, and is probably slightly better off, if Gartcosh does, regrettably, have to close. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] That must be our top priority and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not join his hon. Friends and go around giving the impression that Ravenscraig cannot be run if Gartcosh closes. That is very damaging for the Scottish steel industry.

Mr. John McWilliam: (Blaydon): If Ravenscraig is so safe, why is the National Coal Board closing one third of its coke production for steel making by closing the coke plant at Derwent Haugh in my constituency, which serves Ravenscraig?

Mr. Younger: That has no relevance to future decisions on Ravenscraig. The BSC has made it clear that it has adequate coking capacity at Ravenscraig for the future, with the silicon welding, and it is putting more investment into Ravenscraig for direct coal injection. Of all the problems that we have to tackle, that is not one.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): When the right hon. Gentleman reads the report of these exchanges, he will surely acknowledge the unbelievably tortuous logic that he is trying to use. He told my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) that he has an open mind on the issue and will be looking at the Select Committee report in that frame of mind, but in response to another question he said that he had a hunch —presumably he has had that hunch for some time— that Ravenscraig might be better off if Gartcosh were closed. What sort of open, objective analysis is that?

Given all the publicity about the deliberations of the Select Committee, surely the right hon. Gentleman does not have to wait for the report to arrive to know, as every hon. Member knows, that the Committee has said that it does not see the case for the distinction between Gartcosh and Ravenscraig that the management of the BSC is trying to make. Surely the right hon. Gentleman can respond to that today, instead of dodging the issue yet again.

Mr. Younger: I do not think that, on reflection, the hon. Gentleman will believe that that is a sensible proposition. He would not be pleased with me if I gave my response to any Select Committee report after merely looking at its conclusions and without studying the evidence. I have not had access to all the evidence. I have seen only the evidence that has been published. I do not think that, on reflection, the hon. Gentleman will feel that he has made a sensible suggestion.

The hon. Gentleman will not be doing anybody in Scotland any good if he backs a solution that is worse for Ravenscraig. He ought to think carefully, as I have, about what is best for Ravenscraig.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Is not the truly outrageous aspect of the Secretary of State's behaviour the fact that he deliberately sought to pre-empt the conclusions of a Select Committee? He rushed out his response not because of any suddenly realised need for courtesy, but because he was horrified at the conclusions that he thought that the Select Committee had reached. Has not he undermined the whole system of Select Committees?

Mr. Younger: I suspect that the hon. Lady has not studied the history of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. I note that the hon. Lady thinks that, when a proposition has been put to a Minister on 21 October, a response on 18 December has been "rushed out". I do not think that that would carry much conviction among Scottish Members.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): Are the two arguments that the Secretary of State has put to the House—the importance of competitive pricing and the need to pay attention to the preference of customers—identical to the arguments that he is deploying in his discussions with the Secretary of State for Defence over the placing of the next batch of SSK submarines?

Mr. Younger: There is no conflict between those two views. I have been concentrating this morning on trying to get the best deal for the British steel industry. All hon. Members should carefully study with open minds the evidence that I have published and put in the Library.

Against all that evidence, they should ask which course is the best for the Scottish steel industry and will give the best prospects for Ravenscraig. If hon. Members look at the evidence with that question in mind, I think that they will come to a different conclusion from the one that they hold at present.

Homelessness (London)

Question again proposed, That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: We now return to the Adjournment debate. I say to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) that the best thing would be for him to continue his Adjournment debate until just before noon, which will enable the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) to have one minute extra.

11.29 am

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I hear what you say, Mr. Speaker. The exchanges that we have just heard are very important. However, it is regrettable that the Government did not choose to find a somewhat more convenient time to make that statement, more convenient for Back-Bench Members who have matters to raise and for Scottish Members, many of whom will already have returned to their constituencies.

At least the Minister whom the Government have chosen to make their apologies for the homelessness in London is in the form of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, rather than the chairman of the Conservative party, the Chingford boot boy who unfortunately reduced to the level of the gutter what should have been a good debate last Wednesday on the problems of the inner cities.

In a supposedly civilised society, it should be unacceptable that anyone who so desires should be without a roof over his or her head, but within a few yards of the House may be found hundreds of people — men and women, young and old—who are sleeping rough on the streets. The Greater London council has just received an interim report by Professor John Greve of Leeds university on homelessness in London. He previously reported in 1970 and he now finds that the level of reported homelessness in London is up by 700 per cent. since then. Professor Greve's report, with others that came from the Duke of Edinburgh and the Archbishop of Canterbury's commission, show that there is incontrovertible proof of the social crisis that is facing inner cities.

Instead of approaching this problem with the same urgency that sent a task force steaming towards the Falklands, the Government have sought to rubbish all the evidence. If we believe the Government, the Duke of Edinburgh has become a Marxist, the Church of England has become the Kremlin at prayer and recent inner city riots are just isolated incidents of hooliganism. Perhaps the Government think that they can contain the growing problem by recruiting more policemen and giving them plastic bullets, clubs and water cannon. Such a response would simply add blind stupidity to the criminal negligence of which the Government are already guilty in their policies towards inner cities.

London this year has reached the depressing record of more than 27,000 households accepted by the boroughs as being homeless. That is only part of the problem. There are also over 20,000 single homeless in unsatisfactory accommodation or sleeping rough.

Hon. Members will shortly be departing for Christmas, no doubt a merry one. However, I hope that they will spend some time during the season of good will and festivity thinking of the poverty and degradation facing so many of our citizens in London and elsewhere. The lucky

[Mr. Tony Banks]

ones will go to bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation, where two thirds of the homeless accepted by councils end up. However, I doubt whether any Member of Parliament would consider himself or herself to be lucky in such accommodation. Conditions in bed and breakfast accommodation for the most part are squalid and overcrowded. Fire regulations are often flouted and many mothers and children suffer from ill health and severe social stress brought on by living in such appalling circumstances. The stable in Bethlehem would have offered more pleasant accommodation than many mothers and children will enjoy this Christmas.

The cost to the state of bed and breakfast accommodation is formidable. In his interim report, Professor Greve concluded that, far from representing an economical way to deal with the problem, the use of bed and breakfast hotels for homeless families is financial and economic madness. In London, the GLC figures show that the financial cost to local authorities alone of subsidising this type of accommodation for the homeless exceeded £12·5 million in 1984-85. It is estimated that this could rise to £16 million in the present financial year. However, this expenditure represents only a fraction of the financial cost to the state imposed by the use of this type of accommodation. In addition to local authority spending, huge costs are borne by central Government. Through DHSS board and lodging allowances the Government are acting on that not by building more council houses or providing more accommodation but by harassing the homeless in bed and breakfast accommodation.

In his report, Professor Greve compares the cost of housing families in bed and breakfast hotels with that of building new homes and flats for the families concerned. Taking into account only the estimated DHSS board and lodging costs, he shows that the average annual cost of keeping a couple with two children in bed and breakfast accommodation is over £13,000 compared with only £7,600 for building the family concerned a suitably sized council flat or house. That is how ludicrous the situation is becoming. If one takes into account the other costs, to the local authority and to the families themselves, Professor Greve concludes that these

"reinforce the financial case for giving priority to housing as against bed and breakfast accommodation . . . the social case for doing so is overwhelming."

It might be overwhelming to all sensible people, but that excludes the Government. Their economic and social policies are taking the country towards the status of a banana republic, or, as Prince Charles pointed out, a fourth-rate country. Perhaps the Government think that he too has been recruited into the Militant Tendency.

Yesterday, in a written parliamentary answer, the Secretary of State for the Environment announced the housing capital allocation for 1986-87. I have not had a chance to study it in great depth, but as far as I can see, far from increasing the allocation to reduce homelessness, the national housing improvement figure is cut by 13 per cent. in real terms over 1985-86. The London HIP allocation for 1986-87 is £430 million, a heavy cut from the £483 million allocated in 1985-86. When the Conservative Government came into office in 1979, the HIP allocation for London was £1,563 million, but next year it will be only £430 million. That is a reduction of 72 per cent.

I know that the Government's philosophy is that problems are not solved by throwing money at them, but I should like the Minister to explain how one solves London's housing crisis by a 72 per cent. reduction in HIP allowances since the Government were elected.

The Minister may say that local authorities have lots of vacant property that they could use to house the homeless. However, in London most vacancies come about because the dwelling is not fit to live in and is undergoing repair or improvement. One of the boroughs with the most empty property is the borough that the Government like to praise as a fine example. In Wandsworth, 2,000 council houses are being kept empty because the authority is trying to sell them off. The Minister may say that authorities have capital receipts, but in inner London the capital receipts are simply not there. They are accumulating in outer London areas where the problem of homelessness is not so desperate. The Government should recognise this in the HIP allocation.

The Minister cannot deny that homelessness has increased dramatically throughout the Government's period of office. I am happy to give way if the Minister wishes to deny that, but he cannot and he remains in his place. On this occasion, I do not blame him. Throughout their term of office, the Government have enforced repeated and vicious cuts on local authority housebuilding and repairing programmes. Since 1979, the amount that councils are allowed to spend on housing has been cut by over 60 per cent. Largely as a result of this policy, the Government have also presided over an increase in recorded homelessness of 70 per cent. in London and nearly 50 per cent. nationally.

The social cuts should be obvious to even the nastiest of Tory Members — I accept that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary does not fall into that category. Perhaps the economic argument is not so apparent. The Government say that it costs £6,500 to keep each unemployed person on the dole, in terms of benefits paid and revenue lost. There are 400,000 unemployed construction workers on the dole, which shows that a major housebuilding programme to tackle the housing crisis would save £2,600 million. That money is at present going down the drain to keep 400,000 construction workers on the dole. What is it, apart from an ideological hatred of the public sector, which prevents the Government from ending what is essentially a man-made scandal—homelessness?

The Minister knows my borough of Newham fairly well. He has visited it several times. We are obliged to him for that. I even offered him accommodation in one of our 110 tower blocks, but he has not taken up the offer yet. I would like to think that, when he replies, he will give the Christmas message that I would like to take back to Newham, which is that we can look forward to partnership status in 1986.

In Newham, the number of priority need clients seen by the homeless persons unit increased from 972 in 1982 to an estimated 1,680 in 1985, and Newham is by no means the worst of the London boroughs for homelessness. Those figures exlude all of the non-priority groups, most of whom are people over pensionable age, single people and childless couples. I can give a dramatic demonstration of how bad things have become in Newham. In 1981, the average nightly placement in bed and breakfast was just 1·6 people but it is estimated to have increased to 71·4 a night in 1985. The cost of bed and

breakfast to the borough of Newham during the same period has risen from £9,000 in 1981-82 to an estimated £550,000 in 1985-86.

The Minster knows the borough, but how does he think that we can manage with such problems, which are also mirrored in the adjoining boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney? Those three represent the first, second and third most deprived local authority areas in England on the basis of the Department of the Environment's statistics. That is a terrible treble which the East End can well do without.

I can imagine Tory Members asking why people do not go into the private sector and buy a home. I must tell them that 75 per cent. of Newham's priority applicants for housing are on supplementary benefit. This year, we have for the first time exceeded 40,000 people in the borough on supplementary benefit. I find it peculiarly obscene that the same Prime Minister whose economic and social policies keep so many of my constituents homeless or on the dole can afford to spend £400,000 on a neo-Georgian bunker in Dulwich.

The scandal of London's homeless is getting worse and is directly attributable to Government cuts in housing investment. As the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) said in a flash of inspiration, the poor are poor because they lack money. It can equally be said that the homeless have nowhere to live because there are not enough decent homes to go around at prices which the people who need them can afford. The homeless cannot rely on the private sector because their incomes are too low.

What will the Government do to stem the rising tide of homelessness? Why have they decided not to amend the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 to give all homeless people the right to a home? How will the Government change their methods of distributing housing capital allocations to take more account of the plight of the homeless in the inner city? Who will take on the role of co-ordinating provision for the single homeless in London when the GLC has gone, given that the boroughs' grant scheme at Richmond will deal essentially with the financial business of distributing grants? Do the Government contest the assertion of many that it is cheaper to build a new council house than to keep a homeless family in unsatisfactory bed and breakfast hotels? If not, why do they not act with more financial prudence and protect the ratepayer by allowing councils to spend more on housing investment?

The Government have failed in many areas of social policy, but nowhere has the failure been more profound than in the provision of housing for the homeless. Why has homelessness in London and elsewhere increased so dramatically during the Government's two terms of office? Does the Minister know? More important for the homeless, does he care?

In view of the plight of the homeless in London and the poverty and degradation that we see around us in the inner cities, no member of the Government deserves to have a happy Christmas this year. You do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I cannot wish the Minister the same.

11.44 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sir George Young): The House is grateful to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) for giving us this opportunity to debate the increase in homelessness. He started by saying that last week's debate on the inner cities ended in chaos because of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), the Chairman of the Conservative party. If he had been allowed to make his speech, the House would have been a lot wiser than it was.

The hon. Gentleman is right in saying that the numbers of homeless people are increasing. I think that he will find that they went up under Labour as well. From July 1984 to June 1985, the London boroughs accepted 25,900 households as homeless as compared with 24,280 during the previous year. However, nearly two thirds of them were accommodated in permanent lettings, and others were accommodated in hostels and short-life accommodation. At any one time, there were 2,500 households in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Of course we are worried by the numbers being put in such accommodation as it is unsatisfactory and expensive, especially for families. We have made it quite clear that it should be used only as a last resort. I was pleased to see that my own borough of Ealing has managed to reduce the number of people that it has placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. I do not find the economic argument anything like as powerful as the argument that such accommodation is unacceptable for families. We have made it quite clear to local authorities in our code of practice that such accommodation should be used only as a last resort.

The hon. Gentleman was a little carried away when he said that the increase was "directly attributable" to the Government. If we are honest, we will admit that the rise in homelessness has something to do with some significant social changes, such as the greater incidence of marital breakdown. The figures show that 20 per cent. of those who are accepted as homeless in England became homeless simply because of problems arising from marital breakdown. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman will blame the Government for that, but I think that he would be pushing his case a little too far to try. There are other social reasons. For example, young people are leaving home far earlier and in far greater numbers than they used to. That is social change independent of Government and one of the factors responsible for the increase.

It is also legitimate to consider the other side of the equation — the role of local authorities in coping. Between 1980 and 1985, local authorities in London let homes to about 50,000 homeless families. The number of lettings to homeless families has increased under this Government from 12,700 in 1980 to just over 16,000 in 1985. The Government already allocate a substantial borrowing power to local authorities to enable them to make the necessary adjustments to their housing stock, and we allow them to supplement that with capital receipts. The figures of allocations that the hon. Gentleman quoted conveniently excluded the capital receipts available to local authorities.

Mr. Banks *rose*——

Sir George Young: I shall not give way, partly because I know what the hon. Gentleman will say and partly because time will not permit me.

Local authorities can compliment their allocations by 20 per cent. of the capital receipts that have accumulated during the past few years. Next year, the London boroughs will be permitted to borrow £430 million for capital expenditure on housing.

[Sir George Young]

The hon. Gentleman asked what we were doing about homelessness when allocating resources. Of course, homelessness is one factor and we have recently given it increased weight. For next year we have changed the basis of the homeless indicator from lettings to the homeless to households accepted as homeless. That widening of the indicator means that the number of people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation will have a greater influence on authorities' allocations.

Between 1979 and 1984, local authorities and housing associations in London produced nearly 72,000 new homes, and the private sector nearly 29,000—giving a total of 101,000 new homes. At the same time, the population of London declined by about 100,000, so the overall supply and demand equation is, on the face of it, improving.

The hon. Gentleman dismissed rather peremptorily the fact that in London there are some 30,000 empty public sector dwellings, of which 10,000 have been empty for more than a year. Quite frankly, that is an affront to the homeless. In times of necessary financial constraint, we must try very hard to make the best possible use of existing resources, and returning those vacant dwellings to use must be a top priority.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): If the Minister gave the comparable figures for empty property in the private sector in London, including property that has been empty for more than a year, he would realise that the figure was considerably greater than for public sector property.

Sir George Young: The figures are available, although I think that they go back some time because there has not been a recent survey. It is public knowledge, but I do not have the figure in my folder. The public sector, both central and local government, have a responsibility because the assets are provided by the taxpayer. We do not have a comparable responsibility for assets in private ownership.

On July 10 we issued a circular to all authorities setting out ways in which better management could reduce the number of empty dwellings and recommending a greater use of short-life schemes and temporary lettings. We have also relaxed the housing association grant regime and have established an urban housing renewal unit that is already active in promoting a number of measures to use empty properties and to revitalise some of the run-down estates.

The problem of rent arrears has a role. At the end of the financial year 1984-85, the GLC and the London boroughs between them were owed rent arrears approaching £92 million. That is deplorable and means the loss of valuable resources that could otherwise be devoted to easing the problems of homelessness.

On the question of mobility, some local authorities have difficulties because they have insufficient accommodation in their own boroughs. We attach great importance to mobility schemes to iron out those imbalances. Those schemes enable the local authorities to respond more flexibly to the accommodation needs of the homeless. However, some boroughs do not take up all the lettings afforded to them. We have established the Greater London mobility scheme, but it is not fully subscribed despite a reduction in quotas this year.

The Government have also put £3 million to one side for the London borough of Camden for the purpose of funding housing association developments in the north-west boroughs to help those boroughs in that part of London which do not have housing stock of their own. All the nomination rights for that go to the inter-borough nomination scheme.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned the single homeless. We must have a sense of priority here, and that must mean that families rather than single people should come at the top of the list. That said, we have been trying to help the single homeless in special need. We are funding the provision of small modern hostels and other forms of shared housing. Most of those are for the single homeless, including the elderly, but other groups with special needs merit that also, including ex-offenders, former psychiatric patients, the mentally handicapped, ex-alcoholics, battered wives and the disabled.

Since May 1979, the Housing Corporation has approved schemes nationally for more than 13,000 people in that type of accommodation. We want to help the voluntary sector, and in 1986-87 we shall increase to £500,000 grants to voluntary bodies concerned with homelessness. That is intended to assist the provision of advice that helps to make better use of existing accommodation, to reduce evictions for rent arrears and to ensure that homeless people receive their rights under the Act. Under those provisions, I have today approved a grant to the Bayswater Hotel Homelessness Project, which is doing valuable work advising homeless families in that part of London on their housing problems and, in many cases, helping them to find a solution. I hope to meet members of the organising group in the spring to hear more about their work.

My Department produces a wide range of leaflets giving guidance to the public on various aspects of housing. It is generally accepted that spreading knowledge of people's rights in that way is useful. In August, we issued an expanded version of our booklet aimed at helping one-parent families with their housing problems, including homelessness. I am now looking sympathetically at the possibility of producing a general leaflet on homelessness.

At the beginning of my speech, I expressed concern about the increase in the numbers of homeless people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by local authorities. The hon. Gentleman rightly said that standards in some of that accommodation were most unsatisfactory. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is consulting local authorities and other interested bodies about a draft circular memorandum that will draw the attention of local authorities to the already wide-ranging powers that they have for securing improved conditions in bed and breakfast hotels and other houses in multiple occupation. *—[Interruption.]* The hon Member for Holborn and St. Pancras is muttering continuously throughout my remarks.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras) *rose——*

Sir George Young: In the spirit of Christmas I give way to the hon. Gentleman, in the hope that that will keep him quiet for the remaining few minutes in which I have to speak.

Mr. Dobson: Why have the Government consistently resisted all measures to strengthen the law to improve safety conditions for people living in houses in multiple occupation?

Sir George Young: If the hon. Gentleman examines the record, he will find that that is not the case. We have taken a number of measures to improve safety standards for those living in HMOs — houses in multiple occupation — and I shall write to the hon. Gentleman what will have to be a long letter outlining the steps that we have taken. He might prefer to confine his interventions to the field for which he has shadow ministerial responsibility.

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Sir George Young: I am hoping to answer some of the questions that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West put to me towards the end of his remarks. I promise to give way to him later if there is time.

He asked what the reasons were for homelessness and why the numbers were increasing. That was a relevant question because the underlying reasons are complicated. We are pressing ahead with a substantial programme of research into various aspects of homelessness costing about £600,000. That will shed light on factors influencing homelessness, on the standards in houses in multiple occupation and on the way in which local authorities operate the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, including their use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West also asked if we were contemplating any other measures. We have had discussions with SHACK, CHAR and other interested bodies and we are considering a number of measures which might help to relieve the problem of homelessness. They cover, among other things, further ways of improving the utilisation of the existing public and private sector stock; possible improvements in the ways in which homelessness is reflected in the arrangements for allocating housing resources; and further steps to encourage local authorities to concentrate their provision on those who are in greatest need. Those results will emerge in due course.

Mr. Tony Banks: I am interested to learn that there is to be another study of the problem. Does the Minister accept that the report by Professor Greve, which is due out early next year, will provide an excellent basis for the Department's investigations? The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the report is being paid for by the GLC.

As the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) pointed out, there is a great deal of vacant accommodation in the private sector. Why will his Department not allow local authorities to move in with compulsory purchase orders to take up some of that accommodation? In my borough of Newham we are desperately short of four-bedroom accommodation, although a large amount of it is available in empty private sector stock. We should like to be able to take that up by way of compulsory purchase Can the hon. Gentlman offer any help?

Sir George Young: There is scope for the private sector to do more. We have tried to encourage private householders to let their properties by the introduction in the Housing Act 1980 of shorthold provisions which guarantee them repossession at the end of a fixed term; we have given local authority tenants the right to sublet; and, as I explained, the initiatives that we are considering include a further look at the private sector. My Department welcomes any research that sheds light on this problem and indicates the way ahead, and we shall consider the final conclusions of the Greve report when it is available.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West asked why in yesterday's announcement there was an apparent reduction in resources available to London. The reason is simple. In setting the allocation total, we had to take account, first, of the need to bring expenditure into line with provision. The headroom built in in previous years had not been enough, with the result that there had been a substantial overspend. Secondly, and more importantly, local authorities can use their capital receipts, which have gone up in the last year. Simply holding the percentage constant to 20 per cent. gives them access to increased spending power from those receipts. Local authorities are getting access to other opportunities for capital expenditure.

The hon. Gentleman poured scorn on what Wandsworth is doing, when it is making faster progress in tackling its housing problems by being prepared to have a partnership with the private sector. It is turning round difficult-to-let estates that many council tenants would not accept. It is converting the aptly named Livingstone estate in Wandsworth in partnership with the private sector. In the main, the purchasers of the flats are Wandsworth tenants or those on the waiting lists. It is making real progress in tackling its problems by this partnership. Far from deploring it, Labour Members should be welcoming it with open arms and persuading their local authorities to do even more in this direction.

Urban Regeneration

12 noon

Mr. Sydney Chapman (Chipping Barnet): I am grateful to have this opportunity of raising the wider issue of urban regeneration, which in a sense, but only partly, is a continuation of the previous Adjournment debate. I like to think that it is an extension of the more fruitful part of the debate that took place nine days ago, on 11 December.

I am pleased that the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young), will reply to this short debate. His long ministerial experience covers six years and he was at one time a councillor in an inner London borough and a chairman of a housing association. Both those qualifications will be helpful to him in this debate.

There is no doubt that there is a need for massive additional investment in urban regeneration, and it is important to mention that we are talking not only about our inner cities. The need for urban regeneration extends to most parts of our urban areas. I am told that 77 per cent. of us live in urban areas. Incidentally, over one third of us live in the large conurbations which occupy only 6 per cent. of the land area that we call the United Kingdom. In other words, we are a closely knit community.

We all have our own views about the state of the fabric of the nation and the nation's housing stock, but I suspect that most politicians are uneasy about the low level of investment in our infrastructure. As my hon. Friend knows, there has been a spate of reports recently, including one from his Department's urban housing renewal unit, which estimated that £18·8 billion needs to be spent to maintain the public sector side of housing alone. I am told that if the private sector is included, there is a need for a global £45,000 million to be spent. There has been the Duke of Edinburgh's inquiry into housing and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Church of England report entitled "Faith in the City".

It is self-evident that there is not the remotest chance of adequate public funds becoming available to tackle such a mammoth task on the scale that is necessary for urban regeneration. I happen to think that that is so under the present Government or another one, or even if there is a change of Government direction. If anyone doubts that, I commend to him the excellent article written by my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) that appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of 10 December.

We must encourage more private investment; that is the key to meeting more but not all of our housing needs. Eighteen months ago the Select Committee on the Environment reported on green belts and land for housing. I think that I can summarise it in shorthand without distorting what the Committee said. In effect, it stated that green belts have a broad and positive role, that of open spaces whose presumption against development can better shape urban areas; green belts were conceived originally as a way of containing growth and have become essential in dealing with the problems of urban decline; green belts should now assist urban regeneration. Basically, that is the guts of one part of the Select Committee's report. I agree with it, if only, but not only, because I was a member of the Committee and I am the president of the London Green Belt Council.

It will be prudent for me to declare interests at this stage. I am a non-practising architect, a non-practising town and country planner and a non-executive director of a development company and construction company.

We need a partnership if we are to realise the goal of urban regeneration. The public sector has the authority and, I think, the public acceptance. It has the contact with communities and can identify the social needs of a particular area. It often owns the land that needs to be redeveloped. The private sector has the access to finance, the development experience and the skills and expertise needed to assemble parcels of land and undertake construction. There is a need for a comprehensive new approach. We must encourage a massive financial input by the building societies, the banks which are now in the mortgage market, and, not least, the pension funds, which have considerable assets.

We have seen what can be done. That may have been an exceptional experience, but I draw the attention of the House again to the success of the London Docklands development corporation, which has already attracted £1 billion of private investment. I am told that every £1 of public money invested has attracted more than £5 of private investment. About 2,700 houses have been completed; 5,000 houses are under construction; and 4,700 jobs have been created. About 1,500 people at any one time are employed on the construction works.

Another good example of what can be done is the Baltimore inner harbour scheme, across the Atlantic, which occurred before the LDDC's projects. That was the greatest single programme of urban regeneration ever undertaken.

The trick is to turn derelict or under-used sites with negative market values into positive developments that will show a reasonable rate of return and attract money. The problem is that, although successful schemes can attract four times or more as much private investment as the amount committed by the public, the initial ratio of funding required is 3 : 1 the other way around. The Government must therefore encourage this necessary partnership.

I acknowledge that the Government have taken and are taking certain initiatives. A legislative framework is being built up. The Building Societies Bill, which will make it possible to use the assets of building societies for urban regeneration on a much larger scale; the concept of urban development corporations; enterprise zones and the impending housing and planning legislation, which will bring about simplified planning zones, are part of the legislative jigsaw. The urban programme, which has been substantially increased and is running at about £338 million, the urban development grants of £77 million—a more modest figure—which have attracted £340 million of private money and the derelict land grants are playing their part. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that the grant schemes seem to achieve the most effective results.

I should like to offer some suggestions to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State. First, because of the success of the LDDC and the Merseyside development corporation, the Government should seriously consider creating more urban development corporations. I understand the difficulties, but I believe that parcels of land could be assembled in some of the other major conurbations where relatively few people live and where comprehensive development of this new type could be

better managed by a special agency. The phrase "urban development corporation" is not particularly attractive. I prefer the acronym SPA, or special priority area.

Secondly, there is a need for a new form of national agency to tackle the massive cost of urban regeneration. I do not know whether it should be called a national urban task force or a national urban renewal agency, but we need to draw together people from industry, Government and local authorities who have an expert knowledge of industry and administrative ability. They are the type of people who served on the new town corporations.

That national agency could set up a programme of work and monitor it, and be a catalyst for ideas and experience. There is a case for setting up urban development trusts in selected areas to attract the private finance needed. They could put the money to work to create viable schemes.

There is a need for a rearrangement of finances. There is not so much a need for significantly more public funding for urban regeneration as a need to redirect the money. Urban development grants should not go to the local authorities which in any case have to provide 25 per cent. of the finance needed, but should be redirected to the developers.

I refer my hon. Friend to paragraph 79 of the Select Committee report:

"Short-term public service public sector savings are hindering the creation of the sustained thrust for redevelopment that characterises the success of the LDDC. The Secretary of State accepted that the money that would have gone on those schemes is used inevitably in ways that pressurise vacant land and Green Belt land. The absurdity is that to save the public sector £90 million of expenditure over the whole country, over half a billion pounds of private money is pushed away from urban areas, to intensify pressure on agricultural land. Of course there is a considerable prospect that if Derelict Land Grant were demand-led huge spending might result. However, these grants do not meet the whole cost of schemes, only local authorities' shares of about one seventh. Their operation should be determined by the willingness of the private sector to put up money, and not by cash limits. A major opportunity to promote urban infrastructure and regeneration is being squandered."

I refer my hon. Friend also to paragraphs 64 and 66 of the report. The vexing but real problems should not be used as an excuse for inaction. Difficulties, for example, in producing title due to previous inefficient conveyancing should be and could be dealt with

"by statutorily guaranteed absolute title if necessary."

The Secretary of State should use his reserve powers more regularly to order the disposal of unused land held by local authorities, statutory undertakers and nationalised industries. I know that some progress has been made since the report was published.

This is an opportune time for a major urban regeneration initative. It is clear that the construction and development industries are ready, able and willing to take part. To realise that, one has only to read the recent speeches of the president of the Chartered Institute of Building, Mr. Norman Wakefield, who was last year's chairman of the national contractors group of the Building Employers Confederation. The Chartered Institute of Building and the Building Employers Confederation have taken significant initiatives. The Phoenix Partnership has been set up by the building material producers and there is also the Urban Investment Review Group which is chaired by Mr. Tim Melvill Ross. To show that initiatives are being taken by other parts of the construction industry I should like to quote part of the leader in the current issue of the *Chartered Surveyor Weekly* written by the editor, Mr. Michael Hanson. It is the journal of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. It states:

"The British Property Federation's working party on urban renewal under the chairmanship of Gerald Powell"

is one other initiative.

"This is on the point of identifying an actual inner-city site of about 20 acres (not in Liverpool or London) where a hypothetical redevelopment, mixing residential and commercial, can be shown to bring real benefits to the local community.

The Housebuilders Federation is going further, by embarking on an eight-month tour of Britain's worst inner-city areas, after which it will produce its own White Paper of proposals.

These will differ from the recent report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's working party on inner-city deprivation by producing hard evidence and practical solutions, duly costed.

Clearly, not all Britain's housing needs can be solved by building in the inner cities, but it might be a step in the right direction if the inner cities are regenerated before too much more countryside is laid waste".

We need to harness and channel all those initiatives. It is a matter of the attitude and will of the Government at national and local level. Of course there are difficulties and problems, but I believe that they can be sorted out. I remind my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary that some of our inner-city areas are a disgrace to a nation that calls itself civilised. There is a tremendous challenge. We have a last opportunity to save our inner cities from going into terminal decline. I am told that the Cabinet discussed the need for new initiatives in urban regeneration at its meeting yesterday. I know that my hon. Friend was not present at that meeting, because he is not yet a member of the Cabinet. However, I hope that he will be able to reply to the debate in the positive spirit that is his hallmark.

12.16 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sir George Young): My hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) is better informed about what happened in the Cabinet than I am. I can shed no light on what was discussed yesterday.

My hon. Friend is right to say that there is a real challenge to the Government. A growing number of professional bodies, trade associations and construction companies are interested in the inner cities. They are producing new ways of tackling the problem. They have made it clear that they are prepared to invest their own resources and manpower in partnership with the Government. Over the past few months we have read many reports and had many approaches, some of which my hon. Friend mentioned. It is now up to the Department of the Environment and the Government to respond and harness that enthusiasm and build a fresh approach to the inner cities in a spirit of partnership.

It is common ground, certainly between my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet and myself, that the traditional public sector approach is unlikely to work and, in any case, would be fiendishly expensive. To some extent, we are currently suffering from the public sector oriented approach in our inner cities. We must make the resources available to tackle those problems. Central and local government must have a much closer relationship, be prepared to understand the issues as they are seen by the private sector and recognise that the private sector is not a loss-making social agency. It has a responsibility to shareholders and we must reconcile its interests with our interests as administrators and parliamentarians.

Only yesterday the House approved, without a Division, the Building Societies Bill that was mentioned

[Sir George Young]

by my hon. Friend. That will unlock the substantial resources of the building societies, in a way that is not possible at the moment, to tackle some of the problems of dereliction and decay. My hon. Friend is well placed to address himself to the subject. He is a member of the Select Committee. He has exhibited great interest and he represents a London constituency with the green belt on its northern boundary, but not too far to the south he is exposed to some of the pressures of the inner cities.

My hon. Friend mentioned the London Docklands development corporation and made a powerful case for extending such corporations and setting up similar bodies in other parts of the country. The legislative framework exists and I shall draw his suggestions to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. He also made a more radical suggestion for a national renewal agency, which I suspect will involve primary legislation. That is something that we will have to look at carefully.

My hon. Friend's theme was partnership. He mentioned the gearing that we have secured in the LDDC. Last week it broke the £1 billion landmark for private investment attracted to its area. As he said, every £1 of public money spent in the docklands has drawn in nearly £6 of private investment.

The level of owner-occupation in docklands has risen from 5·3 per cent. in 1981 to 15·7 per cent., but, encouragingly, nearly half of all occupiers of the new homes were previously residents of the three docklands boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Southwark. Many new jobs have been created in the LDDC area. We shall look closely at ways in which we can apply the lessons learnt from the urban development corporations elsewhere.

Another element in my hon. Friend's theme of partnership was the derelict land grant. One of our priorities, as he rightly said, is to bring disused or under-used tracts of urban land into better use. That is a key priority of the derelict land programme. We have increased its budget from £23 million in 1979 to £82 million this year. We have concentrated it on recycling land and on schemes that lead to development and private sector investment. Derelict land grant can be paid direct to the private sector to enable it to reclaim sites for its own use. Earlier this year we approved the largest ever private sector reclamation scheme costing £1·4 million and covering no less than 90 acres of the Normanby park steelworks in Scunthorpe. The site will be developed by Pipe and Rail Limited for several manufacturing activities.

My hon. Friend referred to land registers. It is common ground between us that far too much public sector land is lying idle in the inner cities. There are often exciting opportunities for new investment or housing development, but we cannot achieve that unless the land is made available. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is making increased use of his power under the land registry system to require public sector owners to dispose of unused land. Twenty-one directions were issued on 19 November requiring the disposal of 139 acres. Speaking from memory, I think that one of those directions was in my hon. Friend's borough, although I think that it was in the Prime Minister's constituency rather than his own. We are looking actively at more directions and are determined to get a big momentum behind the scheme. In all, over 10,000 acres have been taken off the register by being sold or brought into use since October 1984.

My hon. Friend mentioned urban development grant and suggested that, instead of having to go through the local authorities, we should introduce a new power enabling us to give grant direct. We shall want to look at that. Urban development grant has made a substantial impact. In England as a whole, by the end of last month, we had approved over 165 UDG schemes. They involve grant offers of £74 million, bringing in their wake private sector investment of £325 million. About £60 million of the approved grants will enable industrial and commercial projects creating 16,000 jobs to go ahead. The remainder is being concentrated on housing development, leading to the provision of nearly 4,000 homes.

Let me give a London example of the success of the UDG. I refer my hon. Friend to last Thursday's edition of *The London Standard,* which contained a profile of the Royal Agricultural Hall. The report reflected on the astonishing variety of uses to which the hall had been put in the past,

"the entertainment ranging from the Grand Ball of 1869, when 5,000 guests waltzed beneath the chandeliers and 4,000 gas jets, to Ubini's Original Exhibition of Performing Fleas — the wonders of minute creation."

We are restoring the hall with £2·8 million of urban development grant, although not necessarily for that historical use. The scheme involves the refurbishment and conversion of the hall into an international business design and exhibition centre. That transformation of a building that has been run down over decades will contribute significantly to the regneration of that part of London.

My hon. Friend referred to enterprise zones. Some areas have suffered from particularly serious decline over a prolonged period. It was to help those areas that we designated the first enterprise zones in 1981. Since then, further zones have been designated and there are now 25 in the United Kingdom. They are a success. The number of jobs in the zones has increased dramatically and the areas concerned, which have been in decline for so long, have been given a new lease of life.

My hon. Friend touched on housing. The Government are committed to strengthening housing choice and promoting opportunities for low-cost home ownership in our cities.

Earlier this year we set up the urban housing renewal unit, which encourages local authorities to improve the management of their stock, to involve tenants in plans for the future of their estates, and to develop management systems, which are more responsive to their needs. It is also exploring private sector solutions to some of the more problematic housing estates, and improving the standard of housing education by funding 15 part-time graduate studentships at the London School of Economics housing management centre.

Among the initiatives that the unit hopes to develop is an extension of the community refurbishment schemes, which were successfully piloted on Merseyside. They involve local people who have been out of work for more than a year refurbishing their estates, and, in some cases, rebuilding their homes. The unit has an urgent programme of visits and meetings with the authorities with the most severe housing problems. It will be an important part of its job to transfer such successful experiments to areas which have not previously considered them.

My hon. Friend mentioned the urban programme, and was kind enough to say that we have increased substantially the resources available to it. They have increased from £93 million in 1978-79 to £338 million, which is a reflection of our commitment to the regeneration of our inner cities. It is an example of how central Government and local government can work effectively together. Much is made of the friction in the relationship between the two. Indeed, the report of the Archbishop's commission on urban priority areas claimed that there

"is a regrettable lack of will on the part of Central Government to support local government and to devote adequate resources to Urban Priority Areas."

We have put fresh impetus behind the urban programme. Under it, some 12,000 projects are being supported, all of which have been submitted for ministerial approval by local authorities. Since 1978-79, more than £1·9 million has been allocated in support of local authorities' programmes of urban renewal. We have sought to concentrate resources on the worst areas, and have worked with local authorities, with some of whom we have political differences, to ensure that maximum value for money is obtained.

It is sometimes suggested that the increases have been more than offset by cuts in the rate support grant. We make no secret of the fact that there has been a change in the relative contributions of central and local government towards the financing of local authority expenditure. The Government's share has been reduced for every local authority to strengthen local accountability and the financial responsibility of those who manage local authority expenditure programmes. There has been no shift in the share of rate support grant to the inner cities, and the share of the rate support grant for urban partnership and programme authorities is much the same in percentage terms now as it was in 1979. The expenditure assessments on which rate support grant is based recognise that inner city authorities have higher spending needs than other areas. To use the terms of the grant calculation, their grant-related expenditure assessments are often much higher in relation to given functions than the national average.

I could say a great deal more about the Government's commitment to inner-city areas. The Government remain firmly committed to the notion of the green belt, which is one of my hon. Friend's particular interests. However, it is important to emphasise its positive role, as my hon. Friend did. There is something in the green belt for the inner cities, as resources must be redirected to the inner cities, and developers no longer have the option simply to take the easier solution of greenfield redevelopments. The green belt is a positive aspect to our inner-city approach, and has a role to play in tackling problems.

One small example of our determination to restore hope —and, dare I say, faith—in the inner city is apparent in Brixton during the festive season. I ask hon. Members who travel through Brixton to bear in mind that the excellent illuminations have been provided with support from the urban programme. As I would not wish to spoil our reputation for thrift, I must point out that they were obtained second-hand from Blackpool. On that festive note, may I say that we have had a more constructive 30 minutes on inner cities today than last week when Labour Members howled down my right hon. Friend, the chairman of the Conservative party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): I am grateful to hon. Members, and especially to the Minister, for bringing us back to the timetable.

Housing (Leyton and Leytonstone)

12.29 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): I congratulate the Church of England on its report "Faith in the City". It makes many telling points and draws attention to the growing crisis in our inner cities, caused and much exacerbated by the Government's policies. The report states:

"The combination of unsatisfied needs and unused human abilities seems to us as uneconomic as it is illogical and immoral."

Such sound moral and economic argument, which is relevant to our housing needs and capabilities, as well as to other aspects of life, was met by a bully-boy response from the Government.

The part of the report that especially caught my eye was its identification of urban priority areas, not just in the inner cities but on the fringes of the cities in housing estates. The report says that they present a pressing problem for the mid-1980s. Its recognition of the fringes of cities clearly applies to Leyton, which is classified as outer London, but its housing and many other services mirror the deprivation of the inner city. The main reason why it is not officially recognised as an inner-city area is that it lies in the borough of Waltham Forest which contains in the north the relatively prosperous area of Chingford, although it, too, has pockets of housing problems. The rest of the borough, especially Leyton and Walthamstow, has inner-city problems, and the Government should recognise that in financial terms.

There is a growing housing crisis in Waltham Forest and a severe problem of homelessness. At present, the homeless are almost the only category who can be guaranteed offers of council accommodation. That is done at the expense of those on the waiting list and requiring transfers. But the policy has been adopted because the alternative is the expensive, wasteful, unsatisfactory and unsuitable bed-and-breakfast arrangements. I am informed that even in Waltham Forest the council cannot find accommodation for about 150 homeless families. Although Waltham Forest has avoided using bed-and-breakfast establishments until now, it could be forced to do so in the near future. Even then, there will be no relief for those on the waiting list and awaiting transfers.

With council houses being sold and no replacements being built, there is almost no hope of the overwhelming majority of people on the waiting lists being rehoused,. Many people live in desperate conditions, and have 70, 80 or 90 points, but are getting nowhere in their quest for housing. The young, the newly married and couples with no children have no chance.

The problem is the shortage of decent accommodation. Recently, I received a letter from the council's rehousing supervisor about the case of a Mrs Smith. He wrote:

"In June this year the Housing Panel awarded a very high degree of social need priority to this case and recommended the offer of a three bedroom house . . . The problem of course is the very limited supply of such properties especially now no new properties are being built . . . I am sorry to write in such pessimistic tones when writing about a high priority case but the limited supply of properties is having a drastic effect on the prospects of any transfer case."

The lack of new properties is causing great difficulties for tenants who want transfers. The housing manager was interviewed in the local press earlier this year. He said:

"Because the supply of council homes has dried up . . . there is less opportunity to move within the Council sector, from the tower block estates to more popular properties."

Some tenants who want transfers face a Catch-22 situation. I took up the case of my constituent Mr. Szersynski. He and his girl friend were in the "couples sharing" queue and had 61 points. The housing department wrote to me:

"The present rehousing level within the 'couples sharing' queue is 77 points".

However, the couple are expecting twins, which gives them another 20 points, taking them past 77 points. That seemed to be excellent news, but the letter from the housing department added that when the twins come they will need two bedroomed accommodation and the minimum of points required for that is 110 points. That is a real Catch-22, or perhaps a Catch-110.

Problems have also been caused for my constituents Mrs. Warsap and her 82-year-old parents in Chingford. Their case is reported in today's edition of the *Walthamstow Guardian* under the headline "Christmas Day Ruined." Mrs. Warsap and her parents want a three or four-bedroom house so that the family can live together. They have offered to swap the two houses that they currently occupy, both of which are in tip-top condition, but that proposal has had to be turned down. Mrs. Warsap told the *Walthamstow Guardian:*

"When I walk in in the morning mum is often lying helpless and sobbing on the bed . . . For now, Christmas is a very sad time indeed."

That is the sort of difficulty facing people who want transfers.

Not only is there not enough money for building, but there is not enough to repair existing properties. In the interview with the local press earlier this year, the housing manager said:

"We haven't got enough resources to do the basic repairs and improvements to our existing stock. Take our list of repairs so far. We've got a 10 year programme, but some of the things we'll be doing in year 10, we should be doing this year—no doubt about it . . . there is no money to spend on environmental upgrading of estates."

That upgrading includes not only the appearance of estates, which is vital, but the facilities for mothers and children on those estates. Play groups and creches on the Hollydown way and Oliver close estates were started and run by the mothers, but have been denied support because of the lack of resources. If facilities are not provided and the environment of estates is not upgraded, it leads to problems such as those experienced on the Broadwater Farm estate as alienation sets in among the inhabitants.

Improvements in the private sector in my borough have also been curtailed because there has been a block on improvement grants since August 1984. There is growing disrepair in that sector, too.

The problem is one of resources. As the housing manager said in that interview:

"It sounds simplistic to say it's a money-linked problem, but to a large extent it is. Obviously you've got to strive to get the maximum out of what you've got, but all these things just can't be done with the amount of money we're working to."

An additional dimension will exacerbate the housing misery of a large number of my constituents for many years to come unless additional resources are provided by the Government. The M11 link road is to be carved through my constituency. The Government gave an inadequate allocation for rehousing the displaced families. In an act of terrible mismanagement, the local Tory-Liberal council sold off the site which was to be used for

building new homes and used the money elsewhere. As a consequence, many more people will be in a housing crisis unless additional money is provided.

In the face of these grim facts and those of 9,300 homes unfit for people to live in, 6,800 without bathrooms or inside toilets, 10,700 in need of urgent renovation, 1,300 overcrowded with more than two people per room, the Government dismiss any need for more to be done and abrogate their responsibility. They have cut Waltham Forest's housing investment allocation — the council received less than one third of what it deemed to be necessary.

It is ironic that the debate is taking place on the day when Tory Members are packing up to go to their comfortable homes in the shires. They should think for a moment how they would feel if they were in my surgery, in which I see family after family in housing discomfort and desperation, and bitterly dissatisfied. My housing caseload is a catalogue of human misery, worry and desperation. How many Tory Members go back to the awful circumstances experienced by my constituents?

How many parents of Tory Members experience conditions like those of Mrs. Harvey and her pensioner friends in my constituency, a case described in the local paper? She lives in a Leyton tower block and hates it. Not only do the lifts not work, but they are filthy and never get cleaned over the weekend because the council does not pay the caretaker overtime. When the lifts do not work there is a long haul up to her 11th floor flat. Mrs. Harvey and her friends dream of having their own front doors and gardens with a bit of green—nothing too fancy—but they realise that they are no longer spring chickens. Mrs. Harvey knows that in a few years she will not be able to climb stairs any more.

How many Tory Members have wives and children trapped on the tops of tower blocks unsuitable for their means, like Mrs. Palfreman and her two children and many others in my constituency? Another example is that of Mrs. Dibley and her large family who live in overcrowded conditions in property too small, dilapidated and inadequate for their living requirements. I have had cases in which teenage daughters and sons have had to share bedrooms or even where mothers are forced to share rooms with teenage sons because of their poor housing circumstances. I bet not many Conservative Members have experience of such housing problems. How can they say that monetarist cuts apply in these circumstances?

Let us compare this housing starkness under the Tories with Labour's alternative. We plan for a big boost in resources, extensive building of new homes and repairs and improvements to existing ones. Priority will be given to providing new homes for rent, a sector in which the need is overwhelming. There will be an enhanced role for local authorities, lifting the present Government restrictions on them, and for housing co-operatives. We shall provide new help for low-income households. That is a proper programme for decent homes, providing many jobs in the process. We need this programme of action for the people of Leyton and Leytonstone. My borough also needs a big boost in its housing investment allocation.

The Tory party should be ashamed when it sees Labour's effective housing alternative. It should be ashamed at its rough-neck reaction to the Church of England report, of its application of monetarist policies to housing and of what that has meant in personal misery to many of my constituents and thousands of others in the country. It should be ashamed of backing the Chancellor. He has applied monetarist policies even to his own father-in-law, who has had to live in impoverished circumstances on state benefit—Victorian values, indeed.

12.45 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sir George Young): The hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) threw away what I thought was a good speech with some rather personal attacks at the end, which did not add much strength to his argument. If we are talking about shame, he might care to consider what happened to the housing investment programme under the previous Labour Government. He will find that the major reductions occurred then. There were reductions of some 49 per cent. as compared with 20 per cent. under this Administration. If the hon. Gentleman wants to dish out accusations and invite shame, he might address himself as much to the Opposition Benches as to these.

The hon. Gentleman made a tactical mistake when he implied that there was lack of concern among Conservative Members who represent London constituencies. When I finish the fourth Adjournment debate today, I shall go to my advice bureau in Acton—the second this week—where I shall deal with housing problems, just like the hon. Gentleman. I know that Conservative colleagues who represent London seats are as committed to tackling their constituents' problems as is the hon. Gentleman.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned the M11. The Government have taken on board the implications for local residents of major road improvement schemes. I have had discussions with local councillors about the implications for the council's housing programme of having to accommodate some of the households that will be displaced by the Department of Transport's road scheme. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Transport has been in touch with the hon. Gentleman about road scheme issues.

Waltham Forest's housing investment programme allocation of £8·270 million for the current year took account of the council's plans to fund a newbuild scheme to assist with the decanting programme. The allocation represented 92·5 per cent. of the council's 1984-85 allocation, when it had been advised to plan on the basis of receiving at least 80 per cent. The hon. Gentleman can be assured that previous HIP allocations had also taken account of the council's plans.

For 1986-87 the council's recently announced allocation of £7·716 million will allow the council to continue with the decanting programme. I understand that development of the Sinnot road site has been delayed, but another site already started at Netley road includes 67 general purpose dwellings to assist in the decant programme. Decisions on the timing to undertake housing schemes are entirely for local authorities, in the light of available resources and local housing needs.

I am satisfied that, within the resources available to London as a whole, housing capital allocations to Waltham Forest borough council have had full regard to local housing needs. I can confirm that special account was taken of the council's plans to develop two newbuild housing schemes to assist with its decanting programme associated with major road schemes in the borough.

The hon. Gentleman said that, to tackle the housing problems in his constituency—I accept that there are

[Sir George Young]

housing problems there—there must be increased public expenditure. He set to one side the role of the private sector in helping to tackle such problems. There are now 3 million more owner-occupiers than when we came to office. If it is possible to develop policies that bring owner-occupation within the reach of more people, pressure on local authorities is reduced, and they can concentrate their resources on people for whom owner-occupation is not an option.

The hon. Gentleman should consider the wide range of schemes that we have introduced such as low-cost home ownership and homesteading. He will find that we have taken pressure off local authorities by encouraging people who have traditionally looked to the local authority for a solution of their housing problems to look elsewhere and to adopt a form of tenure which most of them want.

There has been no mortgage famine. Indeed, there has been ready availability, and land has been available for builders. We have been able to bring owner-occupation within the reach of more people. We have encouraged local authorities to have partnership schemes with private developers. Some local authorities are just sitting on land hoping that, one day, a Government will give them enough money to develop it so that they can build council houses for rent.

Some of the more enlightened authorities have said that they should make that land available to the private sector for low-cost home ownership, but insist that, in the first instance, the homes are offered either to sitting council tenants or to people on their waiting lists. If they adopt that approach, that will not increase public expenditure. Indeed, it will reduce it because they will receive capital for the land. Such an attitude will help them to make real progress with their housing problems. If a tenant buys a new house, the authority has the advantage of a re-let; if it is sold to someone on the waiting list, the pressure on the list is reduced. I did not detect any understanding of the role of the private sector in what the hon. Gentleman said.

Some 62 per cent. of tenants in the private sector are owner-occupiers. If we concentrate on public sector stock and public expenditure only, we are not adopting a total approach to housing. It is right to harness the energy of the private sector to try to tackle the problems outlined by the hon. Gentleman.

Some difficult council estates are being transferred to the private sector, with sitting tenants who retain all their rights, such as the right to buy. The private sector has transformed those estates and made them satisfactory places in which to live. Both Labour and Conservative authorities have adopted that partnership approach so as to make faster progress in tackling housing problems.

Mr. Cohen: I am aware of the role of the private sector. Indeed, I mentioned that improvement grants should be expanded, not blocked as new improvement grants have been since August 1984. If the Minister is so keen on giving the private sector support, he should provide additional money so that the improvement grants can be reinstated.

Many of the schemes to which the Minister referred, such as improvement for sale, are mostly cosmetic because those who most desperately need housing just cannot afford them, even with the discounts being provided. The result is that many of the homes allocated under those schemes are left empty, and that makees those in need of homes very angry.

Sir George Young: When we took office in 1979, the figure spent on improvement grants by local authorities was £90 million. Two years ago, that figure rose to £900 million. It has now settled at between £400 million and £500 million. That is substantially more than was being spent by the previous Administration. The hon. Gentleman is being somewhat selective in his criticism.

On improvement for sale and other initiatives such as homesteading, local authorities must ensure that those to whom homes are allocated will modernise and occupy them quickly. My borough imposes quite tough conditions on when people must begin work if they wish to continue to be eligible for improvement grants and for the delayed start of mortgage repayments.

The hon. Gentleman did not pay sufficient attention to the role of the private sector in tackling housing problems in his constituency. He mentioned the problems of tenants in getting local authorities to effect repairs. He will be pleased to know that, as from 1 January, local authority, new town and housing association tenants will have a right to repair. An item of work that costs between £20 and £200, such as repairing a cracked cistern or a leaking pipe, can now be paid for by the tenant, who will be reimbursed by the authority. That is a worthwhile extension of the many rights that we have given to tenants since we took office.

Leaflets will be available shortly to local authority tenants. We can give the hon. Gentleman a supply of them for his advice bureau if he would like that. The work may be carried out more quickly under the new proposals than if tenants continue to rely solely on local authorities.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned renovation of housing stock. We have a much clearer picture of the position since we undertook a survey, with the help of some authorities, earlier this year. We were especially grateful for the co-operation of Waltham Forest in that exercise. The borough council is an enthusiastic supporter of our policy to improve private sector stock. The housing strategy that it has drafted for next year shows that it proposes to continue with that support. Indeed, almost 30 per cent. of its bid for housing capital resources has been planned for improving the private sector stock.

It is important that improvement grants, which are not as readily available as they were, should be targeted by the local authority at those who can least afford to pay for the repair and improvement of their property. The council newbuild programme continues to give support by providing accommodation for those with special needs, the elderly, disabled and others who are not able to cope easily for themselves.

The hon. Gentleman implied that the allocations announced yesterday were inadequate. Whatever figure we had announced, the Opposition would have found it inadequate, but we had to bear in mind the Government's overall economic strategy, and the need to keep control of public expenditure and keep down inflation.

London's share of the national allocation of £1·5 billion is 30 per cent. That is recognition of the special housing needs of the capital. In addition, the boroughs can invest a worthwhile proportion of the receipts that they generate through the sale of council houses to tenants and through sales of vacant housing and land. The abolition of the GLC

means that the allocation that the GLC would have had has been redistributed to the London boroughs, which will also have the spending power associated with the GLC's capital receipts.

The London borough of Waltham Forest, within which the hon. Gentleman's constituency lies, has received an allocation for next year of £7·716 million. That represents 91·4 per cent. of the council's 1984-85 allocation and fully honours the commitment given to all local authorities in December of last year that they could plan their forward housing programmes on the basis that their allocations for next year would be at least 70 per cent. of their initial allocations for 1984-85. As I say, Waltham Forest has capital receipts which it has built up and it can augment the allocation by using that money.

In total, these resources can be used by the council to meet what it judges to be local housing needs and priorities, including those in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. The council's housing strategy seems to contain the right priorities—eliminating unfit housing, increasing the supply of accommodation for special needs, upgrading unsatisfactory housing, securing additional local authority accommodation to meet general housing needs, such as decanting, and improving the environment of housing areas.

The specific problems include an aging stock with disrepair in the private sector, particularly in the pre-1919 stock. The council also has disrepair in some of its own buildings and a poor external environment to some of its estates. There are 9,300 unfit dwellings in the borough, with 5,700 not having internal WCs or proper bathrooms. It also has the problem of 570 houses affected by the problems of pre-stressed reinforced concrete dwellings. We have made provision to help local authorities with difficulty in meeting their obligations under the Housing Defects Act 1984.

I was involved in an initiative not long ago in the hon. Gentleman's borough. I refer to the Walthamstow neighbourhood home improvement agency, which is in the neighbouring constituency to his. Two years ago I opened, in conjunction with the London borough of Waltham Forest and the Anglia building society, the Walthamstow neighbourhood home improvement agency, the object of which was to provide advice and help to poor, elderly owner-occupiers in an area of the borough covering more than 4,000 homes.

That was run on a non-profit-making basis, giving free advice, and it made a big impact in the area. Indeed, the house from which the scheme is run was itself improved and converted, giving people living in the area an idea of the potential of their own homes. With a commitment by the local authority to improvement grants and the availability of top-up mortgages from the building society, that is the sort of partnership scheme that the Government want to see, and I know that other similar initiatives are being considered.

From my Department's urban housing renewal unit, £50 million of the resources available for housing next year is being made available to assist local authorities to carry out schemes to be identified and agreed in discussion with my Department. We hope that there will be a constructive meeting with Waltham Forest to ascertain whether there is some scope for part of the £50 million to be spent in Waltham Forest to turn round some of the difficult estates.

I do not underestimate the problems facing the hon. Member for Leyton and his constituents. We are doing what we can for Waltham Forest, but we believe that more progress will be made more quickly if we broaden the horizon and harness the resources of the private sector rather than concentrating exclusively on a public sector solution.

Oluronke Owoseja

1 pm

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): Christmas is a time for families, a time for loved ones to be reunited in their own homes, to enjoy themselves and to be together. Most important of all, Christmas is a time for children.

It is with particular sadness, although with particular appropriateness, that on the Friday before Christmas 1985 the House should be debating the tragic story of a young girl who will not be at home and will not be with the family that she loves. Sadly, this will be the third Christmas that she will be spending away from her home in Harlow, where she was brought up since she was three or four months old. She will be in Nigeria. She will be in a strange country, with strange customs, with strange people.

That is the result of the deceit and trickery of her natural mother, the mother who had no contact with her child since her birth until August 1983 and who kidnapped and took the young girl to Nigeria.

In 1971, one of my constituents, Mrs. Jean Dwyer, who lives in Harlow, saw an advertisement in a magazine asking for someone to foster a Nigerian baby girl. She applied because most of her family had grown up and left home and because she had fostered Nigerian girls before. She entered into a private undertaking — a fostering arrangement — between herself and Oluronke's natural mother. It was all proper and above board because Mrs. Dwyer deposited the agreement and had it ratified with the local authority.

All went well. From 1971 to August 1983 the little girl lived happily as part of Mrs. Dwyer's family. She went to a local school and she made many friends. She was a happy little girl who had spent all her formative life in Great Britain, in Harlow.

There was a problem in 1975 when for some reason the natural mother, aided and abetted by the natural father, tried to snatch the girl back. Perhaps that was because in 1974 her natural parents had separated and their marriage was dissolved, but we do not know. As a result of the attempted snatching, Mrs. Dwyer went, properly, to the High Court and Oluronke was made a ward of the High Court, with custody, care and control going to Mrs. Dwyer.

From 1975 until 1983, all was happiness. There were no further disturbances and no further contact with the natural parents. A happy little girl was living in a loving environment in my constituency. Then the High Court did something outrageous, and certainly inexplicable. On the application of the natural mother, it ordered that the little girl should have access to her natural mother, the mother who had had no contact with the little girl since she was born. To make matters worse and to compound the High Court's ludicrous decision, which is still a mystery to me, the mother was allowed to take the child away overnight. This only heralded the obvious tragedy. The natural mother took the child away, despite the protestations of Mrs. Dwyer and the little girl, and Mrs. Dwyer never saw Oluronke again.

The natural mother said to the little girl, "I am taking you on a shopping trip to Amsterdam." Nothing could have been further from the truth. It was nothing more than a wicked deception. The little girl was taken on an aeroplane not to Amsterdam but to Nigeria.

Several months passed before Mrs. Dwyer heard anything about Oluronke. Hon. Members can understand that she was worried out of her mind. The High Court sensibly ordered a full press and television search. The High Court said, "Give the case the maximum coverage. We must find this little girl. The natural mother is clearly in contempt of court because the little girl is a ward of the court and under its jurisdiction."

After several months, letters from Oluronke started to arrive showing that she was desperately unhappy. She was in a strange country with strange customs, strange people and sometimes a strange language, because she had been brought up and educated in Harlow in Britain. She did not know anything about Nigerian customs. She was Nigerian only by birth. It appears that the natural mother does not care for the child in any way, as the little girl does not even live with her. She has been dumped into the custody of a 90-year-old grandfather.

The little girl has been managing to contact Mrs. Dwyer through letters smuggled with the aid of the little girl next door. It may be of interest to the House if I give an example of the type of letter the little girl has been writing to her home. She has said:

> "These past few months have been agony. All the memories of England, Harlow and, most of all, home have just been closing in on my mind, although since I started school I don't get so much time alone and so I am now occupied. But in the first months things were really terrible. Even now, sometimes when I'm watching TV and I see a programme from England, it reminds me of us all arguing over what programme to watch. So you can see, I can never never forget you and all you did for me, and I am determined to pay you back even if not in money . . . I will always love you, even if we are not successful in my returning. I could never resent you for that. So if you don't have the money, please don't worry yourself at all about it.
>
> Bye now, Love,
> Ronke."

That is an example of the tragic, pathetic letters that Mrs. Dwyer, the foster mother, receives from the little girl.

The House and the vast majority of the people in Britain are outraged at such cases. We are not prepared to accept the abduction of young children to strange countries. There was a time, before the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985 and before we were signatories to the Hague convention, which deals with this problem, when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was dealing with 150 child abduction cases a year. There was a time when about 200 illegally abducted children were brought to this country each year. It is no surprise to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State that there is still a serious problem of child abduction. The Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985 and the Hague convention are utterly meaningless unless all countries are willing to make them work. It will be no surprise to the House and to my hon. Friend to know that Nigeria is not a signatory to the Hague convention.

It is normal in a debate involving the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to lash out and blame it for all kinds of difficulties. After all, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster once said that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food was for farmers and the Foreign Office was for foreigners. I do not subscribe to that view. My hon. Friend's Department and his two predecessors have been helpful. They have done all in their power to facilitate the return of this little girl. I commend my hon. Friend and his officials, with whom I have had numerous dealings, for the hard work that they have put into the case.

The difficulty is simple. We are not receiving co-operation from the Nigerian authorities. Money is no object. We have raised enough cash to enable this little girl to be flown back to Great Britain. Passports are not a problem because the Foreign Office and the high commission in Lagos have arranged for an emergency passport to be available for her. What is happening with the Nigerian authorities? Precisely nothing.

The problem is not helped by the natural parents' and the grandfather's attempts to prevent this little girl from returning to this country. I cannot understand why. Shocking threats have been made to this girl. Unfortunately, letters stopped coming from Oluronke to Mrs. Dwyer some time in July this year because the natural family discovered that there had been correspondence between them. They discovered that Sola, the littel girl next door, had been helping with the correspondence. They discovered the plan for Oluronke to return here.

One of the last letters from Oluronke received by Mrs. Dwyer said:

"Dear Auntie Jean,

I am sure now that there will be no way of me returning to England now only for a holiday or after I have finished school here. Every day the people here will be watching my every movement and if I was still to return it would put Sola"—

that is the little girl next door—

"into so much trouble. Although I can honestly say I don't regret my correspondence with you I do regret letting Sola get involved in all this and I swear to God I would have given my life here yesterday just to get her out of all this trouble. Anyway I really wrote to inform you that both my father and mother intend writing to you in the near future. I can't explain what I want to tell you very well but they both swear that when you read their letter you'll die immediately so please if any letter arrives from Nigeria take it straight to your lawyer or barrister but whatever you do don't open it please. This is very important."

What type of people put such terror into the mind of a girl of 14 or 15? What type of people are prepared to go to such lengths to prevent that girl from going back to the family that she loves and to the only home that she has ever known? It is as obscene as it is monstrous. Today is probably a last-ditch attempt to try to get this little girl back. On Monday, I went to the Nigerian high commission and delivered a letter to be sent to the new President of Nigeria asking him whether, for humanitarian if no other reason, he would intervene in the case to try and stop the obfuscation by the authorities and to obtain some co-operation with the family so that this girl can come back.

I ask my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary to do all he can to persuade the Nigerian authorities to be co-operative. They should at least give the little girl a chance to go to the British high commission in Lagos and say that she wants to come home or give her the chance to express her point of view and preferences. I ask him to do all he can to put pressure on the Nigerian Government to become a signatory to the Hague convention, so that, even if we can do nothing in this case, we can prevent such things from happening again.

Most importantly, I am grateful for the work that my hon. Friend and his predecessors have put in, but we must not give up. It is shocking that the little girl should have to endure what she is putting up with at the moment and that she should be so desperately unhappy. The now widowed Mrs. Dwyer spent the years from 1971 to 1983 loving and caring for the child and she will now have to spend another Christmas on her own. The only thing that she has to comfort her are her memories.

4.16 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I pay a warm tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) for the way in which he has fought so steadfastly and determinedly on behalf of his constituent Mrs. Dwyer. It is an extremely sad case and he has described it very movingly to the House. My own personal sympathies go to Mrs. Dwyer and to Oluronke.

Few Members in the House would have done as much as my hon. Friend has on behalf of his constituent. I know that at least twice he visited my predecessors to discuss the case. I am particularly grateful to him for the warm tribute that he paid to the officials of our consular department. The work done by our consular offices throughout the world is under-rated and under-valued. They often work long and unreasonable hours against unreasonable expectations by British citizens. It is nice when hon. Members such as my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow feel able to pay a real tribute to their work. On Christmas day, as on every other day of the year, there will be a consular officer on duty in the consular department in London, standing by to assist in any emergencies that may occur on 25 December.

Before I comment on the sad circumstances of the case I should like to take the opportunity of reminding the House of the background against which all cases of international child abduction have to be considered. It is to be regretted that child abductions are becoming all too common and more frequent. The ones who suffer are not the parents but the children, who often become little more than pawns in bitter marital and legal disputes. However, it is an inescapable fact that when children are removed from Britain, whether they are the subject of a court order of custody or wardship, they become subject to the law of the country where they happen to be and are no longer within the jurisdiction of the British courts.

At present, there is no machinery for the enforcement outside the United Kingdom of British court orders of custody or wardship. In the absence of an amicable agreement between the parties concerned, the only legal course open to the aggrieved party is to take action to be awarded custody in the courts of the country where the children are. It would be for those courts to decide what relevance, if any, to attach to a British court order. Unfortunately, any action overseas would be costly, as British legal aid is not available for legal actions taken in overseas jurisdiction. In the majority of cases, sadly, legal aid will not be available to the British subject in the country where the legal jurisdiction operates. Our diplomatic and consular posts overseas cannot initiate legal action, nor can they represent the plaintiff in court. I stress that we fully accept that we have a general responsibility in such a case to do what we can to help, but the extent to which we can help will vary from country to country, and even from case to case.

Since early in 1983, our consular officers have been under instructions to assist as soon as they are contacted by a parent whose child has been abducted. Their instructions cover the following courses of action: first, to provide lists of local lawyers to enable parents to pursue their case through local channels; secondly, if they are so requested, to try to obtain from the local authorities a report on the child's welfare; and, thirdly, to give any assistance they can in connection with granting access to

[Mr. Tim Eggar]

the children, including if necessary offering facilities where a meeting with the children could take place. Further, after consultation with our consular department in London, officially or unofficially they can draw to the attention of the local authorities information about British court orders affecting the children; they can do what they properly can to help bring about a speedy conclusion of any legal proceedings dealing with the child's custody; and, finally, they can approach the local authorities for help in tracing abducted minors.

However, the situation is made more difficult if the child or children concerned, as well as being British, are citizens of the country where they are being held—in other words, dual nationals. It is a matter of internationally accepted practice that a consular officer cannot afford protection to dual nationals in the country of their second nationality. Any representations on their behalf have to be informal and, sadly, the authorities of the country concerned would be within their rights to say that the British Government had no standing to intervene.

My hon. Friend referred to the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985, which came into effect in October last year. The purpose of the Act is to try to reduce, and ideally to eliminate, the incidence of child abduction from this country. Under its terms, the abduction of a child, even by one of its parents or guardians, is a criminal offence. Anyone suspecting that a child is at risk of abduction can inform the Home Office. A warning will then be sent immediately to ports and airports.

Furthermore, child abduction is an extraditable offence. If a child has been abducted to a country with which the United Kingdom has an extradition treaty, it is for the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions to decide whether action for the extradition of the offender could and should be initiated. However, even if the offender were extradited to this country, that of itself would not necessarily guarantee the return of the child. Unfortunately, in several cases reported to us during the past year, the abduction has been unexpected, and the offender has left the country before the ports could be warned. That happened in the case with which my hon. Friend is concerned.

The problem of child abduction affects not only this country; it is worldwide. As my hon. Friend knows, two international conventions came into force in the second half of 1983. Their purpose is to achieve some mutual recognition of the court orders of wardship or custody of one country in another and to help right the wrongs of child abduction. Those conventions are the European convention on recognition and enforcement of decisions concerning custody of children and on restoration of custody of children, and the Hague convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction. The United Kingdom is a signatory of both conventions, but we have not yet ratified them. The Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985 will enable us to ratify both conventions when it comes into force. We hope to do that some time next year. The terms of the conventions are incorporated in the Act, which will give them the force of law in the United Kingdom.

The terms of the conventions can be applied only between states which have ratified them. Although the existence of the conventions is a step in the right direction, their wider effectiveness will depend on future ratification by other signatories, and the number of cases for which solutions may be sought will be limited by the number of countries which have ratified the conventions. At present there are no proposals to make bilateral agreements with countries that have not acceded to the conventions.

I turn to the specific case which my hon. Friend raised so ably today. It must be considered against the background that I have just outlined. The case is expremely sad, and has caused considerable anguish and distress to the child's foster mother, Mrs. Dwyer.

Oluronke was born in London in 1970 to Nigerian parents. She is a British citizen by birth, but also a Nigerian citizen. When she was three months old, she was fostered to my hon. Friend's constituents, Mr. and Mrs. Dwyer. In 1976, Oluronke was made a ward of court, and care and control were granted to Mr. and Mrs. Dwyer. Furthermore, when Mr. Dwyer sadly died, the court granted care and control to Mrs. Dwyer alone. However, the court stressed that Oluronke's natural parents were to be allowed reasonable access, and during an access visit her mother abducted her to Nigeria.

I well understand Mrs. Dwyer's anxiety for Oluronke's welfare and her desire that Oluronke should return to the United Kingdom. It must be tragic when someone to whom one has dedicated 13 years of love and care is suddenly snatched away. I fully sympathise with Mrs. Dwyer, and my heart goes out to her. I cannot do other than condemn the act of abduction which was in direct breach of a United Kingdom court order. Oluronke is now at the home of her natural mother and grandfather. She is living in her grandfather's house, which in the context of the Nigerian extended family is not as unusual as it would be in the United Kingdom. As she is still a minor, she may not leave Nigeria without the permission of her natural parents.

As my hon. Friend said, both her mother and grandfather are opposed to her return. Oluronke is now attending school, and we understand that she has made some friends of her own age. That is help, albeit to a small degree. As she is a Nigerian child living with her natural family in Nigeria, she is subject to Nigerian law, and I am sorry to say that our high commission in Lagos has no formal standing to intervene in her case.

When Oluronke is 18 she will be able to apply in her own right for a British passport, to which she would be entitled, and, travelling under that passport, she would be able to return to the United Kingdom without any let or hindrance.

The message that I must give my hon. Friend is especially sad and harsh. He has done everything that he can to assist his constituent and has asked me to give an assurance that we shall not give up. He has not given up, and I gladly assure him that we shall not give up. I wish Oluronke well, and I hope that it will not be too long before she is reunited with Mrs. Dwyer.

Arts Council (Special Grant)

1.29 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): The Minister for the Arts has explained to me why he is unable to be present today. He is attending a meeting of Ministers in Brussels. I am sure that the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment—the hon. Member for Mitcham and Morden (Mrs. Rumbold) — will be an admirable substitute. The Minister has offered me a meeting to discuss arts funding in the new year, and I shall take up his offer keenly.

I start from the view that the arts have an enormous value for millions of people. Governments of all political persuasions must encourage the production of the arts to foster creativity, and must at the same time ensure that the general public can enjoy the arts — especially the performing arts — at prices which everyone can reasonably afford. Those twin principles—the fostering of initiative and creativity, and encouraging the public to participate in and enjoy the arts—are the cornerstones of any sensible arts funding policy.

Sadly, the present position is not so happy. Many artistic institutions will have great problems when the GLC and the metropolitan county councils are abolished at the end of March 1986. The funds at present placed at the disposal of artistic institutions by the GLC and the metropolitan counties will not be available after 1 April. The Government have recognised the problem and have said that they will make available additional funds through the Arts Council to enable replacement funding for the institutions that will suffer. However, the amount is insufficient.

I can do no better than quote a letter that I received only two days ago from the chairman of the Arts Council, Sir William Rees-Mogg. On the general problem of replacement funding, he wrote:

"I must make clear to you the very great difficulties the Council faces with regard to post-abolition funding given that the sum of £25 million provided by Government to replace Met. County spending on the Arts, while an improvement on the originally intimated £16 million, still falls far short of the £35 million which the Council has identified as the real need."

That is not the Opposition speaking; that is the chairman of the Arts Council, appointed by the Government, telling them that the amount of replacement funding should be £35 million, not £25 million. That is the root cause of the problem which I shall discuss today. That is the major problem facing many artistic institutions that are vying for too small a part of Arts Council funding.

I hope that the Government will not give the excuse that the Minister for the Arts gave at a recent Question Time when he said that arts funding has risen by 7 per cent. in real terms under this Government. The arts world is baffled by that figure and every calculation demonstrates that it is not correct. I hope that the Government will not start saying that they have been very good to the arts and that we should appreciate that. The simple fact is that £35 million is needed and £25 million is being made available. That is about to have a serious effect on the arts.

I wish to speak principally about two artistic institutions in my constituency — two theatres that receive funds from the Greater London council. They are the Almeida theatre and the Sadler's Wells theatre.

The Almeida was founded about six years ago and has shown a remarkable development, largely through the initiative, enterprise and creativity of the small group who started the theatre and have put in a tremendous amount of work to make it an institution which is respected not only nationally, but internationally. Remarkable progress has been made in those six years.

Not only have those at the theatre produced great achievement in artistic terms, but they have transformed a derelict building into one of the most attractive theatres in the country. The mixture of productions, ranging from the almost popular to the wildly avant garde, has added new dimensions to the artistic enjoyment available within our capital city.

The people at the theatre have adopted an extremely sensible housekeepng approach to funding and the management of resources. They have worked hard, with a skeleton staff, and have put in enormous effort. If the Government are as dedicated to such values as they keep saying that they are, they ought to recognise that the people at the Almeida have put in an enormous amount of work for little reward, being dedicated solely to creating a vibrant and exciting artistic institution.

The theatre has made strenuous efforts to seek private sponsorship for its activities and has been successful to a limited extent, but there are limits to the amounts that private companies are prepared to put into experimental theatre of the type that the Almeida is particularly interested in promoting.

The theatre has used pricing policy to good effect. Seat prices have been raised as high as possible, without losing custom and reducing the size of audiences. In all possible respects, the theatre has adopted a sensible and cost-effective approach to the business of putting on theatrical productions. It is sad that there is no guarantee that the money that the theatre receives from the GLC, both in capital and revenue terms, will be replaced when the council is abolished.

The other artistic institution in my constituency about which I am particularly worried is the Sadler's Wells theatre, which has a long and honourable history, going back far beyond the innovative and recent development of the Almeida theatre.

The recent announcement of the Arts Council that Sadler's Wells and four other so-called receiving theatres would not receive Arts Council funding after abolition has thrown the theatre into a deep and distressing quandary. The decision by the Arts Council not to provide any replacement funds for the receiving theatres runs contrary to the apparent assurances that were given to Sadler's Wells in the past. I quote first from a letter written on 16 April 1984 by Lord Gowrie, who wrote to the right hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. St. John-Stevas), who had taken up the question of Sadler's Wells funding:

"When I met representatives from Sadler's Wells last December (1983), I undertook to consider their case for some form of central funding. I am glad to say that it will now be possible for Sadler's Wells to apply to the Arts Council to make up the deficit in their funding caused by the abolition of the GLC. Final decisions as to the distribution of new funds will of course rest with the Arts Council"—

this is the get out—

"but I am sure that they will sympathetically consider any approach made by Sadler's Wells."

If sympathetic consideration is a rejection of any replacement funding, I shudder to think what unsympathetic consideration might be.

[Mr. Chris Smith]

Subsequent to that, on 23 September this year, the hon. Member for Shoreham (Mr. Luce), now the Minister for the Arts, wrote to the chairman of Sadler's Wells:

"I appreciate Sadler's Wells' worries and I can assure you that the Arts Council are aware of them too. As you know, the GLC's grant to the theatre was taken into account in calculating the £16 million additional funding which the Government has already announced for the Arts Council."

If the Sadler's Wells grant was taken into account in the original £16 million, why, now that the amount is £25 million rather than £16 million, is Sadler's Wells not to get any funding that has been made available to the Arts Council?

It must also be borne in mind that the £267,000 for which Sadler's Wells has applied represents only slightly above 10 per cent. of its gross turnover. It is not asking for massive funding of large proportions of its operations. It is asking only for that amount that is the shortfall that it needs to remain viable in business. It has made strenuous efforts to attract private sponsorship and commercial support. In 1985-86, that amount will reach over £350,000. However, it cannot, in the 15 weeks left to it between the announcement of the Arts Council decision and the start of the next financial year, find the further £250,000 that it will require to make up the shortfall, because no funds are now available.

The Government's decision, through the Arts Council, not to provide funds to Sadler's Wells will undermine the confidence which private and commercial sponsors will wish to see before they put funds in the theatre when the GLC goes. The point that so far has been consistently made in terms of both the Almeida theatre and Sadler's Wells by Government Ministers when they talk about these matters is that the local borough should pick up some of the tab when the GLC goes.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I endorse everything that my hon. Friend has said about the Almeida theatre and Sadler's Wells, being an admirer of both. Will he consider the problem of many other theatres in London, particularly innovative local community theatres such as the St. George's theatre in Tufnell Park in my constituency, as also being serious? The real problem is that the Government should be providing sufficient money to make up for the shortfall following the appalling decision to abolish the GLC in the first place.

Mr. Smith: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. These examples from my constituency are but two among many that will be affected by the decision to abolish the metropolitan county councils and the GLC.

I noticed that the hon. Lady the Under-Secretary was nodding when I said that the successor authorities are expected to pick up the tab. That claim ignores the fact that the borough already provides both theatres with some support. In revenue terms, the amount is small but, in terms of a 25 per cent. contribution to partnership funding for capital works in both theatres, it is substantial. In addition, both theatres receive their mandatory 50 per cent. rate relief and the discretionary 50 per cent. rate relief, which represents a substantial contribution from the borough's ratepayers in forgone rate income.

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the Government's claim also ignores the promise that the Minister for the Arts made to the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts that there would be sufficient Government money to continue supporting GLC and metropolitan counties' arts enterprises?

Mr. Smith: Yes indeed. There is quite clearly insufficient money to continue the full operations of the artistic institutions that are supported by those councils which are about to be abolished.

Two other factors must be borne in mind when the Government say that the borough must pick up the tab. First, the borough of Islington is rate capped. We were told only this week that a reduction of 18 per cent. in rates levied on the people of Islington is demanded by the Government in the coming financial year. How will the additional money that will be required be found from a diminishing pool to support those theatres when the GLC goes? Secondly, the theatres do not relate solely to a small community — they represent borough and regional resources. It can be argued that their attraction goes beyond the capital city. It is up to the Government to recognise, through the Arts Council, that they have a relevance beyond Islington.

I call on the Government to do three things, and I hope that the hon. Lady will be able to give me some assurances. First, they should admit the gross inadequacy of the £25 million that is being made available to the Arts Council as replacement funding. Secondly, they should recognise the special status of these valuable artistic institutions as regional resources rather than merely local ones. Thirdly, they should show some shred of recognition that the arts are essential to our community, and that they are not a luxury to be cut as a result of easy whim.

The arts are an essential part of the civilization that goes with a democracy. If these theatres and others like them suffer as a result of lack of financial commitment from the Government, the quality of life in Britain will be diminished. Heaven knows, life in Islington is hard enough. These two artistic institutions provide a little joy to my constituents. The Government are full set on a course that will remove that joy.

1.50 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): I reiterate the apologies of my hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts, who cannot be present to respond to the debate. As the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) said, my hon. Friend has explained to him that he is in Brussels and has offered to meet him in the new year. If I am unable fully to cover all the points raised by the hon. Gentleman, my hon. Friend will write to him.

The hon. Gentleman felt that it was important that Government, among others, should continue to encourage the arts. I do not think that anyone would disagree with that. Indeed, I believe that the Government have fully demonstrated, by their actions, that they are committed to that.

It may be helpful if I begin by outlining our position on funding the arts after abolition. The Government have always recognised that abolition of the GLC and metropolitan county councils would have important implications for arts funding, bearing in mind the prominent role which the GLC and MCCs have taken in this sphere. As a result, on 11 April 1984 the then Minister for the Arts announced that the Government would make

available £34 million in 1986-87 to replace GLC and MCC expenditure on the arts. That comprised £16 million for the Arts Council, £1 million for the British Film Institute and £17 million for museums. Those figures were based on the estimates then available of actual expenditure in 1983-84, adjusted forward for inflation to 1986-87, and after allowing for a take-up of essentially local activities by the successor districts and borough councils, which were, of course, being relieved of the significant GLC and MCC precepts. I should stress that at no time have we committed ourselves to making up the total deficit, because we consider there is a proper role for local funding. Similarly, we have never committed ourselves to funding additional activities and commitments which the GLC and MCCs have entered into after 1983-84, which may be part of the problem.

Nevertheless, during the course of 1985-86 many representations were made to my hon. Friend and his predecessor, Lord Gowrie, by the Arts Council and others, that the original calculations on which the £16 million had been based omitted significant arts expenditure that was either carried by the GLC and MCCs on other budgets or related to bodies that had come into operation after 1983-84. They also argued that the Government's funding should be increased to take account of the general expansion in arts spending by the GLC and MCCs that had taken place since 1983-84. A case was also made by the British Film Institute for additional post-abolition funding for film projects.

On 14 November, my hon. Friend announced the Government's response to those various representations. He announced that the Government were raising the £16 million allocated to the Arts Council to £25 million and the £1 million allocated to the British Film Institute to £1·3 million. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would recognise that Sir William Rees-Mogg has played a significant part in enabling that increase to take place.

My hon. Friend also announced that the Arts Council's basic grant, excluding post-abolition funding, would be raised to £110·6 million, thus giving it a total grant of £135·6 million for 1986-87.

Together with the £17 million already announced for museums, this brings to over £43 million the Government's provision for post-abolition funding of the arts. It demonstrates our determination to maintain the level of Government support and to give arts bodies in the GLC and metropolitan areas a good foundation on which to build.

Nevertheless, the Arts Council figure of £25 million still leaves districts and boroughs to make a vitally important contribution. The Arts Council's estimate was that to meet all current arts requirements it would need £35 million. This seems to be slightly unreasonable because there is cause to expect districts and boroughs to bridge the gap when they will have been relieved of precepts to a much greater value than this sum—by definition, about £35 million said to be the current GLC-metropolitan county councils' contribution.

We believe strongly that local arts must have a base of local funding. If this is not forthcoming, or if successor authorities are unwilling to contribute adequately, it must call into question whether the arts are seen as sufficiently worthwhile in the area. I am sure that such a question does not arise in the hon. Gentleman's area.

The hon. Gentleman will be grateful to know that, in spite of the rate capping of Islington council, it will have the ability, because of the favourable grant that it has been given—about £11 million in excess of what it received last year — if it is prepared to look carefully at its expenditure, to contribute to the arts within its total budget. I trust that he will look at that with interest, if not with favour.

The Government take the view that there is a strong obligation on districts and boroughs to assess need in their areas and to meet it, often on the basis of matching contributions from central Government via the Arts Council. The hon. Gentleman will recognise that it is not for the Minister to dictate which project should be helped, although my hon. Friend has done his best to ensure that there is enough money to go round.

Mr. Chris Smith: The hon. Lady refers to an additional £11 million going to the borough. She will appreciate that that must cover everything that the GLC at present provides for the people of Islington. She is suggesting that the total grant requirements of Sadler's Wells and the Almeida theatre, which between them—two artistic institutions alone — amount to £600,000, should come out of that £11 million. That, surely, is impossible.

Mrs. Rumbold: I was merely suggesting that there should be some constribution, as the local contribution, from that money to help the Sadler's Wells and the Almeida theatre.

I come to the specific point that the hon. Gentleman made about Sadler's Wells and the general case that he put. The Arts Council said recently that it would not assume responsibility for the metropolitan counties' funding of receiving theatres, including Sadler's Wells. This is entirely consistent with the council's normal funding policy, which is to fund performance, not buildings.

The council firmly believes that it is for local authorities to provide and maintain buildings, but it has undertaken that, where it can assist other arts bodies in a particular district, it will do so, taking full account of the fact that the successor authority is shouldering its responsibility for receiving theatres.

My hon. Friend has received strong representations from a number of the arts bodies affected by the Arts Council's decision not to provide receiving theatres with replacement money. On 9 December he met representatives of Sadler's Wells, who told him of their anxieties.

My hon. Friend has much sympathy with these bodies. Equally, he understands the Arts Council's reluctance to break with its longstanding policy of not funding receiving theatres. He therefore welcomed and has commended to the affected bodies the council's clear indication that it was prepared to take into account successor authorities' funding of receiving theatres when considering the funding of other arts organisations in their areas. He believes firmly that funding of arts bodies should be a joint activity, bringing together the Arts Council and/or regional arts associations in partnership with local authorities and other local interests.

The Almeida is a producing house as well as a receiving theatre and the council has told my hon. Friend that it will be considering its case for replacement funding, in line with the claims of all other bodies presently funded by the GLC. The council does not expect to be able to announce its decision on funding for a few weeks.

[Mrs. Rumbold]

As I have explained, we see funding of the arts as a plural activity; central Government have an important part to play but so, too, have local government and the private sector. We believe that we have upheld our part of the funding. Although the hon. Gentleman will not like what I am about to say, I shall reiterate that since the Government came to power in 1979 we have increased total central arts expenditure by nearly 10 per cent. in real terms and increased the Arts Council's basic budget by about 7 per cent. These figures take no account of the additional funding that we have provided to replace arts spending by the GLC and MCCs.

We believe that the Government have met their commitment, and through their provision of over £43 million for total post-abolition funding, including £25 million for the Arts Council, have recently given a generous lead to the successor authorities in the abolition areas.

Beckenham Hospital

2 pm

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): Almost exactly three years ago, on Friday 17 December 1982, I presented a petition which said:

"There is a need for the full range of facilities to be maintained at Beckenham Hospital for the benefit of the local communities. Wherefore your petitioners pray that your Honourable House will urge the Secretary of State for Social Services to instruct the Bromley Health Authority to maintain the present range of facilities at Beckenham Hospital."

As I told the House at the time, the petition had been signed by a wide cross-section of community leaders. It was supported by more than 22,000 signatures, which were gathered in only six weeks. It represented the largest demonstration of support for a local institution that I could remember in the past 25 years.

That unprecedented gesture reflected, in part, the fear that the authorities would soon take far-reaching decisions without being aware of the strength of local sentiment and, in part, gratitude for the splendid skill and dedication of the staff at Beckenham hospital, which has been demonstrated so often for so many years.

The petition was prompted also by the fact that there is an imbalance in the provision of health facilities in the Bromley health authority district. Most of the hospital beds are in the south and most of the people live in the north. Nearly 50 per cent. of my constituents in the north-west third do not have cars and find journeys to hospitals in the southern part of the district exceedingly difficult.

We feared three years ago, and we still fear, that if cuts had to be made in any hospital provision, the convenience of the doctors who live and work in the south of the district would count for more than the convenience of the patients who live in the north. On 24 January 1983, in replying to the petition, the Secretary of State said:

"Bromley Health Authority will produce a Strategic Plan in 1983 setting out plans for developing local health services. While the Strategic Plan cannot be anticipated in detail, the Authority does intend to maintain a wide range of facilities at Beckenham Hospital for the benefit of the local community: this does not mean that the existing range of facilities will necessarily remain unchanged in every respect . . . but Beckenham Hospital will continue to play an important role in the district."

When the strategic plan was produced, it was eminently sensible. In its draft plan, Bromley health authority said that it had

"as a long-term objective the provision of 60 per cent. of hospital services in the north of the district in line with the distribution of the population."

That sensible declaration was widely welcomed when it was made, for it fitted the social as well as the demographic realities of life in the area.

Since the publication of the draft plan 25 years ago, there have been substantial changes in the provision of health care in Beckenham. Beckenham maternity hospital, which has given such good service to the community for so many years, will soon close. Its facilities will be transferred to Farnborough hospital, which lies about eight miles to the south of the present maternity hospital.

I have accepted the planned closure reluctantly. The move to Farnborough will create some inconvenience for constituents, especially in the north-west of my constituency. There are substantial medical arguments in favour of the transfer, although I would have wished that the Beckenham maternity hospital could continue on its present site until the planned new accommodation in

Bromley hospital is available in the early 1990s. Meanwhile, there has been a reduction in the number of acute beds in Beckenham hospital. They were replaced by a geriatric day hospital and two wards of geriatric patients.

Despite some initial misgivings that the switch in emphasis towards geriatric provision was going too far, the present balance between orthopaedic beds, gynaecological beds and geriatric beds and the geriatric day hospital and outpatient services provides a service to the community that is highly valued. That service is provided efficiently and effectively in a way that commands the respect and affection of the community. There is one operating theatre in Beckenham hospital. From the beginning of January until 19 December this year, 2,245 operations were carried out there, showing that the theatre fills a real need and is managed most efficiently.

Despite the fact that Beckenham hospital has avoided a reputation for conveyor-belt medicine, its throughput of patients is substantially better than in the district as a whole and the regional average. In orthopaedic beds, Beckenham's throughput is 27; the average for the district is 20.2; and the average for the south-east Thames region is 27.2. It does not sound wholly appropriate to talk about throughput in reference to gynaecological beds, but the throughput figure for beds in the Beckenham gynaecological ward is 73, compared with a district average of 57.2 and a regional average of 64.7. In geriatric beds, where clearly throughput must be viewed differently, the Beckenham figures are slightly better than elsewhere in the district. The future of Beckenham should be assured on grounds of convenience and efficiency.

The Bromley health authority's meeting on 17 December was faced with a management paper recommending the closure of the operating theatre and the gynaecological and orthopaedic wards in Beckenham hospital. The management paper envisaged total closure of Beckenham hospital in the near future and the closure of all acute beds in Orpington hospital in the south of the district.

The Bromley health authority is spending, in round terms, £50 million a year on hospitals. Looking ahead to 1986-87, the Bromley health authority estimates that it will be faced with a shortfall in income of £2 million. To meet that shortfall, the health authority has been urged by the management to reduce the number of acute beds from 659 to 566 in 1986-87. In other words, to meet a projected revenue shortfall of 4 per cent., the management proposes a cut in acute beds of more than 16 per cent.

Of course a shortfall of £2 million a year is serious, but to meet this by a cut of 93 hospital beds is barmy. According to the management's own figures, it will produce a saving of £1.2 million a year. In other words, the management will have precipitated a major crisis in the Health Service locally and will still have gone barely halfway towards meeting the projected financial shortfall. That would plainly have the most harmful effect on our waiting lists.

At the moment, the Bromley health authority is in the top quarter of the 200 odd districts in England and Wales when it comes to the shortness of waiting lists, but 28 per cent. of the 350 people on our waiting lists have had to wait for more than a year for an operation. If the proposed plans go through, the waiting lists and the time that those on them will have to wait can be expected to escalate sharply.

The effect of the proposed changes on Beckenham hospital will be out of proportion to the savings that can be achieved. If and when the orthopaedic and gynaecological wards at Beckenham are closed, it is suggested that the beds will be filled with geriatric patients who at present go to Farnborough and Orpington hospitals. That would mean that the sole major identifiable saving would be made on the operating theatre at Beckenham hospital. Its closure will save £60,000 a year.

We are then talking about the destruction of Beckenham hospital as we know it for a paper saving of £60,000 a year. It would, of course, be possible not to move in additional geriatric patients, but just close the orthopaedic and gynaecological wards. When I discussed that matter with the management at Beckenham hospital yesterday, it was plain that that alternative made no economic sense when one considers the division of overheads. If the whole of Beckenham hospital were to be closed, it is said that the savings would be £2 million a year. I suspect that the estimated savings are illusory, while the social and medical loss would be enormous.

The most charitable thing that I can say about the proposals by the chairman of the Bromley health authority and the new management team is that they seem to be ill-considered and are likely to produce the maximum disruption for the minimum of saving.

The new chairman and the new management team should not be asked to take most of the blame for this new crisis. They are being strangled by the guidelines of the resource allocation working party. That working party, which produced its guidelines in the mid-1970s, had the laudable objective of seeking to equalise the provision of medical services across the country as a whole. That was a desirable objective, and it was hoped that progress towards achieving equality between one part of the country and another could be made painlessly by a process of differential growth between the regions.

Relatively under-provided regions would merely have a larger annual increment of growth than the relatively over-provided regions. In theory, no one would suffer. As Dick Crossman, the egalitarian and highly political Labour Secretary of State for Social Services, wrote in the 1970s:

"I can only equalise on an expanding budget."

Between 1979 and 1983, that in effect was what happened. There was differential growth on an expanding budget and the operation was comparatively painless.

In the past three years, however, London and the south-east have been faced with a real loss of resources as money has been transferred to other regions and the regions have been encouraged to carry out their own resources reallocation programme. That means that, if the RAWP guidelines continue to be enforced so enthusiastically, we shall be faced locally with a perpetual crisis. As one senior nurse said to me yesterday at Beckenham hospital, "However many economies we make in Bromley, we always seem to be £2 million a year short."

We have done what the Government want. Our administrative costs in Bromley are lower than those in the region as a whole, and we are saving £2 million a year through the introduction of competitive tendering. However, we still face a crisis. What then should be done? In the immediate future, the Bromley health authority management team should go back to the drawing board and do its sums again. I am glad to say that that is already happening.

[Sir Philip Goodhart]

There should be urgent talks between the Bromley health authority and the South-East Thames region about the application of the RAWP guidelines in the financial year 1986-87 and the years immediately following that. That will help during the course of the next month.

The Secretary of State and his admirable team of Ministers must look urgently at the application of the RAWP formula. I am glad to note that on 17 December this year the Secretary of State announced that he had asked the National Health Service management board to review the operation of the formula, particularly the way in which the relative needs in different parts of the country are measured. I hope that the review will act quickly but, inevitably, it will take time. The hospital service in my area, and in London as a whole, cannot wait for a lengthy academic review which may or may not produce some relief for the current crisis. In order to meet our immediate crisis, I hope that in the new year the Secretary of State will meet the chairmen of the four Thames regions and the chairmen of all the health districts in greater London to consider what remedial action may be taken to relieve the immediate problems faced by London.

This is the last but one debate in the House before the new year. I wish you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the Under-Secretary a merry Christmas. If the patients and the prospective patients at Beckenham hospital in particular, and Bromley hospitals in general, are to have a happy and healthy new year, they will need more help than they are getting at the moment.

2.17 pm

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) on the way in which he has raised the issue of the effect of RAWP in Bromley and the vigorous style in which he has defended his constituents. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute briefly to the debate.

I should like to emphasise that Bromley health authority has reduced its expenditure, as my hon. Friend said. It has done that by efficient economies and by contracting out. It has been congratulated in the House by the Secretary of State on the way in which it has done so. However, it still finds that it is continually having to make reductions in its services because it cannot meet its budget.

I am not going to argue the case for Beckenham or any other hospital. I have no hospitals in my constituency because they are situated in the other three constituencies in the area. However, whatever reductions are made, whether in Beckenham or elsewhere, the ultimate effect will be a reduction in patient care for my constituents and those of my hon. Friend. I accept the principle of RAWP and what it seeks to achieve, but I urge the Under-Secretary to consider a substantial slowing down of the effect of RAWP or an abatement of it.

Like my hon. Friend, I wish the Under-Secretary a peaceful Christmas, but I urge him, when he returns in the new year, to look carefully at the effect that RAWP is having in an area such as Bromley, and to reconsider its effects.

2.18 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Ray Whitney): I am happy to have the opportunity to respond to my hon. Friends the Members for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) and for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims). I reciprocate the wishes for a peaceful, happy and prosperous Christmas for all of us and a healthy and well cared for new year for constituents in the Bromley area.

The concern of my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham for the Beckenham hospital is well known and, as he has reminded the House, he has made sure that Ministers in the Department of Health and Social Security are well aware of his concern. That was particularly manifested by the presentation in December 1982 of a petition to the House signed by around 22,000 people.

I endorse the tribute that my hon. Friend paid to the skill and dedication of the staff at Beckenham hospital, and the loyalty of the local people to the hospital. That is the case in many hospitals. We should be proud of that and take advantage of it.

At the same time, we must improve and develop our health care. I leave aside the resource constraints and problems, which are inescapable. Progress in medicine, shifts in population and the need for more technical and clinical services to be grouped together must be taken into account. I hope that we all agree that there must be changes. Inevitably, we run into problems of the conflicts of old and justified local loyalties with the advances of modern technology. The Health Service must be concerned primarily with the delivery of service to our constituents.

The inescapable shadow of the distribution of resources must always hang over us. Neither of my hon. Friends will need reminding that nationally our record is good. Since 1979, we have increased expenditure on the National Health Service by 20 per cent., and, according to the Chancellor's autumn statement, next year there will be a further increase of 2·2 per cent., in real terms. Of course, there are pressures of pay and additional staff, but we always need to remind ourselves that they, too, are services. Some 70 per cent. of the cost of the NHS is staff pay. Staff are a valuable and crucial commodity in the delivery of health care. We have achieved real increases in pay and in the numbers of doctors and nurses. We are happy to have done so. All that is at the national level, and should be recognised.

Both my hon. Friends referred at length to the complicated resource allocation working party formula. I was glad to note that my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham accepted that the move towards the RAWP objective of equalising services throughout the country was laudable. That proposition was supported by my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst. That is the Government's position, as it was of previous Governments.

We are moving towards that objective at a steady and measured pace, not at a helter-skelter pace. Long-term revenue plans assume annual reductions of 0·3 per cent. until 1993-94. That can be regarded in no sense as undue or immoderate haste or pressure. As my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham was good enough to acknowledge, the pressures on several areas, particularly the four Thames regions, have been recognised in two ways—by the statement following the autumn statement and by the broad RAWP outlines announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 17 December.

There was an increase in funding in the Thames regions to take account of the pressures to which both my hon. Friends referred. The management board of the Health

Service was invited to review the operation of the RAWP formula. That is being done within the basic principles of RAWP, with which we all agree, but we recognise that an examination of the pressures is required. My hon. Friend rightly suggested that the examination be speedy. That is a fair point, and I take note of it. I hope that he will accept that we recognise those pressures.

I shall now deal with the proposition of Bromley health authority, and the future of Beckenham hospital. I stress that these are still proposals for discussion. As I understand it, a formal consultation process will begin next month. The proposals are revisions of proposals which have been around for some time.

Sir Philip Goodhart: At the meeting on 17 December all the proposals were referred back, so the health authority will have to do its sums again.

Mr. Whitney: My point is that this is still an issue for the health authority. As my hon. Friend recognises, our system must be based on policies being made essentially at district health authority level. The region and the Department only take part at appropriate points in the process.

Given that the health authority is above RAWP and that financial adjustments are still to be made, I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that better dispositions of resources can be achieved. Therefore, it must be right for the health authority to examine all the available options, taking due account of the sensitivities of local support for particular services and facilities. I hope that my hon. Friend will not seek to cramp the authority's intellectual style in the search both for the most effective use of resources and, more important, for the delivery of the services which his constituents need. I understand that the health authority is adopting that approach. Obviously, we shall maintain close contact with it.

The proposition is that the acute services will be dealt with in two hospitals rather than four, taking account of the fact that the hospital throughput is rather slow and expensive for acute services. Clearly there is a need for improvement. The delivery of the full range of high-quality clinical acute treatment is difficult to achieve. It is not for the Department or Ministers to take a decision on that. However, we must consider whether these days an 80-bed hospital can truly provide the level of acute treatment that our constituents have a right to expect. Whatever may have happened on 17 December, I understand that the authority has judged that the answer to the provision of a better service is to concentrate acute services in two hospitals, and to use the facility at Beckenham hospital for geriatric and mental illness provision.

We have watched the development of the issue carefully, and I have no doubt that the chairman and members of the district health authority of Bromley will take careful note of the points made with sincerity and conviction by my hon. Friends. The community health council has been involved in the discussions from the earliest stages. It appreciates the need to put the proposals into effect. But the measures will be the subject of the usual consultation, and Ministers will not come to a firm view unless and until the proposals are referred to the Department for consideration.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

ARMED FORCES BILL

Ordered,

That Sir Antony Buck and Mr. Robert Key be discharged from the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill and that Mr. Tony Baldry and Mr. Nicholas Soames be added to the Committee.—*(Mr. Maude.)*

Housing Co-operatives

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

2.30 pm

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I have the privilege of opening the last debate of the last sitting before Christmas and, indeed, of this year. That gives me the opportunity to extend seasonal greetings to you and your family, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the Minister and his. It also enables me to comment on the appropriateness of debating housing at a time when we celebrate a feast with such obvious significance for the homeless and the badly housed.

My interest in housing co-operatives predates my entry into the House and originated when I was chairman of Liverpool council's housing committee. I believe in housing co-operatives because they offer the best way of giving tenants a stake and a say in their communities. I believe in them because, from my experience of representing people in the inner city during the past 13 years — as a local councillor or as a Member of Parliament — I am convinced that the traditional landlord-tenant relationship has failed badly. A passing glimpse at sprawling, faceless, badly-maintained municipal estates confirms my belief.

Planners and politicians have waged war against entire communities, slowly and deliberately running down neighbourhoods and depriving people of their homes, roots and identities. In their place, the "we-know-best" politicians have created nightmare developments which people have rejected utterly. One need look no further than Manchester's Hulme or Liverpool's Netherley to see the dire consequences of Labour and Tory housing policies during the past 20 years. I opposed the construction of Netherley in 1972; 13 years later, it is being demolished with about 47 years of debt charges remaining to be paid. In my constituency, two 20-year-old blocks of flats—Entwistle Heights and Milner House — are being demolished, with 40 years of debt charges remaining.

It is a bitter and costly legacy. But perhaps most damaging of all is that, in destroying the "Coronation Street" communities, family life and support has been wrecked. In the past, many inner-city communities were like large happy families, until the politicians came along and scattered the people to the winds.

The housing co-operative movement has recognised people's desire to take over from the planners and take control of their homes. Nowhere has that desire been so potent as in Liverpool, where thousands of people recognise housing co-operatives as the opportunity to realise their most cherished dreams. In a city where one in five is unemployed and many have low incomes, the right-to-buy legislation is not an option. But that should not preclude people from having the opportunity to realise their cherished dreams.

I have been saddened by the response of the Labour-controlled council to those who wish to have their own homes, but who cannot afford to buy them. The Rochdale Pioneers must be turning in their graves as they see Socialists putting every possible obstacle in the path of people who wish to shake off the municipal, corporatist yoke.

The Minister will be aware of the heroic struggle and the fight waged by the Eldonian housing co-operative in Liverpool. Its leader, Tony McGann, and his brave committee have faced every sort of threat from municipal bully-boys. Their original planning application was opposed on completely trumped-up grounds, with the council subsequently being overruled by the Secretary of State on appeal. Attempts were also made to bribe and intimidate tenants to break ranks and move out into newly-built council properties. Labour used every dirty trick in the book to try to break the spirit of that co-operative. It has happened in other developments, too. Portland gardens was to have been a housing co-operative, but it was municipalised, snatching away from people who saw homes being built opposite them the chance of homes of their own. Those properties were sequestrated by the local council and taken away from those tenants.

Furthermore, the local Merseyside Improved Housing association, which had been backing the Portland gardens development, lost about £40,000 on abortive work on the scheme. That, too, is public money.

Tenants at the Mill street co-operative were told by the local housing department that if they resigned they would immediately be offered houses—if they got out of the co-op, they would be given somewhere decent to live—but if they chose to remain, no repairs would be done to their homes.

The latest attempt by local Labour leaders is to change the allocations policy so that tenants who believed that they would be able to move into housing co-operatives will now be denied that chance. Every possible obstacle has been put in the path of people who want to live in housing co-operatives.

That bitter experience has convinced me that a new Act to guarantee the rights of co-operators is needed urgently. A right-to-co-operate Bill should be introduced at the earliest opportunity in the new year and should guarantee in law the rights of tenants who take on the full might of the council landlords.

The Eldonians were a particularly strong group. They had the support of their local councillors, some of whom were moderates in the Labour group. I admire them immensely for the way in which they stood up to the local Militants. The Eldonians also had the support of the Archbishop of Liverpool and of the Liberal group on the city council. My right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), the leader of the Liberal party, met that group at one of its meetings and gave it his personal support.

The Eldonians' fight has secured for them £6 million of housing investment in Liverpool. The housing will be managed by the tenants. That is jobs; that is services; that is homes. How ironic it is that political leaders, who never stop parroting those phrases, should have been in the vanguard in trying to prevent that investment and those homes from coming to Liverpool.

The Eldonians were fortunate to have the support of the Merseyside Improved Housing association in their fight. The work of that association has been magnificant, and I pay particular tribute to the chief officer, Mr. Barry Natton, to Tom Clay, who has done much of the groundwork, and to the other members of the team. Merseyside Improved Housing backed its commitment to housing associations by putting its money where its mouth was. It put £150,000 into the Eldonians' scheme alone, and £50,000 of that will ultimately be a direct subsidy which is not reclaimable.

Merseyside Improved Housing cannot afford to do that every time, as my hon. Friend the Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) learned last Friday when we visited St. Andrew's gardens in my constituency and met the fledgling Bronte housing co-operative. The members of that co-operative need resources and help desperately. Representatives of Merseyside Improved Housing came to that meeting and will happily provide the professional advice and skills, but they must be backed up by resources.

The Department of the Environment's funds for housing co-operatives are lamentably small. The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction told me last month in answer to my question about grants under section 121 of the Housing Act 1980:

"I consider that the present arrangements are satisfactory; the total provision for such grants in 1985-86 is £342,700 of which £94,700 has been set aside for co-operatives." [*Official Report*, 25 November 1985; Vol. 87, c. 381.]

In other words, less than £100,000 has been provided throughout the country for the development of housing co-operatives through grants under the 1980 Act. I have given an example of one co-op which required £50,000 to get only one scheme off the ground.

The Housing Corporation provides a co-operative promotion allowance, but that is only £2,100 per scheme. The Minister told me in another written answer:

"The level of co-operative promotion allowance for 1986-87 is currently being considered as part of the annual review of all housing association grant allowances."

The Minister admitted that the current rates were only £2,135 per scheme for projects in the provinces, and slightly more in London. He went on to say:

"The rates to take effect from 1 April 1986 will be promulgated early in 1986." [*Official Report*, 27 November 1985; Vol. 87, c. 570.]

That gives the Minister the opportunity to review those small allowances. The Government should take into account as well the size of the scheme and an additional per unit allowance should be made available.

Thirdly, we should be looking at the funding for repair grants, the upper limit of which is about £200. That is not enough money if one lives in a run-down flat in the middle of a hard-to-let development on a peripheral council estate. The House must pass legislation or bring in orders that will enable more money to be made available to tenants who want to turn around their estates. If special grants, such as repair grants, were given where people formed housing co-operatives, they could act as a catalyst and be responsible for tackling the major problem of hard-to-let and empty property that we see on so many of the big municipal developments.

There is a need for plurality of funding from a number of different pockets both in the Housing Corporation and in the Department of the Environment. The present derisory sums are hopelessly inadequate. None of the existing mechanisms recognises this most difficult and important work and the struggle that so many tenants have to mount without professional advice or expertise.

As an illustration of how low a priority such action is at the moment, I point out that the Housing Corporation nationally allocated only half of one person's time specifically to housing co-operatives, and that is not good enough. I hope that the Minister will say that the Government will look again at funding the need for more professional backing and help. If the housing co-operatives succeed, they will form a springboard for more co-operative ventures. The Mondragon experience in Spain came about when groups of unemployed Basques got together with the help of the local priest to set up a people's bank. They put their savings into the bank and financed the development of workers' co-operatives. That experience could be repeated in areas such as central Liverpool, which can work on the basis of a successful housing co-operative.

Housing co-operatives give people a stake and a say in their own community and homes. Families need greater protection if they are not to see the homes that they have helped to plan snatched away from under them. That is why we need a right-to-co-operate Bill. Co-operatives are about the most important form of home rule. They enable us to decentralise power and ownership in the most radical way possible. They are worthy of full support from the House. In the spirit of Christmas, which is of such special significance to the homeless and the badly housed, I hope that the Minister will be able to give me the assurances that I have sought.

2.43 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey) *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Does the hon. Gentleman have the consent of both the Minister and the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) to speak? I see that he does.

Mr. Hughes: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for granting me a few minutes to speak in support of his plea to the Government to be more supportive of the housing co-operative movement.

At the moment, our lament is that the housing co-operative movement is seen as incidental rather than integral to the planning of housing provision in Britain. For many—and the Government have still to learn this lesson—they are the only way out of municipal misery. They are the only alternative that offers self-management and self-control rather than that other fallacious alternative, the unmanageable financial prospect of being able to buy, and then keep up payments for, a house. The liability of owner occupation and the right to buy is a useless resource to those who do not have the money to purchase and then sustain a commitment.

The Government should no longer consider the co-operative movement to be the reserve of the trendy middle class. That is not the reality. They are often most appreciated by working people in inner cities, London as well as Liverpool. The working people are backed up with the expertise and resources, both financial and skilled, of people who can advise and assist.

I have three propositions to make to the Government. First, they should establish, as part of the Department of the Environment, a national co-operative development fund—a co-operative corporation to balance the Housing Corporation — which would channel funds to the co-operative movement to build up that part of our housing sector.

Secondly, the Government should ask local authorities to present proposals for co-operative schemes in what is presently the public sector and in newbuild when, each year, they ask for local authorities' housing plans. That would help us to get away from the idea that the only alternative to public sector build is private sector build. Local authorities could get used to the idea that they had to plan co-operative ventures.

[Mr. Hughes]

Thirdly, the Government should facilitate a network of expertise, administrative skills, financial advice and resources to enable those who would choose co-operative housing if they were given the chance to make that choice and to be supported.

Such steps would give the Government a new reputation for the new year as the improving, enabling, co-operative Government — which even they will find appealing.

May I, on behalf of Opposition Members, offer our good wishes to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the Clerks and staff of the House who make our work so much easier? May I ask the Government to reflect that the more co-operative they are on matters such as this, the happier people will be and the better our housing will be in 1986?

2.46 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sir George Young): Nobody is more committed than the Government to breaking up the municipal monopolies that the hon. Members for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) and for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) have mentioned. Similarly, nobody is more committed to moving away from the town hall paternalism which has doomed many local authority tenants to live in rather depressing surroundings.

That is why we are happy to review our support for the co-operative movement and to see how we might usefully build on it to provide greater impetus in this growing movement. I was disturbed but not surprised to hear of the irregularities of Liverpool city council that the hon. Member for Mossley Hill described. It is appropriate at a time of year when thoughts of many of our colleagues turn to other things to consider the role of co-operatives in tackling some of the remaining housing problems.

The debate shows the anxiety of the hon. Member for Mossley Hill about the many recent disturbing developments that affect his constituency and the whole of Liverpool. Some of the incidents that he described show the damage that can be wrought by militant Socialism in a deprived inner-city area.

There is not much between the Government and the hon. Members for Mossley Hill and for Southwark and Bermondsey about the desirability of extending further the housing co-operative movement. Only last week, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment said in a debate on the inner cities that co-operatives are working successfully in many inner city areas, not least Liverpool. We are anxious to see how we might help best.

Co-operatives are formed by a group of tenants or prospective tenants who are in housing need. If they are registered with the Housing Corporation, they have access to development funding, as do other housing associations. What distinguishes them is the fact that they are completely self governing, that their rules restrict membership to tenants and would-be tenants, and that all tenants have to be members of the co-operative. Almost by definition, therefore, their experience of the broader requirements of developing a housing scheme is somewhat limited.

The right way in which to approach that lack of experience is to help with the necessary training, advice and support. The Housing Corporation now insists that any new co-operative seeking registration and public finance must have a development agreement with a recognised secondary co-operative or housing association that provides back-up services and training. Secondary co-operatives are bodies which own no properties, but exist solely to provide development and other services to the primary co-operatives which carry out the work. I pay tribute to Co-operative Development Services, one of the major secondary co-operatives in Liverpool, which has done so much to encourage and foster the movement in Liverpool.

I have touched on the difficulties that can arise with housing co-operatives, but a recent review by my Department showed that they are balanced — and, indeed, outweighed — by the benefits and advantages that the movement can bring, not least in inner urban areas. Inherent in the co-operative movement—and both hon. Members touched on that—is the willingness of the residents to take responsibility for managing their own houses and taking a real sense of pride in the area in which they live. That avoids many of the problems and the resentments between landlord and tenant which have been a feature on large local authority estates.

That participative approach extends to the design of the dwellings to be built or renovated by the co-operatives. Apart from the co-operative style of management, a key feature is likely to be the close involvement of the actual members who work closely with building professionals in the physical arrangement of the development so that it fully reflects the wishes of the members of the co-operative. For that reason, they are now in the forefront of the community architectural movement that has attracted considerable publicity and most distinguished endorsement during recent months. Those of us interested in the inner cities simply have to take note of the growing awareness and willingness of those who live there to take responsibility for their future and to transform the soulless inner-city estates into an area in which they are proud to live.

The development of those schemes is funded primarily by loans from the Housing Corporation. I note what the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey said about the need to set up a separate source of funds—he used the initials NCDF—for that movement.

At the moment, every scheme, whether submitted by a co-operative or a conventional housing association, is considered by the corporation on its merits. That ensures that only the best and most suitable projects are approved and that funds are used in the most effective way within the corporation's overall strategy.

In 1984-85, the level of capital expenditure on co-operative schemes was £23 million. It is too early to say what the figure will be for this year, but the indications are that the value of new schemes may be running at a slightly higher level. Yesterday we announced the Housing Corporation's approved development programme for next year. Gross provision has been maintained at the same level but we will concentrate resources on meeting needs in inner-city areas. That should encourage the funding of co-operative schemes.

However, development loans are not the sum total of our commitment to housing co-operatives. On 1 April this year an additional development allowance, the co-operative promotion allowance, was introduced. It is provided exclusively to housing co-operatives and its aim

is to meet the extra costs that they face in obtaining back-up and advice from registered associations and secondary co-operatives. It currently stands at £3,522 for each first project in London and £2,135 elsewhere. The hon. Member for Mossley Hill implied that that was a derisory sum. When it is reviewed, we shall take his comments into account. Second and subsequent projects receive a smaller allowance.

We have attempted to recognise the special problems that co-operatives face when considering section 121 grants. Out of the total of nearly £350,000 available, some 30 per cent. has been set aside for secondary co-operatives in the current year.

Mr. Alton: Can I press the Minister further on allowances? Will he look at the question of their being paid only on successful completion of the scheme? There are occasions when co-operatives fail, through no fault of their own, and the allowances are not paid.

Will the Minister say something about the number of staff employed by the Housing Corporation who deal with housing co-operatives?

Sir George Young: The Government are anxious not to spend too much on abortive expenditure. That principle inspires our approach to housing associations and co-operatives. I shall have another look at the matter, but obviously we want the money to go on schemes that are completed rather than on those that are simply contemplated. I shall also take another look at the resources of the housing corporations that are devoted to promoting co-operatives in the light of the fraction of 1 per cent., or one person, as mentioned by the hon. Gentleman.

The housing co-operative movement was pioneered in Liverpool in the late 1970s when people in depressing public housing started to band together into self-help groups to find a way to better housing. That approach, harnessing the energies of local people, was supported initially both by the housing corporation and the city council of the day, and many of those early schemes are now complete.

Notable successes have been, for example, the Weller street and the Grafton crescent housing co-operatives in Liverpool 8. Those achievements have been widely recognised and some have won awards. The Prime Minister visited Grafton crescent co-operative in Liverpool last year and she, like others, was deeply impressed by what she saw.

In the Merseyside context, the co-operative principle provides an opportunity for those with no realistic prospect of home ownership, a point made by both hon. Members. The people there can now take real responsibility for the design, management and maintenance of their homes. It enables them to escape from inefficient local bureaucracy and to play a role in creating and sustaining good sheltered housing.

It was extremely sad, therefore, that the present Labour city council should have adopted a deliberate and dogmatic policy of municipalisation at the expense of co-operative schemes. The city council is not now prepared to enter into arrangements for tenant management co-ops or to found newbuild schemes for co-operative ownership because of its wish to direct all available resources to the council's newbuild for rent programmes, a narrow-minded and counter-productive approach.

That means that Liverpool co-operatives must now look exclusively to the Housing Corporation for funding and compete directly with many other claims on resources. Even though the corporation's resources are fully committed, it has been possible — through the special allocation for Merseyside which the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction announced yesterday as £8·6 million for next year—to help some deserving co-operative schemes, in particular the Eldonian community association, which established the Portland gardens housing co-op in 1982 with the objective of developing a scheme of 111 houses and bungalows for families from the Portland gardens tenement block.

That scheme had been caught by the change in Liverpool city council's policy, but a deal was struck by which the council took over the scheme as a municipal development. But as co-operative members were involved in the design work, they will be allocated the new houses and bungalows.

That association has further plans for another scheme of 145 houses, bungalows and flats on the Tate and Lyle site. The scheme will be for families living in tenement blocks due to be demolished in Vauxhall. The proposed scheme is 60 houses for shared ownership for families in employment, 40 houses for rent by unemployed families and 45 bungalows and flats for rent by pensioners. We have been able to agree that resources should be made available from the Housing Corporation's approved development programme to make a special allocation to the co-operative to acquire and develop the site.

The former sugar refinery had been acquired by English Estates, which demolished it, and it is now reclaiming the land, with the aid of a derelict land grant, for future development. As the hon. Gentleman pointed out, there was a problem with planning permission, which the Secretary of State resolved, and the Eldonians have now started to work out detailed design proposals.

Despite Liverpool city council's rejection of the co-operative movement, that movement still demands attention. The Government have shown their commitment and have made special funds available, through the Housing Corporation, to enable a number of schemes to proceed.

When the city withdrew support, we provided resources for the Dingle residents and the Shorefields co-operatives to proceed on land owned by the Merseyside development corporation near the garden festival. Those are almost complete. Co-operative development services, neighbourhood housing services and major co-operative housing agencies in Liverpool, together with other bodies, have been in the forefront of building up the co-operative movement in Liverpool.

There is much to be said in favour of housing co-operatives. The forthcoming legislation may provide an opportunity for a debate on the lines that the hon. Gentleman outlined about a right to manage. I readily concede that there is energy and resource in our inner cities that the Government must harness, perhaps through the co-operative movement, to enable people to have a greater say in their own destinies, and the Government are ready to give those people an opportunity to achieve their aspirations.

As the final speaker before Christmas, I join in what has been said in wishing you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and your fellow occupants of the Chair, the officers of the House and the Whips a richly deserved happy Christmas and all the best for 1986. I have no doubt that when the House reassembles early in January we shall have been refreshed

[Sir George Young]

and invigorated by our holidays and will be ready to tackle some of the problems that hon. Members have outlined in these Adjournment debates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am grateful to hon. Members for their kind expressions of good will. I join them in extending our best wishes to all who serve us here, and I extend my personal best wishes to all right hon. and honourable Members.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 13 January 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Death of a Member

Mr. Speaker: I regret to have to inform the House of the death of Martin Stevens, esquire, Member for Fulham, and I desire, on behalf of the House, to express our sense of the loss we have sustained and our sympathy with the relatives of the hon. Member.

Oral Answers to Questions

TRANSPORT

Docklands Light Railway

1. **Mr. Sims** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of London Regional Transport to discuss the proposed westward extension of the docklands light railway to Bank station.

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): I discussed this matter with the chairman when I met him on 12 November. I and my officials are in close touch with him.

Mr. Sims: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the principle that applies privatisation to rail transport is very much welcomed on this side of the House? When my right hon. Friend next meets the chairman, will he convey that sentiment to him, and will he wish the project every success?

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I agree entirely with him that it is a very important breakthrough that the provision of public transport can now be contemplated in the private sector. I shall certainly convey what my hon. Friend has said to the chairman of LRT, who I know shares his and my view.

Mr. Spearing: Will the Secretary of State confirm that the westward extension will go ahead only if the Canary wharf project goes ahead first?

Mr. Ridley: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Robert Atkins: Can my right hon. Friend indicate when the STOLport, of which the docklands light railway will be a feature, will take effect?

Mr. Ridley: There are no proposals for the extension of the docklands light railway east to the STOLport from the central section, which is currently being constructed. The date when STOLport will go forward is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. I believe that it will go ahead, but he must give the precise time.

Roads Policy

2. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his roads policy, in the light of the National Economic Development Office civil engineering report: "A Fairer and Faster Route to Major Road Construction".

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Michael Spicer): My right hon. Friend made an interim response to the Economic Development Committee last March. Consideration of the report is almost complete and we hope to give a full response to the EDC in the near future. The response will be published and I shall send my hon. Friend a copy.

Mr. Chapman: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the Government's objective — there is plenty of scope for doing this — ought to be to expedite public inquiries into major road proposals and that this can be done without any loss of rights by those who are adversely affected or who make representations? Furthermore, will he confirm that it would be possible for the Government to improve the compensation paid to those who are adversely affected without any extra call being made upon public funds, provided that the consultations and the procedures could be expedited?

Mr. Spicer: I cannot prejudge our response to the Economic Development Committee. However, we recognise that serious delays can be caused by planning procedures. We have to balance these against the rights of those individuals who are affected. We are looking at ways in which compensation can be improved.

Mr. Bruinvels: I recognise the need to speed up motorway and major road construction, but will my hon. Friend consider the need to monitor the working of these roads once they have been constructed? I have in mind the notorious cracks that arose on the M25 during construction.

Mr. Spicer: The answer has to be, yes. We certainly monitor roads after they have been built. That is one of the reasons why maintenance has been stepped up.

Severn Bridge

3. **Mr Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the outstanding debt on the Severn bridge at the latest available date.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): At 31 March 1984, some £46 million.

Mr. Hughes: Bearing in mind that the Secretary of State said a few days ago that the former Secretary of State for Defence ought to go because he had become an embarrassment to the Government, and bearing in mind also that this Secretary of State is so persistently flouting the law, is he not equally an embarrassment to the Government? Is it not simply ridiculous to impose a 150 per cent. increase in tolls on the Severn bridge when the Welsh economy is in such a parlous condition?

Mr. Mitchell: The judgment was not concerned with the level of tolls or the question which the hon. Gentleman has attached to that. It was concerned with procedural impropriety at the 1984 inquiry, and that is an entirely different matter.

Mr. Stern: Does my hon. Friend agree that if the Welsh economy needs assistance from public funds, which may well be so, that can far more clearly be provided through regional aid than through an indiscriminate subsidy to all road users on a particular stretch of road?

Mr. Mitchell: I entirely concur with my hon. Friend's view.

Mr. Anderson: Surely the Secretary of State must realise the problems of attracting new industrial investment over the bridge. Why do the Government insist on persisting in a policy the certain effect of which is to place an additional obstacle before the regeneration of the Welsh economy?

Mr. Mitchell: It is by no means certain that the best use of such money would be to subsidise the tolls on the bridge rather than give more direct help to the Welsh economy.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Is my hon. Friend aware of the steadily growing opinion in all shades of political views in Wales that the trouble of having tolls on the Severn bridge is by no means justified by the sums raised and that it would be far better to sweep them all away?

Mr. Mitchell: I hear clearly what my hon. Friend says, but a substantial debt has to be worked off, and that is slowly being done. By the year 2006 it will have gone. It would be wrong for us to ignore the extent of that debt and pretend that it does not exist.

Mr. Ron Davies: Does the Minister realise that there is no logic in the argument that on the one hand tolls should be retained and on the other that subsidies should be given by regional aid, particularly when the Government this year have already cut regional aid by 50 per cent.? Given the recent legal defeat, why does the Minister not realise that there is massive resentment on the Welsh side of the bridge against the tolls and that the Welsh people regard them as a block on industrial and commercial development? Why does he not take this opportunity to admit defeat and do away with the tolls altogether?

Mr. Mitchell: The question whether there should be tolls is different from that tabled today, but we have given notice of appeal against the judgment and perhaps we had better await the outcome of that.

Coaches (Speed Governors)

4. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects that speed governors on coaches will be required to be fitted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: We expect to consult on draft regulations later this year with a view to requiring coaches that can exceed 70 mph starting to be fitted with speed governors in 1987.

Mr. Adley: I welcome the Government's decision to try to do something to control the increasing menace of coaches on our roads, but may I ask my hon. Friend, if he has not yet done so, to look at the recent Channel 4 programme called "Catching the coach"? Is he aware that it was made clear in that programme that the safety standards applied by coach operators in Britain are well below those of other countries and that the behaviour of some coach operators in using physical short cuts in many of our towns and cities is just one of the problems that mean that we should have a full review of the way in which coach companies are using or abusing the law in a whole area of activity at the moment?

Mr. Spicer: I have not seen the programme to which my hon. Friend refers, but I shall do so. I agree about the sense of urgency that this matter requires, but before introducing the necessary regulations we must be sure that the devices work properly and safely and are calibrated and sealed.

Mr. Holt: My hon. Friend knows that we shall all welcome the introduction of the governors on coaches, but what will the Government do about the drivers who are able to drive lethally often when they are inadequately trained and qualified and moonlighting?

Mr. Spicer: If the drivers are not obeying the law they will be prosecuted.

Channel Tunnel

5. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the safety provisions of the alternative transport systems put forward in the prospective Channel tunnel schemes.

Mr. David Mitchell: Concerns about safety have been included in a number of letters from members of the public and representative and voluntary bodies. Safety has, of course, been at the forefront of the Government's assessment of the schemes.

Mr. Pike: Will the Minister recognise that there is strong concern about the safety aspects of any Channel tunnel, whether rail or road, and the problems of satisfactorily dealing with an accident should it occur under the middle of the Channel? We want to be sure that if the project goes ahead such problems can be dealt with and that there will be adequate safety measures and facilities to deal with them.

Mr. Mitchell: The question of the results of accidents and how to deal with them is covered by the assessment.

Mr Crouch: Is my hon. Friend aware that I have been receiving a great amount of flak recently from my constituents for having given support to the idea of a fixed link? Has he any safety provisions — not for me, because I can easily get a flak jacket, as they are readily available these days—but for my consitituents, who are properly concerned about the possible destruction of the Kentish environment that the project might produce?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is rather wide of the question.

Mr. Mitchell: The environment has been one of our major considerations, in which we have been assisted by an outside assessor. I assure my hon. Friend that the problems for his constituents and for all people living in one of our most beautiful counties have been taken into account.

Mr Stephen Ross: As the Channel Expressway is being reported as one of the two runners for this contract, will the Minister assure us that he is taking into account the problems of a 31-mile road link, the ventilation for that road, the extraction of carbon monoxide and the danger of an accident in such a tunnel?

Mr. Mitchell: Assessments have covered ventilation and the particular circumstances that would arise if there were an accident in the tunnel leading to a build-up of stationary traffic, with the consequent effect on the carbon monoxide level.

Mr. Alfred Morris: Is the Minister prepared to meet the North of England Regional Consortium to consider and respond in detail to its important views about the proposed link?

Mr. Mitchell: If those views are concerned with safety, of course I would be prepared to meet a deputation if the right hon. Gentleman wished to bring one.

Mr Harrison: On the safety considerations, will there be continuous adequate lighting in the tunnel, unlike the lighting provision on our motorways, especially the M1 and the M62, in both of which I have an interest?

Mr. Mitchell: The right hon. Gentleman will have to await the choice of project before he can have full details on such matters.

Mr. Robert Hughes: In deciding on which type of link to have, taking into account the safety aspects, will the decision be made by the Cabinet after full discussion of the Secretary of State's recommendation, or by the Prime Minister by political prejudice? If the latter, are we to expect further ministerial resignations?

Mr. Mitchell: The decision will be made by the Prime Minister and the President of France on 20 January. As always, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will consult her Cabinet colleagues before reaching a major decision.

Bus Fares

7. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the average increase in bus fares since 1979; what information he has as to the likely trend in bus fares in South Yorkshire in 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The average increase in bus fares nationally since 1979 has been 84 per cent. In the same period, South Yorkshire county council has chosen to place the entire burden of mounting costs on its ratepayers rather than increase fares for passengers. Future bus fare levels in South Yorkshire will be a matter for the passenger transport authorities and for bus operators.

Mr. Hardy: Is the Minister aware that when the Secretary of State announced his bus policy, he offered the House the firm prospect of better services and lower fares? Will not the result of Government policy be to push up fares in South Yorkshire by such an enormous amount that it will imperil our services?

Mr. Mitchell: South Yorkshire county council has pursued a high subsidy policy, which has meant that there has been no rise in fares for 10 years. Where a subsidy policy has been followed in that way there have been high rates, with all the consequences of that on employment and business, and the damage that it does to the community.

Mr. Parris: Does my hon. Friend agree that if politicians in South Yorkshire insist on increasing bus fares at one jump as a political gesture, instead of gradually, as the professional busmen on South Yorkshire passenger transport want, it would be a cruel and unnecessary abuse of South Yorkshire's passengers?

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. Friend is right. The professional advice that must have been received by politicians in South Yorkshire is that they should already have started a gradual increase to carry their passengers with them. If they decide to play politics, the result will be a sharp rise in fares, a loss of passengers, and a consequent loss of jobs for those employed in the bus undertaking.

National Bus Company

8. **Mr. Stephen Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of the privatisation of the National Bus Company and its subsidiaries.

Mr. Ridley: The process for the disposal of the NBC has now started. I have suggested to general managers that they and their staff should consider whether they wish to buy control of the companies for which they work. I understand that the NBC will be canvassing bids in the near future.

Mr. Ross: I read the Secretary of State's press statement on 9 December. What steps is he taking to prevent asset-stripping by possible purchasers whose prime intention may be speculative rather than to run a bus company?

Mr. Ridley: We are prepared to consider selling the companies with the property assets already removed and leased back to the companies, which would effectively avoid the problem that the hon. Gentleman mentioned.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the danger of what is happening now where NBC subsidiaries, while still nationalised, are uncommercially underbidding the private sector for the bids that must be tendered shortly? Is he further aware that the private sector, unlike the public sector, cannot match those bids because it is not backed by public money, and it may be frozen out of routes which must be contracted for within a few weeks' time, and which will be operated later in the year only if they are contracted for? Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is not an equal or even-handed situation?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend that it is vital to strive for an equal and even-handed situation. However, it is not yet time for the receipt of tenders for unremunerative routes to local authorities. No tenders have yet been called for. If any publicly owned bus company were to contract at unviable rates, the consequences would fall on the company at a later stage, when it would find that it made losses as a result. Where managers may be taking a controlling interest in their company, they would wish to avoid that.

Mr. Gregory: When my right hon. Friend denationalises the NBC, will he consider breaking it into sufficiently small units so that as many employees as possible can participate in the purchase of shares? In that way, he will move from the present monolithic system to one where employees can receive benefits from the privatisation of the company.

Mr. Ridley: Yes, Sir. The expected break-up of the NBC will result in about 60 operating subsidiaries. I am happy to tell the House that more than two-thirds of them have already said that they want to mount bids for their company. My hon. Friend's point is well made.

Mr. Stott: If that is the case, can the Secretary of State guarantee those who are at present employed in the NBC that the pension provisions they enjoy will remain the same?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman knows full well that there is no guarantee of the present pensions. There will be no formal guarantee of the pensions in future, but there are options before the trustees of the NBC pension funds which enable them to choose whether they prefer greater security to other considerations.

Railway Passenger Services (West London)

9. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any proposals for the withdrawal of any railway passenger services in the west London area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The British Railways Board has proposed the closure of Marylebone station and the withdrawal of passenger services between Marylebone and Harrow on the Hill and Northolt Park stations. In reaching a decision on the board's proposal I and my right hon. Friend will take into account all relevant factors.

Mr. Greenway: In addition to objecting to the proposal to close the Marylebone-Northolt Park line, is my hon. Friend aware of British Rail's proposal to withdraw a third of the services to Hanwell and west London? Does he agree that British Rail is at present receiving a much higher subsidy in real terms than in 1979, in addition to having recently increased fares to Hanwell and elsewhere by 8 per cent.? Will he support me in demanding that British Rail retains a proper and full service for my constituents in Hanwell and west London?

Mr. Mitchell: British Rail intends next year to reduce suburban services from Paddington. These services are among the most lightly used and heavily loss making in the London area. It is for British Rail to determine what level of services to operate in the light of the broad financial and other objectives set by Ministers.

M25 (Dartford Crossing)

10. **Mr. Proctor** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what factors he intends to take into account in meeting the demands for additional crossing capacity at Dartford on the M25; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend will make these clear soon in an invitation to promoters to make proposals for a third crossing at Dartford.

Mr. Proctor: Is my hon. Friend aware that that additional capacity at Dartford is urgently required? Will he take into account the fact that the present tolls on the Dartford tunnel will pay off the capital costs by the early 1990s and that it would be inappropriate for tolls to continue after that date?

Mr. Mitchell: I agree that the matter is becoming urgent, but consideration as to whether tolls should be applied thereafter would depend upon the method by which any additional crossing was financed.

Mr. Cartwright: Does the hon. Gentleman intend that only the third crossing will be privately owned and operated, or is it the Government's longer-term intention that the whole Dartford tunnel complex will be transferred from public to private hands?

Mr. Mitchell: It would not be precisely as the hon. Gentleman has suggested, but more the latter than the former.

Mr. Squire: May I underline to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mr. Proctor), that throughout most of the day the flow of traffic in either direction through the two Dartford tunnels is much higher than they were ever intended to carry? Even when the east London river crossing is constructed—if it is constructed—the central problem of Dartford will not be resolved.

Mr. Mitchell: I accept that capacity is important. It is one of the crucial factors in assessing the promotors' proposals, which we shall be inviting.

Shipping Cabotage

11. **Mr. Sayeed** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether any progress has been made in negotiations with his colleagues in the European Economic Community towards agreeing free access to European Economic Community shipping cabotage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Almost all member states now accept the principle of early liberalisation but further negotiations will be needed on this and a number of other aspects of European Community shipping policy before regulations can be agreed. If negotiations are not successful within the next few months, I shall have to consider taking other steps to ensure fair and equal treatment for United Kingdom flag vessels.

Mr. Sayeed: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that answer. Will he consider, as one of those steps, denying access to our shipping cabotage to those countries which improperly prevent our merchant vessels from enjoying freedom of their cabotage? In addition, will my right hon. Friend consider going to the European Court of Justice?

Mr. Ridley: I agree that it is inequitable that our cabotage is open to all members states of the European Community whereas, roughly speaking, the northern European states have agreed to open their cabotage to our vessels but the southern European states have not yet done so. I shall certainly have to take account of the two ways of proceeding which my hon. Friend suggests—either closing our cabotage to those countries which will not open theirs or proceeding through the European Court of Justice. I would prefer it if we could obtain agreement by negotiation this year. That would be the best solution.

Dr. Godman: Did the discussions on cabotage involve in any way the trade in offshore supplies in the North sea gas and oil industries? At the moment, Norway, which is not a member of the EEC, enjoys a clear lead over British maritime interests. Is the EEC conducting negotiations on Britain's behalf with Norway to restore balance to this trade?

Mr Ridley: The matters that the hon. Gentleman mentions touch upon the cabotage issue, although they are

slightly different, because Norway is not a member of the European Community. When my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Mr. Mitchell) the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport was responsible for those matters he succeeded in persuading the Norwegians to withdraw a charge for pilotage which discriminated against our fleet in favour of the Norwegian fleet. If there are any examples of unfair competition in the Norwegian part of the continental shelf I am prepared to pursue them further. I believe that it is better to have both markets open on fair terms rather than have both markets closed.

Mr. Higgins: Is my right hon. Friend aware that it is wrong that these restrictions on competition within the EEC should exist so long after we joined? Will he fight that matter as strongly as he possibly can? He will have the support of both sides of the House in doing so.

Mr. Ridley: I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend. I am glad to be able to tell the House that I reached a bilateral agreement with the West German Government that they will open their cabotage to us in practice. I intend to pursue this matter relentlessly with the other members of the European Community. At a meeting of the Council of Transport Ministers last week it appeared that my colleagues agreed that cabotage should be liberalised by at least 1992, but that was an informal meeting and I should like to see the agreement in writing.

Mr. Stott: I thank the Secretary of State for what he said to his hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) about this matter. I am not at all surprised that he is having some problems with the Greeks on this issue. As I understand it, the regulations concern the nationality of the company. In other words, they do not concern British companies which flag their ships out and whose ships are manned by foreign crews. When we achieve greater freedom of cabotage, will he ensure that it is carried out by British ships carrying British seamen, and not by British ships that are flagged out under flags of convenience?

Mr. Ridley: The Greek difficulty to some extent relates to defence and the Greek's ability to resupply islands off the coast of Greece for possible defensive action. We should seek to open up the cabotage of all member states of the Community to the fleets of those who fly the flags of the member states.

Airedale Route

12. **Mr. Waller** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects construction work to commence on the A629/A650 Airedale route.

Mr. Michael Spicer: A decision will be announced very shortly on the outstanding statutory orders for the Kildwick to Beechcliffe section. The timing of the start of work depends on the decision.

Mr. Waller: When considering the speed at which future decisions about this road are reached, will my hon. Friend bear in mind the strongly held feeling in the whole of the Aire valley that the new road is vital to the area's future economic prosperity? Is he aware that plans and inquiries relating to this route have been going on for over 20 years, and that a long period has elapsed since the public inquiry on the side road orders relating to the Kildwick to Beechcliffe section?

Mr. Spicer: I am aware of the great interest that my hon. Friend has taken in this matter. I cannot, however, prejudge or prejudice the decision, which, as I have said, will be made soon.

Mr. Pike: Does the Minister recognise how important north-east Lancashire feels the completion of the Airedale route and the link of that route to the M65 and the M1 are, because it is important to have another east-west Lancashire to Yorkshire crossing?

Mr. Spicer: I am aware of the great interest that is felt about this road in the area that the hon. Gentleman has mentioned. I must repeat that I cannot say anything that will prejudice the decision.

Docklands Light Railway

13. **Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what approaches he has received from potential future purchasers of the London docklands light railway.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have received two approaches, including the one from the consortium which plans to develop Canary wharf, about which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made an announcement on 27 November.

Mr. Spearing: Is it not a fact that even if the western extension is built, about nine tenths of the route mileage of that railway will have been provided with public money? On what basis can there be private profit from public expenditure? Will the Minister reconsider the Secretary of State's decision not to require private operators to fit in with the system of travel cards and general traffic and fare levels which have been arranged by London Regional Transport?

Mr. Mitchell: The railway is not expected to make a profit. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman is wrong to assume that this is a case of public investment designed to create private profit. I am sorry to have to say that it will create a running loss.

Mr. Adley: Is there not cause for slight concern about the manner in which permission for the westward extension of this railway has been granted? Can my hon. Friend say whether I am right in assuming that the decision by the private operator to proceed was made only on the basis of his receiving planning permission at the other end of the line for a project which was originally rejected not only by the local authorities but by the Department of the Environment? Is this not a somewhat dangerous proposition?

Mr. Robert Hughes: Just say, "I do not know."

Mr. Mitchell: I was going to say that they are dependent one upon the other.

Fixed Channel Link

14. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many letters he has received in his official capacity about the fixed Channel link; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Approximately 1,700 letters about the Channel fixed link have been received since the promoters submitted their proposals on 31 October 1985. Of these, about 1,500 have been from members of the public.

Mr. Taylor: Does not this correspondence show that the public would much prefer a third Dartford tunnel to a Channel tunnel? Will the Minister issue a warning to innocent investors who might be tempted to put their savings into this project that if private enterprise funds run out before the project is completed, there is no question of the Government bailing out the project or their savings with taxpayers' money?

Mr. Ridley: In relation to the first question, I do not consider that 1,700 letters from a population of 54 million is statistically significant. Secondly, I agree entirely with my hon. Friend that no public finances will be made available if either of the projects that might be selected runs into financial difficulties halfway through.

Mr. Dalyell: Since the Under-Secretary of State most courteously answered my Consolidated Fund debate on 19 December, have the Government got any further in considering the problems of microsleep, driver hypnosis, and what could happen if people attempt to drive from Edinburgh to France and are fatigued when they enter the tunnel and do nuttish things?

Mr. Ridley: As my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State said, those matters have been analysed and considered, and the hon. Gentleman would do well to await the decision and the White Paper that will follow it. It will be impossible to publish that White Paper on the day of the decision, because the decision must come first, and the White Paper must be written thereafter, but it will provide the answers to the hon. Gentleman's worries.

Mr. Colvin: I apologise to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the House for not being here earlier when my question was called. How many letters has my right hon. Friend received about Britain's ability to fulfil its NATO defence commitments should the Channel fixed link lead to a reduction in our ferry fleet? What mechanism will be used to monitor the position as the impact of the Channel fixed link becomes clearer?

Mr. Ridley: I have received 19 letters on that subject, and I do not consider that 19 letters can be taken as expressing major national concern. The impact on the ferry fleet of any fixed link depends radically upon which fixed link is chosen. The White Paper will attempt to provide an analysis of the impact of our choice on the ferry fleet.

Mr. Robert Hughes: Can the Secretary of State confirm that his noble Friend the Earl of Caithness advised the Merchant Navy and Air Line Officers' Association that the Government intended to maintain a ferry service and fleet? How will that be done? Can he also confirm that no treaty between Britain and France will be signed before the House has had an opportunity to analyse and debate the White Paper?

Mr. Ridley: I am not sure what my noble Friend might or might not have said. However, the impact of any choice upon the ferry fleet and the defence consequences will be spelt out in the White Paper. Debates in the House are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

Berkhamsted Bypass

15. **Mr. Richard Page** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his best estimate of when construction of the Berkhamsted bypass will start.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Subject to the outcome of the outstanding statutory procedures, construction could start in the second half of 1988.

Mr. Page: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Does he accept that many of my constitutents want the bypass to be built urgently? As there seems to be an increase in traffic along the existing road through towns and villages, will he ensure that the road is dual tracked?

Mr. Spicer: My hon. Friend is right to imply that a revision of traffic forecasts caused the delay. He is also right to say that we are considering the whole question of dualling along that stretch of the road.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Latent Damage

31. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Attorney-General when he proposes to introduce legislation to amend the law relating to latent damage.

The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): It is hoped to introduce a Bill in the near future to amend the law of limitation in negligence cases involving latent damage, based on the recommendations of the Law Reform Committee.

Mr. Chapman: Is my hon. and learned Friend aware of the disquiet among professional organisations in the construction industry that the proposed date of breach is vague and imprecise? Does he agree that that is the problem in existing legislation? Will he consider sympathetically the suggestion that the period of liability should begin on a date which is definite and leaves nothing to chance?

The Solicitor-General: I shall draw my hon. Friend's views to the Lord Chancellor's attention. The Government have accepted the Law Reform Committee's reasons for rejecting the date of completion approach. The date of completion would be difficult to apply to the many other types of cases, other than construction, for which legislation is intended. Moreover, date of completion might cause injustice in lengthy construction projects, when completion occurs many years after the relevant date of breach of duty.

Mr. Ryman: Regarding the law relating to latent damage, can the Solicitor-General confirm that he wrote a letter to the former Secretary of State for Defence accusing him of uttering a material inaccuracy?

The Solicitor-General: I admire the hon. Gentleman's ingenuity, but his question does not arise out of the main question.

Fraud Investigations (Manpower)

32. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Attorney-General whether he now has any plans to increase manpower dealing with fraud investigations.

The Attorney-General (Sir Michael Havers) *rose*——

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

The Attorney-General: I am grateful to the House. The Director of Public Prosecutions is increasing the number of lawyers on his staff who are assigned full-time

to fraud cases from the present 15 to a total of 24—a 60 per cent. increase. There will also be increases in support staff. It is especially important that those staff should have considerable relevant experience, and we are exploring the use of some form of short service contract so as to permit the recruitment, for this purpose, of experienced practitioners from the Bar and solicitors' firms.

I shall, of course, continue to monitor the position closely.

Mr. Dykes: I warmly welcome my right hon. and learned Friend on behalf of hon. Members in all parts of the House and express the hope that he has recovered. I thank him for the answer. Does he now believe that, at long last, we have the basis, in terms of the number of people available, coupled with the Roskill recommendations, for a real and serious attack on the growing problem of fraud?

The Attorney-General: This involves the operation of the fraud investigation group. Roskill's first recommendation involves something even better than FIG and of course the Government will look closely at that. That might need even more resources, in which case I shall welcome them.

Mr. Skinner: Does the Attorney-General realise that he has a lot to live up to in view of his statement some months ago that the level of City fraud was unacceptable? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give a guarantee that, based upon these new recruits, including lawyers, he will be able to state unequivocally——

Mr. Cormack: —and categorically.

Mr. Skinner: —and categorically, as well as without ambiguity, that Peter Cameron-Webb, who is now living in Miami, will be brought back to Britain to face charges that relate to him getting rid of a sum approaching £130 million? According to yesterday's newspaper reports, Cameron-Webb, along with Peter Dixon, made £13 million for himself. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give a guarantee that law and order applies to people such as Cameron-Webb and Dixon as well as to those in the inner cities, and that they are subject to the law like the rest of the British people?

The Attorney-General: I shall answer the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question by giving him an idea of the resources that we are applying to the PCW and Howden frauds. There is the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman bring them back?

The Attorney-General: There is an assistant director and a professional officer——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Answer the question.

The Attorney-General: I shall come to it. There are two detective superintendents and other police and five counsel, including two QCs. The problem lies in tracing the funds so that we can ascertain who were the ultimate beneficiaries. There are several countries involved as well as a bank in Switzerland which was acquired by Howden. More than 1 million documents have been seized from Howden. There are extradition problems to face in getting back Cameron-Webb and others, and it may be that they are in Costa Rica and not Miami.

Mr. Skinner: The newspapers say that they are in Miami.

The Attorney-General: I do not mind what is in the newspapers. If Cameron-Webb is in Costa Rica, the House will be aware that we do not have an extradition treaty with that country. If he is in the United States—this applies to Cameron-Webb and to Dixon — the extradition procedure will be a lengthy business. Grob is another person who we would like to see back in this country. He has dual nationality—Swiss and British—and the Swiss do not extradite their own nationals.

Mr. Spencer: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that outside London the country forces have been dealing effectively with cases of long-firm fraud and fraudulent trading for many years and bringing those guilty of such offences to book, with the courts passing appropriate sentences?

The Attorney-General: Long-firm frauds are some of the easiest frauds to investigate and to prosecute. It is the much more complex frauds that have been causing difficulties. It is interesting that the Director of Public Prosecutions informed provincial police forces last year that if they wanted the assistance of FIG they had only to ask for it. A number of provincial fraud cases of great complexity—there are stock exchanges outside London —have been referred to FIG.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) and I extend a warm welcome to the Attorney-General on his return to our proceedings. I hope that he has made a full and robust recovery from his recent operation. In taking up the issues raised by the committee on fraud trials, is it now the Government's view that too few reported fraud cases are brought to trial, and that this is primarily because of a lack of resources? What consideration is being given to the issues of expertise that are raised in the report, especially the training in accountancy and information technology that is suggested for barristers and judges, and especially for fraud squad investigation officers?

The Attorney-General: I am very grateful for the kind words of the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) and the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). I feel very much better.

There has been a great deal of extra training in FIG. Lawyers, including counsel, have been to Lloyd's and learnt the reinsurance processs. They are now much more skilled. The purpose of FIG is to gain a highly skilled group of experts—lawyers, accountants and the rest—who are much better able to get on quickly with what we hope are better trained police officers. So far, FIG has been a great success story. Indeed, it has been so successful that it is almost overwhelming.

Official Secrets Acts

33. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the progress of the Director of Public Prosecutions' inquiry into alleged breaches of the Official Secrets Act involving the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) and Miss Sara Keays.

The Solicitor-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions announced on 7 January that there was no evidence available which could support a prosecution in respect of any infringement of the Offiial Secrets Acts arising out of this matter. In these circumstances, the

Director has decided to take no further action and has advised the Metropolitan police that no further inquiries by them are required.

Mr. Dalyell: Does the DPP or the police have access to the relevant Cabinet papers?

The Solicitor-General: No, Sir.

Mr. John Morris: In view of the principle of equality under the law, will the Solicitor-General consider prosecuting under the Official Secrets Acts those responsible for disclosing the contents of his recent letter to the Secretary of State for Defence? Can he assure the House——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The same rules must apply to everyone. The question relates to a completely different matter.

Mr. Morris: With respect, Mr. Speaker, I am anxious to ensure that the Official Secrets Acts are applied in the same way and——

Mr. Speaker: Order. But this question relates to the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson).

Mr. Morris: Has the Director of Public Prosecutions been inhibited in any way in his inquiry into this or any other matter concerning possible breaches of the Official Secrets Acts? Can the Solicitor-General assure the House that the law will be applied equally, whether to the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson), the press secretary at No. 10 or anybody else who leaks official documents?

The Solicitor-General: I am happy to give the right hon. and learned Gentleman the assurance that, in the discharge of all of their functions, Law Officers exercise an independent and impartial judgment.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Aid Programme

37. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to increase the amount of basic agriculture development work undertaken under the aid programme.

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Timothy Raison): Agricultural development is at the heart of our bilateral aid policy. In devising our programmes we have to take account of the wishes of recipient countries, but we aim to increase the agricultural content whenever we can.

Mr. Beith: Has there not been a drastic reduction in the proportion of resources and the number of people employed under our aid programme giving essential aid to subsistence agriculture? Would not the reversal of that trend do a tremendous amount of good and go some way towards altering the bad impression given by the Government's new year honours list recommendations?

Mr. Raison: The proportion of British bilateral aid to sub-Saharan Africa used for agriculture and related purposes rose from 27 to 33 per cent. between 1979 and 1983. I have just seen extremely valuable agricultural work in the Sudan and the Yemen being carried out under the Government's auspices, which is strongly directed towards the poorer partners.

Mr. Prentice: Bearing in mind the appalling background of what has happened in sub-Saharan Africa, is there not an urgent need for Western aid donors to co-operate more closely to identify medium-term projects which could raise food production in that area? To what extent is that happening and what machinery is being used to further such steps?

Mr. Raison: My right hon. Friend is right. I assure him that co-ordination between donors is increasing all the time and that there is general agreement about the great importance of developing agriculture in those regions.

Aid and Trade Provision

38. **Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a further statement on the aid and trade provision.

Mr. Raison: The new loan scheme announced to the House on 12 November by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry strengthens the existing aid and trade provision. We shall now be able to respond more flexibly to the preferences of developing countries and to match the practices of other donors.

Mr. Holland: The Minister will be aware that there is considerable concern about this matter and about the extent to which priority is being given to aid and trade schemes rather than rural development initiatives. What resources does he expect to go to the ATP? Is he really in the business of trade to aid development, or mainly in development to aid trade?

Mr. Raison: I remind the hon. Gentleman that the aid and trade provision was introduced in 1977 by the right hon. Member for Clydesdale (Dame J. Hart). The additions required over the next three years under the ATP provisions that are being extended to loans are £3 million in the first year, £10 million in the next year and £20 million in he third year. It is important to remember that under the aid and trade provision we provide development help to the countries concerned and we have provided about £1 billion of export orders for British industry over the past few years.

Mr. Robert B. Jones: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the ELE company in my constituency has developed a portable water purification testing centre that is far in advance of anything elsewhere? That is a prime candidate for trade aid and could benefit employment in this country as well as helping people overseas.

Mr. Raison: I shall be very happy to talk to my hon. Friend about that company.

UNESCO

39. **Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his statement of 5 December about the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, what arrangements he has made for additional sums for work on soil and water management in arid or semi-arid areas.

Mr. Raison: I have allocated £400,000 per annum to support work on soil and water management in arid or semi-arid areas.

Mr. Spearing: Does the Minister agree that, welcome though the allocation is, it does not fill the gap left by the

decimation of the Land Resources Development Centre, which was cut by the Prime Minister-inspired Rayner review three or four years ago? If the Government take African famine seriously, will they restore the resources for the centre at least to the level that existed before the cuts insisted on by the Prime Minister?

Mr. Raison: The hon. Gentleman is exaggerating. The LRDC is an admirable body which is continuing to do admirable work.

Mr. Alan Howarth: In the wake of the decision to withdraw from UNESCO, will my right hon. Friend undertake to give the best support he can to the work of agricultural research institutes in this country, such as the national vegetable research station at Wellesbourne, which is doing work of proven value to Third world countries as well as to our own? Will my right hon. Friend encourage his colleagues at the Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Education and Science to do likewise?

Mr. Raison: I agree with my hon. Friend about the great importance of agricultural research. My Department certainly does all that it can to propagate that.

Sudan

40. **Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the present amount of aid given by the Government to the Sudan.

Mr. Raison: British bilateral development aid to Sudan in the last financial year amounted to £27·5 million. We expect to spend about the same amount in 1985-86. We have also provided more than £29 million on bilateral famine relief for Sudan since October 1984, including over £10 million through voluntary agencies. Following my visit to Sudan earlier this month, I have agreed to make a further £5 million available through the Save the Children Fund, mainly to meet the costs of urgent food distribution in Darfur. In addition, I am allocating £200,000 to Oxfam for emergency work in the Red sea province and the south.

Mr. Cox: I thank the Minister very much for that reply, and especially for the fact that he has agreed to give money to the Save the Children Fund. In view of the superb work done by the fund in appalling conditions in Sudan, I am sure that his support will be warmly welcomed, not only in the House, but outside. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will assure us that the support will continue if the need exists.

Mr. Raison: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his kind words. He might like to know that the £5 million that I have just announced, together with another £1 million that I announced a short time ago, will make it possible to distribute within Darfur 110,000 tonnes of badly needed food.

Mr. Moynihan: Does my right hon. Friend agree that development projects such as the Equatoria region agricultural scheme, which he recently visited, are the sorts of projects that could be developed elsewhere in Sudan?

Mr. Raison: I agree with my hon. Friend. I have just visited that project. It is an excellent project and it is the sort of thing that we are looking to do elsewhere.

Mr. Stuart Holland: One of the critical issues in the Sudan is whether there is adequate fuel for food aid distribution. What did the right hon. Gentleman learn about that on his recent visit? Shall we find, as we did last time, that he will be overtaken by Bob Geldof's transport convoys in getting the food distributed?

Mr. Raison: The hon. Gentleman is being ludicrous about this matter. Bob Geldof has done a very good job, but the British aid programme to Sudan has made a substantial contribution, both short-term and long-term. One of the factors that we are examining is the provision of fuel wood.

Vietnamese Refugees

41. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what financial support he has given to keep the Vietnamese refugees in the camps in Hong Kong in each of the last five years.

Mr. Raison: The Overseas Development Administration has made the following contributions to the Save the Children Fund for its programme of assistance to Vietnamese refugees in camps in Hong Kong:—£15,000 in 1981; £10,000 in 1982; £9,000 in 1983; £14,000 in 1984 and £15,000 in 1985. In addition, the ODA makes an annual contribution of approximately £3·5 million to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who also runs a refugee programme in Hong Kong.

Mr. Dubs: Does the Minister not accept that we in Britain have a great responsibility for supporting the Hong Kong Government in what they are doing for the Vietnamese in camps in Hong Kong? Does he accept also that the resources available are not adequate? He has only to look at the schools in the camps to understand that. Will he reconsider the possibility of Britain giving more support to those who need help?

Mr. Raison: I believe the facts show that we are already making a reasonable contribution. Indeed, the work that we are doing is fully appreciated.

Westland

3.31 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Several times in recent weeks, Ministers, including the Prime Minister, have told the House that they took a completely dispassionate view of the affairs of Westland plc. Disagreement about that issue has now led to the resignation of a Cabinet Minister. Following his resignation, the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), the former Secretary of State for Defence, repeatedly made the grave allegation that the Prime Minister had been systematically following one course in the privacy of Government, while insisting both in public and in the House that she was following the opposite course—*[Interruption.]* The implications of that for the House are grave indeed—*[Interruption.]* They clearly—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The right hon. Gentleman is putting a point of order to me.

Mr. Kinnock: When it is alleged that the Prime Minister has said one thing in private, but systematically said another in this House, the implications for this House are serious. They are that someone has been telling the truth, and that someone has not been telling the truth.

For that reason, I asked the Prime Minister to make a statement on the matter to the House today. The right hon. Lady refused. I believe that that is a craven evasion of her duty to the House and country. I therefore give notice that on Wednesday the Opposition will use their Supply day to debate these issues. During that debate I shall demand that the Prime Minister comes to the House and accounts for her role and her conduct in this matter of national importance. The Prime Minister can run, but she cannot hide.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that that matter is to be the subject of a statement.

Several hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I call the Leader of the House to make a business statement.

Business of the House

3.33 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I should like to make a short business statement——

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Further to the point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have called the Leader of the House to make a business statement.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have dealt with the point which was not a matter for me—as the hon. Gentleman well knows.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is a matter, not for me, but for the Leader of the House.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member, who is very experienced in these matters, and the whole House know that the matter that was raised is not a matter for me. *[Interruption.]* Order. I have called the Leader of the House to make a statement on this very matter.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not prepared to take any further points of order — [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Order. I am not prepared to take any further points of order on this matter because that would tend to lead to a debate, which is not a matter for me.

Mr. Biffen: I should like to make a short business statement. In view of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, the business of the House for Wednesday will now be as follows:

Opposition Day, Third allotted day. There will be a debate on Westland plc, on an Opposition motion. Afterwards, a debate on a motion on the Statutory Sick Pay Uprating Order.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman will be patient, I shall call him later.

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): Presumably the business statement is open to question. I should like to ask the Leader of the House whether he is aware that every newspaper, every radio and television programme, and every pub in the land is discussing the issues that have arisen — *[Interruption.]* — from the resignation—*[Interruption.]*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This begins to sound like every pub in the land.

Mr. Steel: —of the Secretary of State for Defence? Is it not the right hon. Gentleman's responsibility, as Leader of the House, to arrange for the Prime Minister to make a statement on the wider issues, not on the narrow issues, which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for

Trade and Industry? The wider issues are Cabinet responsibility and the balance of defence procurements between Europe and the United States. If no such statement is forthcoming, will the right hon. Gentleman give an undertaking that the Prime Minister will participate in the debate that he has just announced?

Mr. Biffen: Obviously it will be within your competence, Mr. Speaker, to decide how wide the debate may go on Wednesday. However, I should be surprised if the right hon. Gentleman were disappointed.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): May I ask the Leader of the House whether we may know the terms of the motion that we shall be asked to debate on Wednesday?

Mr. Biffen: The terms are not yet available, but they will be in good time.

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): Is the Leader of the House aware that many of us from Scotland knew that part of the debate on Wednesday would be given over to the problem of the Gart — er [HON. MEMBERS:" — cosh."]

Mr. Speaker: Order. We all suffer from slips of memory.

Mr. Wilson: Given my anger about the matter, it is hardly surprising that that should have happened. Why is the debate to be abandoned, particularly as people have been marching down from Scotland to England? When will we have a debate on that crucial matter, in which Scotland is far more interested than it is in the Westland Helicopters' problem?

Mr. Biffen: I am sure the hon. Gentleman will understand at once that the decision not to proceed with the debate was in the gift of the Opposition. I shall look at the wider issues that he mentioned.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Will my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister take part in the debate on Wednesday?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend need not fret. He will not be disappointed.

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): Can the Leader of the House be a little more precise? Is he not aware that the statements made last week by the former Secretary of State for Defence have profound implications both for national security and for the whole conduct of government in this country? Is he not also aware that the House will be disappointed to learn that the Prime Minister is not to make a statement this afternoon? Will he therefore make it clear that the Prime Minister will speak during the debate on Wednesday?

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will in no sense be disappointed by the content and outcome of Wednesday's debate.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): Does my right hon. Friend know whether the Opposition, in choosing this subject for debate, propose to treat it as a matter for the various spokesmen of the sponsoring Departments, in opening and winding up the debate, or whether they propose to throw in some heavier guns?

Mr. Biffen: I shall not respond to the mean remarks that have been made from behind me. The actual participants are for the Opposition themselves to determine, but the Government will be fielding the highest and foremost team.

Westland plc

3.41 pm

Mr. Speaker: Statement, the Home Secretary.—*[Interruption.]* Order. Even I can make mistakes! Statement, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Leon Brittan): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement.—*[Interruption.]* Perhaps I should add, in my present capacity.

Throughout last year, Westland plc was facing financial difficulties. The company's position reflected, among other things, a worldwide slump in demand for civil helicopters. Against this background Sir John Cuckney, who became chairman in June 1985, sought a partnership with a substantial industrial group which could offer both finances and commercial strength. United Technologies expressed an interest in taking a substantial minority shareholding.

Subsequently, Fiat joined United Technologies in a joint proposal to take a minority shareholding in Westland. The Government, however, encouraged Westland to explore fully in addition the possibility of an alternative European-based proposal. This led to the development of proposals from a consortium comprising Aerospatiale, Agusta and MBB, which were later joined by British Aerospace.

I announced in my statement to the House of 16 December that the board of Westland had decided to recommend to shareholders the proposals put forward by United Technologies and Fiat. I explained that the Government were not bound by the recommendation of the national armaments directors of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy that certain helicopter requirements should in future be met solely from helicopters designed and built in Europe. That remains the position. I also explained the action that the Government had taken to ensure that Westland had an alternative European-based offer to consider, but emphasised that it was for Westland to decide the best route to follow to secure its future and that of its employees. At no stage did the Government collectively determine on a preference for a particular solution.

At its meeting on 19 December the Cabinet confirmed the policy that I had previously announced. It was also decided that no Minister was entitled to lobby in favour of one proposal rather than another. That decision was unanimously approved by the members of the Cabinet.

On 1 January my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out clearly in a letter to Sir John Cuckney that as long as Westland continues to carry on business in the United Kingdom the Government will support the company in pursuing British interests in Europe. My right hon. Friend also made it clear that the Government would resist to the best of their ability attempts by others to discriminate against Westland.

The alternative solutions put to Westland have been presented in some quarters as offering a choice between collaboration with Europe and collaboration with the United States. In fact, the Government welcome collaboration with both Europe and the United States. Both the proposals put to the board have a European involvement. The Government will continue to support Westland in pursuing British interests in Europe, whichever solution is implemented.

A number of assertions have been made in recent days about my own and the Government's position on this matter. I shall be happy to answer questions on these specific points.

The position now is that the board of Westland has unanimously recommended revised proposals from United Technologies and Fiat to shareholders. Revised proposals from the European consortium, now joined by GEC, have also been circulated to shareholders. The Government hope that the matter can be resolved quickly in the interests of the company and its employees.

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that it is rather curious for a Secretary of State to come to the House after a series of detailed allegations have been made by a former colleague and say nothing whatever about those allegations? Will he understand that the Opposition, at least, do not think that he is the appropriate person to answer questions about the Government's conduct? The Prime Minister should have come to the House today to answer questions posed by a colleague in whom she placed sufficient confidence to give him substantial responsibilities on behalf of her Government.

So far as the Secretary of State, with his responsibilities, is involved, is it not clear that his statement today adds little to what has already been said? May I ask him one detailed question to which I should like his answer? In his statement on 16 December he told the House:

> "In view of the urgent necessity for a deal to be concluded quickly, the Government decided that from 13 December they would not be bound by the national armaments directors' recommendation unless Westland had by then received a firm offer from the three European companies, which the board would recommend to its shareholders." — [*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 89, c. 35.]

When and how did the Government reach that decision —*[Interruption.]*—collectively?

The Secretary of State told us that the Government had decided that Ministers would not lobby for either solution. May I ask him about his activities in connection with an interview that he had with Sir Raymond Lygo, the chief executive of British Aerospace, in his office at the Department of Trade and Industry? The Secretary of State will be aware of what has been said in recent days about that interview. Is there a contemporaneous written record of the interview between Sir Raymond and himself, bearing in mind that it would be normal Government practice for such a record to be taken by his private secretary or by officials in his Department? Does that record exist, and, if it does, can it be made available to Members of the House so that they can make a judgment as to what happened and test the accounts that we have been given? Will the Secretary of State understand that what we are interested in in that regard is the contemporaneous written record, which would automatically be made?

If it was the Government's decision that Ministers should keep out of the matter and leave it to the shareholders to decide on both proposals, which were clearly in circulation, why on earth did the right and learned Gentleman decide to speak to Sir Raymond Lygo at all? What was his purpose in calling him into his room

and discussing the matter with him? Why was there an admitted reference in the course of that conversation to anti-United States sentiment and to the consequences of British Aerospace's involvement in Airbus, leading to a cancellation perhaps of American orders for Airbus? Why did the Secretary of State think that it was relevant to raise that matter with Sir Raymond Lygo in the context of a discussion on Westland Helicopters? What was his purpose in raising it if it were not to influence him in one direction or another?

If the Secretary of State says that he was merely discussing the state of orders for British Aerospace, does he not think it remarkable that that very evening Sir Raymond Lygo took the matter of his conversation sufficiently seriously to telephone each of his directors on the board of British Aerospace to acquaint them with the communication that he had received from the Secretary of State that very afternoon? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not understand that unless he gives a full account of what was said to Sir Raymond Lygo the impression will continue to circulate widely in Britain that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was saying one thing to Parliament, that he was even-handed, and doing another thing in practice and seeking to influence the outcome of the deal?

If Westland is unable, because of its articles of association and its constitution, to decide effectively in favour of either of the proposals, what do the Government propose to do?

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. and learned Gentleman asked, first, when the decision that I announced on 16 December as having been taken by the Government with regard to the national armaments directors' recommendation was made, and in what form. The answer is that the decision was taken collectively at a meeting of Ministers on 9 December.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman went on to ask a number of questions about my meeting with Sir Raymond Lygo. The circumstance of the meeting was that Sir Raymond was, in any event, due to meet my hon. Friend the Minister for Information Technology to discuss, among other things, the Airbus. Therefore, it seemed to me that it would have been wholly artificial if I did not see Sir Raymond as well, and I shall explain why that was so.

Let me make it clear that it is untrue to say that in the course of the meeting I made any suggestion that British Aerospace should withdraw from the European consortium or that its participation was contrary to the national interest. On the contrary, the Government's position was that it was for Westland to decide which course to follow. However, what I said then, and continue to believe, is that the nature and tone of some of the campaigning, and only some of it, on behalf of the European consortium could fuel protectionism and damage the commercial interests of British Aerospace and its European partners, especially in the United States.

The House and the right hon. and learned Gentleman might like to know that Sir Raymond said that the United States subsidiary of British Aerospace had expressed concern about its United States' business being halved. I also said that it was not in the national interest that the uncertainty involving Westland should drag on.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman referred to conversations which he said took place after that meeting. I do not know of them, but I can say that others gave a different impression of what was said or intended at the meeting, and I naturally regret that. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman wants to know why I was concerned about the implication for Airbus sales and thought it appropriate to raise the matter, he will recall that I have already said that Sir Raymond said that the British Aerospace subsidiary had expressed concern about its business being halved. British Aerospace has a substantial stake in the A320 airbus and, as its sponsoring Minister, I am naturally concerned to protect this interest.

The House also knows that the Government are committed to advancing £250 million launch aid for that project. The recovery of all but £50 million is dependent upon the sale of the aircraft. For all those reasons, I was naturally concerned at the possibility that Airbus sales might be made more difficult, not by the participation of Sir Raymond and British Aerospace in the consortium, but by the tone of some of the things said.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman asked for collaboration of what I have said about the meeting with Sir Raymond. Present at the meeting were a number of civil servants, as well as my hon. Friend the Minister for Information Technology. I have checked the recollection of all those present against mine, and the account that I have given to the House has been confirmed by every official present, as well as by my hon. Friend the Minister for Information Technology. The disclosure of the note is not a matter for me, but I shall consider the right hon. and learned Gentleman's request.

What happens at tomorrow's meeting may be inconclusive. It would be unwise, faced with the meeting of shareholders tomorrow, for the House or for me to speculate on the many alternative possibilities that could arise. It would be wrong to attempt to do so today.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): May I ask my right hon. and learned Friend whether the Government have received any letters from British Aerospace giving its views of the meeting?

Mr. Brittan: I have not received any such letter.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I wish to return from the wider issues to the matters of the affair which particularly affect my constituency. Does the Secretary of State accept that the vast majority of both the work force at Westland and the smaller shareholders back the decision of the Westland board? Will he confirm that the Anglo-Italian helicopter project, which is vital to Westland's future, is founded on an agreement between the two Governments, not on an agreement between the firms, and that Westland's position as the British Government's chosen instrument cannot be affected? Does the Secretary of State agree that future helicopter projects, which also rest on agreements between Governments, will depend on whom the British Government choose as their representative, and that neither of the two decisions before shareholders tomorrow can threaten Westland's position as the British Government's representative on future European collaborative projects?

Mr. Brittan: The views of the work force are well enough known, and the hon. Gentleman has said what they are. The shareholders must give such weight as they think appropriate to those views.

With regard to the Government's support for Westland, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made clear in

[Mr. Brittan]

her letter of 1 January, the Government will give their support to Westland in Europe and elsewhere so long as the company carries on business in Britain, irrespective of which consortium takes an interest in the company.

Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson (New Forest): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on his fair statement of events. Is he aware that for months suppliers to Westland and others have been desperately worried about the problems surrounding the company's finances, and whether they would be paid? That was even before the Ministry of Defence, the Europeans or anybody proposed anything resembling a rescue package. As Westland is not a nationalised industry, and as this is not a takeover bid, would it not be far wiser to have a moment of silence so that Sir John Cuckney, who is an able chairman, and his board can produce the best deal for the company?

Mr. Brittan: My hon. Friend is entirely right in saying that for some considerable time there have been anxieties about the finances of Westland. On his second point, although it is right that I should make the statement to the House, it is also right that we should be careful what we say, because there is a shareholders' meeting tomorrow and it would be wrong to apply any improper influence today.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): Was the correcting letter from the Law Officers to the Secretary of State for Defence seen by the right hon. and learned Gentleman or his Department before it was sent to the Ministry of Defence?

Mr. Brittan: I saw the letter after it was sent.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Does my right hon. and learned Friend see any potential conflict of interest in the fact that the head of the procurement executive, Mr. Peter Levene, was formerly the chairman of United Scientific Holdings? Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that Mr. Levene was appointed at a salary vastly in excess of that of the chiefs of staff by the former Secretary of State for Defence, who assured the House that there would be no potential conflict? Yet United Scientific Holdings is now being blackmailed by the French Ministry of Defence, which says that an order that it could have in France will be withdrawn if the European consortium's offer is not accepted.

Mr. Brittan: I was not aware of that latter fact. I am sure that Mr. Levene has conducted himself with complete propriety.

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): As the sponsoring Minister for the Westland W30 helicopter, will the Secretary of State tell us in what ways he collaborated with the former Secretary of State for Defence in establishing the European consortium?

Mr. Brittan: I said to Westland before the matter came between me and my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence that I thought it should look into the possibility of a European alternative to the United Technologies-Fiat offer which had already come forward. I therefore invited my right hon. Friend to begin that search. At a later stage—last October—at a meeting attended by, among other people, my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Defence, I indicated my strong view that the search for a European alternative should continue and go ahead.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that there is substantial concern among the work force, because of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding this affair, that neither proposition will come to fruition? In such circumstances, does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the Government have a firm responsibility to save Westland from receivership?

Mr. Brittan: I very much hope that the matter will be resolved. I must make it clear that I cannot accept responsibility on behalf of the Government. As a result of the actions taken by the Government, including my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence, the company is faced with two alternatives, both of which are better than anything that any fair-minded person could reasonably have expected was likely to come forward several weeks ago.

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that Westland Aerospace, a totally owned subsidiary, is the largest industrial employer in my constituency and is therefore vital to the well-being of the Isle of Wight? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman know also that that company is profitable? Does he further know that most of that profit comes from the work of Boeing and de Haviland—de Haviland now being a subsidiary of Boeing? Does he know also that the work force and middle management voted overwhelmingly the other day in favour of the deal with Sikorsky—by, I think, 1,200 to seven? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman confirm that Sikorsky has behaved impeccably throughout this trauma? Does he not believe that that should be taken seriously into account by the shareholders at tomorrow's meeting?

Mr. Brittan: The House will have heard the hon. Gentleman's expression of views on the opinions of his constituents. On the question of Sikorsky's behaviour, I am not at the Dispatch Box to make criticisms of either side in this deal.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): In view of the important national defence interest involved, and irrespective of the bid that one might favour, how is it possible for the Government not to have a view on which bid is better for this country?

Mr. Brittan: One reason is that the security of supply of helicopters for the armed forces is assured. That is not, therefore, a problem. Another reason, which is of some importance, is that Westland's board has told shareholders that United Technologies has made it clear that it wishes Westland to retain its own helicopter research, design and development capability.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the important answer that he gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees). From where did the information come that misleading information had been given by the former Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department did not know about it? How did the Law Officers know that there was misleading information if they had not consulted the right hon. Gentleman's Department? Was the right hon. and learned Gentleman

surprised when the matter was "leaked", if I may use that offensive word, a few hours later? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman a party to the wishes of those hon. Members who seek an investigation into how that possible breach of the Official Secrets Act 1911 occurred?

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. Gentleman is well enough experienced in government to know that it is inconceivable that anyone asking such questions when his party was in power would have obtained an answer.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): My right hon. learned Friend said in his statement that the Government had asked that the European rescue option be fully explored. In replying to a question a few moments ago he said that he had confirmed at the 18 October meeting his strong support for pursuing the European option. Yet a few weeks ago he rebutted press speculation that he had expressed a preference for a European option. Would it not be in the interests of my right hon. and learned Friend and everyone involved in this affair if he were to make the position clear by placing in the Library the minutes that he wrote for 4 and 18 October?

Mr. Brittan: I think that I can make the position perfectly clear without doing that. There is all the difference in the world between wishing for an alternative to be explored and taking the view that the alternative, which at that stage had not been explored, was preferable.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that he has failed to satisfy the House about what he said to British Aerospace? Is it not clear that at that meeting he expressed a preference implicitly, and perhaps even explicitly, for the American deal? If so, was that not incompatible with Government policy as stated to the House?

Mr. Brittan: The account that I have given of the meeting is accurate. I do not think that to warn people of the consequences of pursuing matters in a particular way, which they had accepted, and of which they had had word from their subsidiary—I am not accusing a particular person, but certain things had been said involving anti-Americanism which were likely to damage their interests—is the same as expressing a preference for the deal.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Has my right hon. and learned Friend not been subjected to unjustified and cruel criticism? Will he confirm that on 19 December the Cabinet unanimously agreed that Ministers would not campaign for either option and that that agreement was consistently and repeatedly breached, not by my right hon. and learned Friend, but by the former Secretary of State for Defence?

Mr. Brittan: It is true that the Cabinet agreed that no one should campaign for either option. I understand, of course, that my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence strongly felt that the European option should be pursued vigorously. I imagine that some of the things that were said in the course of that led my right hon. Friend to the conclusion that he reached.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Is not the central problem the fact that the Prime Minister always intends to have her own way, however deviously she does so, in contravention of collective decision-taking? Is not her greatest strength her unawareness of her limitations?

Mr. Brittan: No, Sir.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): Did my right hon. and learned Friend report the substance of his conversations last Wednesday evening with Sir Raymond Lygo to his Cabinet colleagues the following morning?

Mr. Brittan: No. There was no reason to do so. It was agreed at the Cabinet meeting the following morning to affirm the previous policy, which I had already expressed to the House. There was nothing at the meeting with Sir Raymond Lygo that would have led me or anyone else to wish to change that policy.

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): In view of the Government's assertions of even-handedness in this matter, can the right hon. and learned Gentleman shed any light on the suggestion that there were discussions between the Prime Minister and President Reagan about the Sikorsky bid and aid for Westland Helicopters? Were there any discussions with the American Administration?

Mr. Brittan: I am not aware of any such discussions.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): In answering my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), my right hon. and learned Friend said that he had received no such letter. In view of the importance of the conversation that is purported to have taken place, has any other member of the Government received any representations or letter from Sir Raymond Lygo or British Aerospace?

Mr. Brittan: I can only speak for myself.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Will the Secretary of State address the first question that was asked my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith)? On 16 December, why did the Secretary of State refer to the Government's decision to abandon the national armaments directors' recommendation from 13 December? In his answer, he said that the matter was relevant to 9 December. What happened on 13 December which caused him to refer to 13 December if there was no meeting of the Government on that day?

Mr. Brittan: The meeting on 9 December decided that if by 4 pm on 13 December there was no offer from the European consortium which the Westland board felt able to commend to its shareholders, from that moment the national armaments directors' recommendation would not continue to have any effect. The decision was taken on 9 December as to what would happen on 13 December. What had happened was announced on 16 December.

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): As the Ministry of Defence is Westland's major customer, is it not desirable that if possible there should be a European alternative to the Sikorsky terms so that there can be competitive tenders?

Mr. Brittan: I see the advantage of competition. The implications of that aspect of the matter must be considered.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In answer to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), the former Secretary of State for Defence, the Secretary of State referred to the crucial British Aerospace letters and emphasised to the House, "I did not." He was then asked by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) if he knew whether other members of the Cabinet did, to which he replied, "I can only speak for

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

myself." Would it not be more candid for the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry frankly to tell us that if he did not read them, the Prime Minister did?

Mr. Brittan: I have given an account of the meeting, and I have nothing further to add.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Why should the House of Commons have more confidence in my right hon. and learned Friend's judgment of the defence implications of this matter than in the judgment of our right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), bearing in mind that throughout his distinguished tenure of office he enjoyed the Prime Minister's wholehearted confidence?

Mr. Brittan: I am not inviting the House to do what my hon. Friend suggests I am inviting it to do.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): In view of the profound interest in this matter throughout the nation and Europe, and the almost unprecedented attendance here on a Monday afternoon—*[Interruption.]*—Tory Members may laugh, but they have something to hide. Why is the Secretary of State treating this serious subject so cavalierly, by not giving proper answers to the questions that he is being asked? Has he something to conceal? Has he read the advertisement in *The Times* this morning about the mess that British science is in? Does he realise that we are all fearful that our technology is about to disappear to the United States and that our armaments and defence industries are being sold for a mess of potage to a group of shareholders who have no interest in British working people?

Mr. Brittan: That is a view which the hon. Gentleman is entitled to hold. If he is worried about the interests of British working people, he will no doubt also have noted the clear view of the British working people working for Westland in Yeovil.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the motives of my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) have wide support in the country and in the House? If the Government are sincere about their commitment to Europe, why did they not prefer European participation from the beginning?

Mr. Brittan: The answer is that it was not forthcoming.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has been asked two questions about the meeting with the chairman of British Aerospace. The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) asked whether the Government had received a letter from the chairman, and the Secretary of State was subsequently asked the same question again. He dodged answering it on both occasions by meekly saying that he could only speak for himself. Does he not understand that the conviction politician has dodged the column today and that he has been put in her place to answer question? Now that he has been put there, it is his job, not just to answer for himself, but to answer for the Government. That is why he is at the Dispatch Box. He should come clean.

Mr. Brittan: If it helps the hon. Gentleman, I am not aware of any letter from Sir Raymond Lygo to anyone else either.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Will my right hon. and learned Friend explain why the former Secretary of State for Defence places his store firmly behind the British-European option, which I support, when he had the solution for saving Westland in his own hands while he was Secretary of State for Defence? Why did he never place orders for more helicopters with Westland?

Mr. Brittan: The Ministry of Defence took the view, which I wish to make clear I am not in any way criticising, that it was unable to confirm a requirement for support helicopters, for which Westland had been hoping. The Ministry also declined a request from the company to place additional orders for W30 helicopters to help with its short-term problems because there was no military requirement for such helicopters. I wish to make it clear that those are the facts, and that I am not criticising the former Secretary of State for Defence for coming to those conclusions.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): If the contents of the letter from Sir Raymond Lygo are at variance with the statement by the Secretary of State, in order to secure the fullest possible disclosure will the Secretary of State attend, and allow his officials to attend, a hearing of the Select Committee on Defence so that they may be questioned by members of the Committee?

Mr. Brittan: I assure the hon. Gentleman that all Select Committees of the House will be treated with the normal respect to which they are entitled.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that three years before he—my right hon. and learned Friend—came to the House I accompanied the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr Benn) to New York and Washington, at the suggestion and request of the then Minister for Aerospace and the Conservative Government, to defend the concerted attacks on the Concorde project by the American aerospace industry, which was determined to kill it? In my right hon. and learned Friend's opinion, is the American aerospace industry any less determined to neuter or takeover the British aerospace industry? Does he believe that the Government are interested in protecting this country's national aerospace interest? Does he accept that a Rolls-Royce 1971 proposition for Westland is infinitely better than bankruptcy?

Mr. Brittan: Happily, as a result of the action taken by the Government, including my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence, something very much better than that now faces Westland. I was protecting British Aerospace, in its capacity as a member of the Airbus consortium, which is an example of European co-operation, from the threat to the orders which it has successfully secured in the United States, against tremendous opposition from Boeing, being jeopardised.

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): Will the Secretary of State comment on press reports that if Westland were to become a subsidiary of United Technologies it would become involved in strategic defence initiative work as a subcontractor, and that that

might be contrary to the memorandum signed by the former Secretary of State for Defence and his United States counterpart?

Mr. Brittan: I cannot comment on those press reports. I do not know of their validity.

Mr. Robert Jackson (Wantage): Does my right hon. and learned Friend consider that this episode has advanced or retarded the cause of European defence industrial collaboration?

Mr. Brittan: Neither.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South and Penarth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is some years since the matter arose, but it is my recollection that Ministers are entitled to refer to Government documents and those documents need not be published. However, it is my recollection that if a Minister quotes from a document, the document is then published. I believe that I heard the Secretary of State quote to the House what Sir Raymond Lygo said to him about the British Airbus. In those circumstances, I ask you to consider whether the substance of that conversation should be published.

Mr. Speaker: I did not hear the Secretary of State quote from a Government document

Mr. Brittan: I assure the right hon. Gentleman—I know of his interest in these matters—that I did not quote from the document.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): Is it the case that, for the shareholders of Westland to have a choice, the recommendation of the national armaments directors had to be rejected by the Government? As a result, the work force and shareholders have a choice. Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that it is intolerable that a private sector company has had to endure so much pressure at a time when it had found a solution to its problems and was within sight of achieving that solution, which could now be in jeopardy?

Mr. Brittan: The board of Westland came up with proposals which it believed would lead to a solution of the problems. It is also the case that as long as the national armaments directors' recommendation remained on the table, the Sikorsky-Fiat proposals could not go ahead.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must have regard to the fact that there is other important business to follow this statement. I shall allow questions to continue for a further five minutes, by which time we will have had a full half hour for Back-Benchers' questions.

Mr. Callaghan: Further to my point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is my clear recollection, because I noted it at the time, that the Secretary of State was reading the answer given by Sir Raymond Lygo. I am ready to admit that I may be wrong, but I noted the fact especially because I have had this matter in mind. I ask you to check *Hansard* carefully to ensure what happened and to give a ruling on the matter.

Mr. Speaker: The House heard what the Secretary of State said on that matter.

Mr. Callaghan: Further to that point of order——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The right hon. Gentleman asked me whether I would check the record, and I shall do so.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): A similar point was raised in the debate on the Second Reading of the Maplin Development Bill, when my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) was purported to quote from a document which he declined to lay on the Table of the House, although he was pressed to do so. Perhaps the Father of the House would consider that precedent and the ruling was made on it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We must not be distracted by Maplin today.

Mr. Robert C. Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): Further to the question asked by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), is the Secretary of State aware of any letter received by Her Majesty's Government from British Aerospace? Is the Secretary of State aware that when he states from the Dispatch Box that he can only speak for himself he is seriously misleading the House? Any Minister of any rank who speaks from the Dispatch Box speaks for the Government.

Mr. Brittan: I have already answered that point in reply to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Will the Secretary of State explain in more detail how the Government took the decision of non-intervention, in view of the defence implications of a Westland takeover? Can he say whether it was considered that Sikorsky might not be satisfied with a partial shareholding and that it might try to take over the entire company in the future?

From the explanation in the statement about the interview with the chairman of British Aerospace, when the Minister said that British Aerospace was aware of the American implications, could it appear that he was bullying the chairman of British Aerospace? Has he considered following the example of the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) and resigning from the Cabinet in view of the fact that he broke his undertaking of non-intervention to the House on 16 December?

Mr. Brittan: The answer to the latter point is no.

In taking their decision the Government took into account all questions, such as defence procurement and other matters, and took the view that the options available did not justify Government intervention.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): What confidence can the workers of Westland have in the job guarantees from either of the teams of big business which have been gazumping each other during recent days, especially from the team led by Lord Weinstock, who, during the past four to six weeks, has axed more than 1,000 jobs in GEC in my constituency?

If defence is the national priority which the right hon. and learned Gentleman and the Prime Minister consistently state it is, why do the Government not follow the example of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in 1971 and nationalise Westland and give guarantees to the work force that any surplus capacity will be used to make socially useful goods?

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman is merging defence considerations with industrial considerations. For defence, the Government must be able to ensure that helicopters are available from a secure NATO source. For industry, the Government's aim must be to further the rescue that would

[Mr. Brittan]

be in the company's best interests. The two offers would secure those objectives. I believe that the Government have not done all that badly.

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): The right hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned the millions of pounds invested by the Government — which is taxpayers' money. Regardless of which company is successful, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman state whether there will be any protection of technical design in Britain? Will the Minister discuss the offset problems and the possibilities for companies such as Rolls-Royce which make helicopter engines?

Mr. Brittan: Rolls-Royce has expressed an interest in this matter. However, in view of the commercially sensitive position, I should not discuss that matter before tomorrow. That could appear to favour one side — *[Interruption.]* I hear one of my hon. Friends say, "In favour of Sikorsky", but that must be a matter for Rolls-Royce.

Mr. John Smith: With regard to the meeting with Sir Raymond Lygo, the Secretary of State said that he had cheched the recollections of colleagues and officials. Did he check a written record? Does a written record exist? It has been drawn to my attention that in a newspaper yesterday an allegation was made that during the discussion the Secretary of State indicated to officials that he did not wish that matter to be recorded. Can the Secretary of State give his reaction to that allegation? When will that record be made available to hon. Members?

As to the so-called concern about the adverse impact on British Aerospace sales, it is clear from the Secretary of State that he does not accuse Sir Raymond Lygo or British Aerospace of creating the problem. To whose statement was he referring?

Mr. Brittan: There is no truth in the hon. Gentleman's point about a matter not being recorded. On the point about what in the campaign led me to take that view, I can safely state, without referring to any statements, that many things were said during the course of the campaign implying that the sole interest of any United States involvement was to reduce Westland's status to low technology. Any suggestion to that effect is contrary to the expressed statement of United Technologies. It is entirely open to people to take one view or another as to which offer is to be preferred, but such allegations are completely untrue —[HON. MEMBERS: "Check the record."] I have already said that I will look into that.

Imported Goods (Safety)

4.30 pm

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 10, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the death and injury sustained through the sale of dangerous imported consumer goods over the Christmas period."

Christmas should be a time of happiness as we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. In too many homes this festive time has been marred by injuries received from imported goods, especially toys, and even by death. The present legislation, which does not require importers to show a duty of care that any goods have been checked on safety grounds, is clearly inadequate.

I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to recognise that the matter is so urgent that it should have priority over the business that has already been arranged for the House. The urgency stems from the fact that the goods which cause injury and death have not been prohibited from sale. Exporters from the far east are still shipping dangerous products to the United Kingdom and apparently not testing them against the criteria employed by the British Standards Institution. Britain cannot become the home of cheap, shoddy goods that have deadly consequences.

The debate requested is specific since it seeks to deal with dangerous imported consumer goods. New regulations are overdue, as foreshadowed in the Government's White Paper. Their absence from the statute book can be quantified in the human suffering endured in too many homes during the recess. This is the first opportunity to raise the subject in the House since Christmas. It is also an opportunity for all sides to recognise that prohibition notices and orders, together with voluntary codes of practice, have proved inadequate.

The subject is important. On 20 December, in Yorkshire, a five-month-old baby boy died as a direct consequence of playing with a dangerous imported toy. He was asphyxiated by the nylon hair on a toy pony imported from Taiwan. This was a new and tragic development since my hon. Friend the Minister responded to my Adjournment debate last year. Customs officers must have powers to seize and control dangerous imports, and trading standards officers must be given powers to protect the public. Such goods should not have the ability to maim and kill. Far too many non-United Kingdom goods, especially toys, purchased before Christmas and still being traded have potentially lethal consequences. We owe it to the nation to amend the legislation. I hope that you, Mr. Speaker, will permit the time to debate this matter.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the death and injury sustained through the sale of dangerous imported consumer goods over the Christmas period."

I listened with great care to what the hon. Gentleman said, but I regret that I do not consider that the matter that he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 10 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I shall put together the three motions relating to statutory instruments.

Ordered,

That the Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 1985 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Asian Development Bank (Extension of Limit on Guarantees) Order 1985 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the Local Government Reorganisation (Transitional Provisions) Order 1985 (S.I., 1985, No. 1781) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c. — *[Mr. Lennox-Boyd].*

Orders of the Day

Public Order Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

4.34 pm

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the Secretary of State, I should tell the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I must start with the principle that underlies the Bill. Public order is the fundamental social good. It is a principle of which we were reminded several times during 1985. We shall hear much today and in the debates to come about human rights and freedoms, and rightly so. But let us not forget that the right to go about one's lawful occasions in peace is the underlying human right without which all others are nugatory.

Quiet streets and a peaceful framework for our individual lives can never be taken for granted. For short periods of our history it seemed that public order was established for ever. Other periods, such as the first decade of this century, on which we may look back wistfully, included plenty of public violence. The threat to public order comes in different shapes at different times. That means that the measures needed to safeguard public order and protect the public must be re-examined from time to time. It is half a century since Parliament set itself to that task, and society and its habits have changed radically. It is not unreasonable that the Public Order Act 1936 should be followed by a Public Order Act 1986.

Change must be steadily and carefully considered, and panic and anger are bad guides to this. That is true of all legislation, but especially of Home Office legislation, and even more especially of public order legislation. I make it clear that the Bill was not cobbled together in hasty reaction to last autumn's riots. That is self-evident from its content, and everyone who has followed the proposals knows that their ancestry is older than that and different. When rioting of the sort described in the Metropolitan police report in today's newspapers breaks out, the problem confronting the police is not a shortage of legal powers, but one of enforcement. As I shall try to show, the Bill does not detract from our traditional philosophy of policing, which is based on the principles of policing by co-operation with the public and the minimum use of force. The police are anxious to maintain that tradition, and so am I.

Part I is drawn largely from the English Law Commission's report published in 1983. We agree with the commission that public order offences should be clearly stated in modern language, and part I revises and codifies the common law offences in England and Wales. No change is made to the common law in Scotland, where the Scottish Law Commission is still considering the law on mobbing and rioting.

In England and Wales, the common law offences are replaced by new statutory offences of riot, violent disorder and affray. Clause 1 defines the new offence of riot, which will be committed when 12 or more people use or threaten violence to achieve a common purpose. Only those using

[Mr. Douglas Hurd]

violence will be guilty of the offence. The White Paper suggested a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment for this offence. However, it is the most serious public order offence, and we have provided a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. It does now have a maximum penalty of life for an offence drawn rather more loosely than we propose. On balance, we decided to propose the retention of the present maximum sentence of life imprisonment for the new offence, which will be more strictly defined and which will have a higher threshold.

Clause 2 creates the offence of violent disorder to replace the existing offence of unlawful assembly, with a maximum penalty on indictment of five years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine. Violent disorder will be used in the future as the normal charge for serious outbreaks of public disorder.

Clause 3 largely restates the existing common law offence of affray, with minor changes. I shall not dwell on that. However, I should dwell on clause 5, because the new offence of disorderly conduct has proved controversial in some quarters and is likely to remain so.

The proposal in clause 5 will penalise behaviour which is not itself violent but which is

"threatening, abusive, insulting or disorderly, and"

—I emphasise the word "and"—is likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress.

The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) at one time welcomed such an offence in principle. I can understand why. Right hon. and hon. Members who represent inner cities know how many of their constituents suffer from the mischiefs of hooliganism.

The new offence is aimed at protecting those in our communities who are most vulnerable to loutish and abusive behaviour—particularly the elderly and people from the ethnic minorities. Many hon. Members will be only too familiar with the type of behaviour to which I refer. It casts a blight upon an area, whether it be a shopping precinct or a city housing estate, and makes the lives of people living there fearful and miserable. People are frightened to open their own front doors. They are kept awake by rowdy behaviour late at night. Ethnic minority families are victimised with racialist slogans and abuse. Gangs of hooligans make some pedestrian and shopping areas places where ordinary people fear to go. There cannot be many right hon. and hon. Members who do not have examples in their postbags and at their surgeries.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The Secretary of State rightly refers to ethnic minorities being the victims of racial harassment. Why have the Government not taken the opportunity of the Bill to make racial harassment a specific criminal offence?

Mr. Hurd: If the hon. Gentleman examines the events which constitute racial attacks he will find that they are offences anyway. It seems better to encourage the police in London and elsewhere to take the matter seriously, to issue new guidelines and to let the offence be treated as it is, seriously, with a racial connotation, but within the existing definition of offences. That is better than to single out an offence as the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) suggests.

Clause 5 takes account of the many helpful comments that we received when we asked for suggestions on how the new offence of disorderly conduct should be defined. First, we have abandoned the requirement of proof of actual alarm, harassment or distress. That would have required the victim to give evidence in court. Several bodies represented strongly to us that the more vulnerable victims were most unlikely to be prepared to face their persecutors in case things went wrong and the persecution became worse.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): This is the single most important departure from the White Paper. Who made the representations? How does the Secretary of State answer the argument that he set out so clearly in paragraph 3.26 of the White Paper, which makes it clear that safeguards are required?

Mr. Hurd: We have said throughout that the clause would be difficult to draw. My predecessor set out fairly and clearly in the White Paper the arguments for and against this offence and the considerations in drawing it. Those who commented on the reluctance of victims to go to court to give evidence included the police, the Magistrates' Association, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Society of Prosecuting Solicitors and a number of individuals. When I came to office and considered the Bill, I thought that the case was strongly made out.

We have also dropped the requirement that the alarm, harassment or distress be substantial, in response to criticism that this would present the court with an impossible measurement task. We have introduced a limited power of arrest, which will apply only if a defendant fails to desist from disorderly conduct after a police warning, and we have raised the maximum fine to £400.

Those are the principal changes that we have made since the White Paper foreshadowed this offence. The offence has not been easy to draft. We know what we are aiming at and we do not intend to lose that purpose, but we are certainly open to suggestions on drafting.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): Paragraph 3.26 of the White paper is clear. It says:

"Any degree of annoyance or disturbance will not suffice."

At what stage did the Home Secretary decide that

"Any degree of annoyance or disturbance"

would suffice when his predecessor had said that so categorically?

Mr. Hurd: I decided after studying the representations and arguments. The right hon. Member for Gorton is referring to the "substantial" argument — a different point. Setting the courts the task of measuring is unreasonable. However the right hon. Member is entitled to argue his case in Committee.

The response to the White Paper convinced us that we must act to provide the police with more effective powers to protect the public against hooligan behaviour. But we have no desire to use the criminal law to enforce a particular social standard or to worsen relations between young people and the police. This is a law against hooliganism, not against high spirits. It is carefully drafted to avoid the risks of reviving a sus law. Before the right hon. Member for Gorton shakes his head too definitively, I ask him to follow the argument. I hope that we have avoided the risk of reviving a sus law by requiring that the person committing the acts must know or have reasonable cause to believe that his behaviour is likely to cause alarm,

harassment or distress. It is the concept of alarm, harassment or distress which distinguishes what we now propose from the old sus law. Let us look carefully at the drafting, but I hope that before any right hon. or hon. Member opposes the clause he will reflect for a minute on the fear and unhappiness that hooliganism inflicts on so many of our fellow citizens. We believe that we have the job of finding a remedy.

Mr. Douglas Hogg (Grantham): I note that the Home Secretary is anxious to avoid this part of the Bill being abused. He will appreciate that the Bill as drafted enables a constable to arrest without warrant in the event of the conduct being repeated after warning. Would it not be a good idea for the power to arrest to arise only if the constable has given warning that an arrest will follow if the offender does not desist from his conduct?

Mr. Hurd: I should like to consider whether that is practicable. It points in the direction in which I wanted to move when considering whether there should be a power of arrest at all. Some people believe that there should not be such a power and others say that the Bill would be pointless without it. I shall consider my hon. Friend's suggestion.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): I have corresponded with my right hon. Friend about riots. Will he consider proposing that a warning be given in advance of action by the police?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend has put that suggestion to me and it has been considered. My hon. Friend might have the opportunity to argue his case but we do not believe that his proposal is likely to be practicable in real life. One of the difficulties is that people might be caught up in a riot but not have committed an offence. If it were an offence to be present after the equivalent of the Riot Act had been read, a person might become caught up. For the moment, we do not think that my hon. Friend's suggestion should find a place in the Bill.

Part II of the Bill deals with processions and assemblies. It establishes a new legal framework for the holding of processions, demonstrations and assemblies, building on the framework already provided by the Public Order Act 1936. We want to ensure that the right to protest, to march and to picket peacefully is regulated only to the extent necessary to preserve order and to protect the rights of others. We have therefore concentrated on trying to ensure that the law provides the police with adequate powers to prevent and deal with violence and disorder, while freedom of speech and the right to protest continue to be safeguarded.

Clause 11 deals with advance notice and sets out a new national requirement for the organisers of marches to give seven days' notice to the police. The requirement exists already in Scotland and there are advance notice requirements in local legislation in parts of England and Wales. Lord Scarman and the Select Committee both supported a requirement of advance notice, which would enable discussions between the organisers of marches and the police to take place in good time. The vast majority of march organisers already give notice to the police, and we think it absurd that the police should have to rely on chance and rumour to learn about marches that are organised by a minority of irresponsible groups, which could give rise to violence on the streets and serious disorder.

In March 1985, the Metropolitan police learnt about a proposed National Front march in Greenwich only as a result of leaflets left at a London railway station, yet the march and opposition to it posed a sufficient threat to public order that the police had eventually to seek consent to a ban.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I take the Home Secretary's point about National Front marches, and I accept, as I am sure my hon. Friends do, that there are certain problems. However, does he recognise that his proposals will cause a great deal of concern to genuine demonstrators? We are living in a democratic country and we must bear in mind always that people have a right to demonstrate on the spur of the moment as strikes develop, for example. Another example is when residents feel strongly that something should be done immediately on their behalf. Therefore, the provisions in the Bill could undermine important and basic democratic rights.

Mr. Hurd: I direct the hon. Gentleman's attention to clause 11(4). We believe that we have provided there for exactly the sort of case that he has in mind. There is a specific relaxation of the requirement for marches called at short notice because of some emergency. The hon. Gentleman thought of one example, and another is when a dramatic event abroad suddenly blows up, against which some people want to protest.

Clause 12 widens the existing powers of the police that are contained in section 3 of the Public Order Act 1936 to impose conditions on marches. At present, the sole ground for imposing conditions is to prevent serious public disorder. We propose to add three new tests—the need to prevent serious damage to property, serious disruption of the life of the community, and the intimidation of others. The second test—serious disruption of the life of the community — was proposed by the Select Committee. I shall not repeat the way in which it described vividly the sort of disruption that can be caused by marches. We believe that the police should have the power to re-route a march to limit the resulting congestion of traffic, to prevent a bridge being blocked, for example, or to stop a city centre being brought to a standstill.

The third test of intimidation is a libertarian safeguard that will prevent demonstrations being used by those whose real purpose is to intimidate and coerce and not to persuade. The National Front provides examples. The provision that we propose would enable National Front marches in suitable instances to be routed away from racially sensitive areas.

I should stress that the new tests will not enable the police to ban a procession. The power to ban marches does not rest with the police. That power remains unchanged and it is re-enacted in clause 13. Nor are the new powers open-ended. The police will be able to impose conditions only if they reasonably apprehend serious disorder, damage, disruption or intimidation. As now — this is crucial — any decision by the police to impose conditions will be subject to judicial review.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): The Home Secretary has spoken about tests and referred to clause 11(4), which provides that the full period of notice will not be required when it is not "reasonably practicable" to give it. Does he not recognise that the application of the tests could be purely arbitrary and that the provisions of clause 11(4) are likely in some instances to be completely ineffective

[Mr. Alex Carlile]

unless there is some immediate and available way of testing the merits of a decision that has been made? Does he agree that judicial review is not a way of testing the merits of a decision? Does he not accept that the Government should provide that those wishing to hold a procession or assembly should be able to apply to the local county court or to a Crown court judge for a review of the decision made by the police?

Mr. Hurd: I think that judicial review has proved itself effective. It provides a means of dealing speedily with matters of the sort that we are discussing. That is why we inserted "reasonable" in clauses 12 and 14, especially. I shall consider what the hon. and learned Gentleman says about clause 11(4). However, if someone goes ahead and does not give clear notice, he might expect to have to argue the matter before the courts and persuade them that he was covered by clause 11(4). It would not be too late because he would not have given notice.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Is my right hon. Friend aware that nearly two years ago in Leicester there was a possibility of three different marches taking place in the city on the same day, directed mainly to getting the troops out of Northern Ireland? The council made it clear that it would not apply for the Home Secretary to grant a banning order, even though the Chief Constable appeared to want one. What is my right hon. Friend's advice to chief constables when local authorities refuse to grant such applications on political grounds?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is tempting me on to ground that I do not intend to cover with the Bill. As I have said, I do not think that we should change the arrangements by which it is the responsibility of councils, outside London, to take a decision on a ban. I am aware of the difficulties that arise occasionally but it should remain a matter of local persuasion.

I shall try to deal with the provisions of clause 14 in full before giving way to further interventions. The clause breaks new ground by conferring upon the police certain preventive powers in relation to open-air assemblies. These powers fall short of those in relation to marches which I have been describing. There will be no requirement of advance notice and there will be no power to ban. The clause introduces a new power to impose conditions. Assemblies and static demonstrations may just as often be the occasion of public disorder as marches and the Government believe that it is unacceptable for gatherings, such as those at Greenham common, or the mass pickets of the miners' strike, to be outside the framework of controls. The clause therefore confers on the police powers to impose conditions on open-air assemblies to prevent, on the same three tests I have mentioned, serious disorder, serious disruption or intimidation.

We stopped short of a power to ban because we believed that that would be an excessive limit on the right of assembly and freedom of speech. For this reason, clause 14 does not permit the police to impose conditions changing the date and time of an assembly. They will be able only to impose conditions limiting its size, location or duration. As with clause 12, any decision by the police to impose conditions will be subject to judicial review. Where a rally threatens serious public disorder, the police will in future be able to relocate it. Where, as in the Stop the City campaign, the demonstrators set out deliberately to be obstructive, the police would have the power to take preventive action. Where pickets obstruct deliberately, or try to, the passage of those going to work, as they did at Grunwick's and Warrington and during the miners' strike, the police would be able to limit their numbers or move them further away from the workers' path.

There is an important point, which has not been grasped fully. As we know from experience during the miners' strike, the police have already substantial powers under the common law to remove people who are threatening a breach of the peace. These existing powers enable the police to take action when trouble is imminent or when it has begun. It seems sensible to us that they should have a preventive power that will enable them to negotiate reasonable ground rules that would prevent trouble happening at all. If the police were to try to impose unjustified conditions, that could be challenged by way of judicial review. As the House will see, the right of peaceful picketing will not be infringed.

Mr. Kaufman: It will.

Mr. Hurd: It will, but it depends on what the right hon. Gentleman thinks is the purpose of picketing. Pickets whose purpose is peacefully to dissuade or communicate information will not be touched by the new measure because this picketing will not be disorderly, disruptive or coercive. But where the purpose of picketing is physically to obstruct or to intimidate rather than to persuade, it is right that the police should have preventive powers.

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): This clause has a lot to do with the miners' picketing of last year. Is there anything in this Bill that assists with the evidential aspect of the offences that were committed at that time? The problem that arose out of the miners' picketing was the great difficulty in bringing people, who had clearly committed offences, successfully to trial due to evidential difficulties. Is there anything in this Bill that will assist?

Mr. Hurd: I hope when my hon. Friend studies in depth the new definitions of riot and violent disorder he will find that they have been tightened. Areas of uncertainty have been cleared up. We have made it more difficult to obtain a conviction for riot because we have tightened up the definition of that offence. I hope that when my hon. Friend looks at part I as a whole, he will see a tidier framework, which should remove some of the present uncertainties.

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): The Secretary of State spoke earlier of the right of protest and demonstration. Does he not accept that clause 14 means that the right of assembly is now to be defined in its formal context by the police? This is a major change to existing legislation.

Mr. Hurd: Where the police have reasonable grounds —I am sure that the hon. Gentleman knows more about the law than I do and he will know the importance of the word "reasonable"—the court can make a test. When the police have reasonable grounds for supposing that there would be serious disorder, serious disruption or intimidation, they can impose conditions which are subject to judicial review. That is the nub of the change that we are proposing.

Part II applies in Scotland, except for clause 11 and clause 13. Scotland has a separate regulatory structure for the control of marches and certain minor changes to the structure are made by the amendments to the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 in schedule 2.

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): I am most grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way. He has dealt most tolerantly with so many interventions. Will my right hon. Friend turn his mind to the anxiety of many people about gatherings and so-called festivals at archaeological sites and ancient monuments? At an appropriate stage, will my right hon. Friend consider amendments to part II to assist the police to deal with these matters?

Mr. Hurd: Such amendments will be considered, as I know that many hon. Members feel strongly about this. My hon. Friend the Minister will deal with this in the winding-up speech.

I will not dwell on part III, which deals with racial hatred and provides additional protection against incitement to racial hatred. I hope that the provisions will be acceptable to the House.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Will the Secretary of State comment on part III?

Mr. Hurd: I am prepared to say a great deal, but in the interests of brevity I will leave it to my hon. Friend to find other ways of making his point.

Part IV consists mainly of measures against football hooliganism. Last summer, with the help of all parties, we passed an Act to control the sale and possession of alcohol at football matches. We now propose to introduce an exclusion order scheme, which will enable the courts to ban convicted hooligans from attending football matches. The purpose of this scheme is to exclude the troublemakers and especially the ringleaders who instigate much of the violence. Anyone found guilty of a football-related offence may be subject to an exclusion order and any breach of that order would be a further offence for which he could be sent to prison. It has been said, since we published the Bill, that exclusion orders will be hard to enforce without membership cards. Certainly I hope that the scheme will stimulate the clubs to make greater speed on membership cards. It is a powerful scheme, even without membership cards. An offender who has an exclusion order added to his sentence will have his photograph taken. He will know that photographs are circulated and he will also know that, more likely than not, there will be closed-circuit television on any ground he is tempted to visit. This knowledge will be a powerful deterrent against his defying the order.

The exclusion order scheme will not apply in Scotland but the further measures against football hooliganism in schedule 1 will apply there as in England and Wales. There will be a new offence of possessing a smoke bomb at a football match, as recommended by Mr. Justice Popplewell in his interim report. In the light of experience and protest, mini-buses are brought within the scope of the alcohol ban which applies at present to coaches and trains.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way and I shall be brief. Most of the football industry will welcome this clause. Can the Secretary of State clear up two points? Will those people who are excluded because of violence during a game or on the approach to a game be subject to the law in other forms? The Bill talks about certain football matches—I think the words are "the football ground concerned". What about other grounds? Will offenders be excluded from grounds other than those where the offence took place?

Mr. Hurd: It is not a substitute for other penalties or other sentences. It would be for the court to decide the scope, both in terms of the geography and duration of an exclusion order.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): Photography has attracted a great deal of interest. Can my right hon. Friend comment on the possibility of adding fingerprinting to clause 30 as well as photography? Will my right hon. Friend seek to take some action relating to the hooligans' passport when an exclusion order has been served? These are the people who behave badly in Britain and then go abroad and besmirch our name at soccer matches on the continent.

Mr. Hurd: I am prepared to think about the second point. Photography is crucial. It would not be possible to take people's fingerprints at football grounds. Photographs can be circulated and there is an increasing use of closed-circuit television. I will consider what my hon. Friend said, though I consider that the circulation of photographs will probably be the effective technique.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): I understand that parts of this Bill include some of the recommendations of Popplewell part one. I understand that Popplewell part two—the final report—is expected shortly. Will its recommendations be absorbed in this Bill at a later stage or will there be separate piece of legislation?

Mr. Hurd: I hope to make a statement about Mr. Justice Popplewell's final report possibly later this week. Much of his report deals with matters that do not fall within the scope of this Bill.

It is 50 years since the Public Order Act 1936 was passed. It has stood the test of time pretty well, but the events of recent years have confirmed the need to update the framework of public order law to ensure that it is strong enough to protect the public in 1986 and hereafter. We have tested each proposal in the Bill against that standard. In Standing Committee, if the Bill gets a Second Reading, the House will repeat those tests—quite rightly, that is what Standing Committee is for. Some will speak, quite naturally, as they have begun to do from the Opposition Benches, this afternoon, for those who define liberty in terms of the right to march, picket and demonstrate, to go unhindered to a football match, to do what they like on housing estates and in shopping precincts without police interference.

Mr. Kaufman: Nonsense.

Mr. Hurd: Well, we shall judge what happens in debate. We have to balance those rights, which are understandably of concern, against the rights of the public to be protected from disorder, destruction, intimidation and hooliganism. We shall listen carefully to suggestions that might improve the balance that we have tried to strike. I hope that, like its predecessors, the present team of Home Office Ministers has a reputation for constructive listening.

Before the discussion of detail gets under way, can I leave the House with just one thought? The Government do not believe that there is any intrinsic merit in piling up

[Mr. Hurd]

fresh powers for the police. The police need their powers, not for their own satisfaction or aggrandisement, but to protect the public more effectively. This is a Bill for the better protection of the public. I am certain that the public stand four square behind that argument. In no respect is it more important than in public order. I commend the Bill to the House.

5.9 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question, and to add instead thereof,

"this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which, at a time when serious crime has increased by 40 per cent. under this Government and the crime clear-up rate has markedly declined, contains no proposals which are likely to be effective in preventing disorder, while diverting scarce police resources from fighting crime and at the same time seriously undermining traditional civil liberties."

This debate takes place against a background of a crime wave which continues to be the most alarming that the country has experienced in modern times, and the collapse of the Government's policy on law and order. The newly published volume of "Social Trends" documents that 3·5 million serious crimes are now committed in Britain each year — nearly 1 million a year more than when the Government came to office. In urban areas, the crime increase in places such as greater Manchester and south Yorkshire is more than twice the national average. "Social Trends" confirms that, over the nation as a whole, little more than one third of those crimes are being cleared up —a reduction from 42 per cent. when the Government came to office.

Fear of crime has now become a plague, casting a grim shadow across Britain. No fewer than 12 per cent. of all inner-city residents say that they never go out alone at night because of crime. More than 60 per cent. of women living in inner cities feel at least somewhat unsafe and 60 per cent. of those aged over 60 say that they feel very unsafe.

Against that background of soaring crime and a serious decline in proportionate police success in combating it, the pressure on overstretched police forces grows ever greater and more oppressive. Chief constables and police authorities in many parts of the country document those severe problems that seriously hamper their strenuous efforts to combat crime.

Three months ago, the greater Manchester police authority sent a plea to the Home Secretary, documenting the cuts that it might have to make, including a stop on recruitment entailing a fall in police numbers and closure of some police stations. It said that increased insurance costs alone, consequent upon the abolition of the greater Manchester council, will cost the force £700,000. Although the Home Secretary has partially increased the greater Manchester police authority's determination, he has still not met its full needs, yet he claims that his response to such requests will be based on need.

The district auditor recently completed an inquiry into the west midlands police authority. His conclusions included the verdict that that force suffers from insufficient resources for operational policing. He reports:

"Several senior officers told my staff that their sole objective is to get through the day without a major catastrophe."

The district auditor declared:

"The manpower available for operational policing is often frighteningly low."

The chief constable of the west midlands, Mr. Geoffrey Dear, says in his report on the Handsworth riots:

"currently we are training all personnel in relation to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Such commitments inevitably reduce the uniformed control capacity."

The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, Sir Kenneth Newman, forecast a few weeks ago another huge increase in crime in London. He warned that, without extra manpower, some burglaries would not even be investigated—that when, in London, the clear-up rate for burglary is only 10 per cent. Today's press reports the estimates submitted by Sir Kenneth to the Home Office and comments that they do not provide even half of the manpower increase that Sir Kenneth says that he needs.

The Government are so ashamed of their response to the financial requests of the police that they have done their best to confuse and mislead Parliament by throwing up a smokescreen around the true figures. Last month, in the House, the Home Secretary, obediently followed by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, tried to imply that the Government are planning an increase in finance for the police in real terms for the next financial year. The operation was renewed with a planted story in *The Times* only last week. However, on the most favourable estimates, the Government are planning a reduction in expenditure on the police in real terms this year.

A study of the fine print of ministerial answers shows that the Government's claims of an increase are based on a comparison of this year's budget with that of next year. The problem for the Government is that the pressure on the police this year has caused them to spend £101 million more than their budget. The Home Secretary tried to imply last month that the increase is due to expenditure on police overtime during the miners' strike. When I asked him, the Minister of State admitted to me that the Government had no idea of the cost of police overtime during the miners' strike and that their estimate of all special payments in connection with that dispute is about £9 million—only a small fraction of the £101 million overspent.

If the previous Home Secretary had tried to deceive the House with such manipulation of statistics, I would have accused him of deliberate sharp practice. The present Home Secretary being what he is, all I say is that he has got himself into a muddle. It is unquestionable, however, that the only realistic way in which to compare expenditure levels is to set one year's expenditure, when it is known or can be estimated, against the next year's plans. Such a comparison shows clearly whether there is to be an increase or a decrease. To base comparisons on spending plans that have been exceeded is financial chicanery.

If Mr. Roberts, the Grantham grocer, had based his accounting not on what he spent but on the smaller sum to which he would have liked to limit himself, Mr. Roberts would never have been awarded an alderman's robe, let alone be able to lay it down with honour, as he would have been an undischarged bankrupt at the time.

On the Government's present inflation estimates, they are budgeting for an expenditure reduction of 0·75 per cent. on the police next year. On today's inflation rate, the reduction is 1·8 per cent. Far from doing their best to ease the burdens of the police, in this Session the Government are legislating to increase them. The Shops Bill is before the House of Lords at the moment. Mr. Andrew Mackinlay, the excellent and enterprising prospective

Labour candidate for Peterborough, recently wrote to the Association of Chief Police Officers asking about the expected effect on the police of the Sunday opening of shops. I have here the reply that he received from the honorary secretary of the Association of Chief Police Officers, Mr Brian Hayes, the chief constable of Surrey. About the deregulation of Sunday shopping, Mr Hayes says:

"Traffic . . . police presence on Sundays might need to be increased and the current practice of minimum manning would need to be re-assessed. Parking regulations would require major revision to incorporate Sundays, as many existing regulations do not apply after 6.30 pm on Saturdays. The increased restrictions would then need to be enforced."

Mr. Nicholas Lyell (Mid-Bedfordshire): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kaufman: No. May I conclude this quotation from a very respected chief constable? About the potential increase in crime as a result of the deregulation of Sunday shopping, Mr. Hayes says:

"Longer opening hours would provide increased opportunities for persons, particularly juveniles, to commit offences of theft, and there could be an increased risk to shop staff, especially females, who are required to take cash to the bank or to travel home during the hours of darkness. There is also a possibility of an increase in offences of public disorder, criminal damage and violence if late night shoppers come into contact with early evening drinkers."

In summing up, the chief constable of Surrey said:

"It would be difficult to be more precise on the matter of cost, but if Saturdays are any yardstick, we should not underestimate the possible difficulties."

Mr. Lyell: Before the right hon. Gentleman drags away this smelly red herring, will he tell the House what he estimates it would cost local authorities if they set out to enforce the present law on Sunday trading?

Mr. Kaufman: The hon. and learned Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mr. Lyell) must follow the creditable example of the future Labour Member for Peterborough and write to the secretary of the Association of Chief Police Officers. What the hon. and learned Gentleman describes as a smelly red herring is, in fact, a letter from the secretary of that respected body. I would bet that if I had quoted from him something derogatory about the miners, the hon. and learned Gentleman would have cheered.

Mr. Hurd: Does the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) not expect to be called when the House debates the Shops Bill?

Mr. Kaufman: I do not know. After what has happened in the Cabinet, there may be other changes in the House. Who can tell?

If the chief constable of Surrey is correct, the Shops Bill may even increase the number of disturbances with which the Public Order Bill claims to deal.

Public order offences are only a tiny fraction of the crimes committed in Britain each year. Despite the costs caused by their ugly destructiveness, the financial costs to the economy of disorder and rioting—as distinct from the grave, human and social costs,—are small compared to the cost to the nation of financial fraud which is estimated to exceed £3 billion a year. Yet despite the Financial Services Bill, which the House is to debate tomorrow, the Government are taking little more than token action in dealing with fraud, compared with this extremely heavy-handed Bill.

On 20 December the Financial Secretary to the Treasury admitted to my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) that criminal prosecutions are undertaken in only a small number of fraud cases. On Saturday *The Times* gave the excuse:

"The cost of trials, an average of £500,000 in such complex City cases, makes the Department of Public Prosecutions or the tax authorities reluctant to press cases unless they can safely predict conviction on serious charges."

Such considerations of cost and difficulty did not deter the public order trials connected with the miners' strike. One Orgreave trial cost £500,000 and a trial in Nottinghamshire cost £1·5 million. In total, the estimated cost of trials arising from the miners' strike is said to be millions of pounds and all, without exception, ended in ignominious defeat for the prosecution.

The Government's approach to such offences reveals a great deal about their real definition of law and order which they apply very differently in a socially and discriminatory way to working people on the one hand and to City swindlers on the other.

There is great public concern about disorder and riots because such crimes are the most visible of all. They are catapulted into our living rooms by the vividness of television. The nation would welcome firm and effective action to prevent such disorders, provided that such action is compatible with civil liberties. The Opposition would support such action.

Although the Bill is stuffed with new offences and penalties, there is no evidence that it would have the tiniest effect in preventing disorder. I have read press accounts today of the Metropolitan police report on the Broadwater Farm disorders. Having studied the accounts I have no reason to doubt the veracity of that inquiry. Yet it cannot be denied that if this Bill had been an Act at the time of the Broadwater Farm riot, not one event described in the Metropolitan police report would have been prevented and the riot would have proceeded as scheduled. Even people like Mrs. Donna Kiffin, who warned the police several days in advance that such a disturbance was in the offing, could not have influenced the outcome.

It is unlikely that, if the Bill had been in force, there would have been more arrests for public order offences at Broadwater Farm. Another official inquiry prepared by Chief Constable Dear into the Handsworth disorders revealed that only a small proportion of the offences with which people were charged after the disturbance were public order offences—48 out of 355. All the Bill will do, at best, is to create new offences for which people involved in riots can be arrested. However, the evidence shows that sufficient offences are already available to the police and that the courts can already impose heavy sentences, as happened with the recent life sentence on a football hooligan.

At best, the Bill is innocuous and in some ways even comic. At worst, it will impose unnecessary new burdens on our sorely pressed police forces, will invade civil liberties and create new tensions between the police and the public at a time when it is essential that relationships between the police and the public should be strengthened and improved.

Before the Christmas recess, the Opposition assisted and expedited legislation giving powers to ban alcohol from football grounds. In so far as that legislation has been successful, the Opposition are glad that they did so. But the Opposition are still waiting to hear about the

[Mr. Kaufman]

Government's success in their other objectives. In April the Government called upon the football authorities to report within six weeks on a practical scheme of membership cards. Nine months later no progress has been made and a group of northern football clubs which I met a few weeks ago assures me that such a scheme continues to be impractical, whatever the Home Secretary has said this afternoon.

The Government asked the football authorities in April to accelerate the introduction of closed-circuit television. The Home Secretary seems to have little idea of what is happening, as he said on BBC radio on 6 December:

"closed-circuit television is now becoming quite usual in football grounds."

Yet the Minister responsible for sport told me six days after the Home Secretary's categorical statement that only 27 grounds in the football league and the Scottish football league have closed-circuit television systems. That is a mere 21 per cent. of the total, yet the Home Secretary has said that closed-circuit television is an adjunct of the other proposals in the Bill. On that basis, the Bill can have no helpful effect on 80 per cent. of football grounds.

In place of the Government priorities which now seem to have been abandoned, the Bill contains two new proposals. One is the creation of exclusion orders by which football hooligans will be banned from matches. In principle, the Opposition see no objection to that. We are baffled, however, about how that will work. The police organisations with which my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith and I have discussed the matter are just as baffled. No one has the slightest idea of how the orders are to be enforced or what will happen if an excluded person turns up at a ground from which he has been banned. The Home Secretary seems to say that such a person would be photographed. The clause dealing with photography is one of the most obscure clauses that I have ever seen.

Clause 30 empowers a court to make an order that a person subject to an exclusion order should be photographed. However, the Bill does not state what will be done with the photographs. When the Bill was published, I had meetings with the Police Federation and the Association of Chief Police Officers. At each of those meetings with some of the most distinguished police officers in the country, we sat round the table, with cold towels figuratively round our heads, trying to puzzle out the implications of the photography clause. We agreed that a direct consequence would be an encouraging increase in the sales of the magazine *Amateur Photographer*. We were equally agreed that that could not be the Government's entire objective. We mused upon the possibility that the photographs could be pasted into albums and that police officers could while away long winter nights turning the pages and admiring these mugshots.

We were sure that it would be impracticable for such photographs to festoon the turnstiles of football grounds, with stewards comparing, one by one, the faces of customers in the queue with these pin-up pictures. It would be impossible to imagine any situation more likely to provoke a riot rather than keep out a rioter. So we must take it that clause 30 is the Home Secretary's little joke.

Mr. John Carlisle: The right hon. Gentleman is giving a graphic description of what could happen and those of us involved in the football industry have some sympathy with what he says. However, will he accept the point made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, which was that there would be a deterrent effect on those photographed after committing a violent offence inside or outside a ground? In the same way, there is a deterrent effect in the curfew orders in the Criminal Justice Act 1982. That is partly what this Bill is about. If it deters offenders from going to grounds, it will have gone some way to remedy this awful problem.

Mr. Kaufman: If I thought that the act of photography would turn a hooligan into a law-abiding citizen, I would advocate the mass sale of cameras. In "A Clockwork Orange" the gentleman was tamed by listening to Beethoven. Perhaps we should try that solution if the photography does not work.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The people who would recognise those who had been excluded from football grounds, but subsequently got into the grounds, are their colleagues at those grounds. They would quickly realise that the provision was almost unenforceable and it would come into contempt.

Mr. Kaufman: I accept what my hon. Friend says, which implies that they would gain entry to football grounds; exclusion orders are designed to prevent that.

Let us look at other parts of the Bill that are far from a joke and, indeed, have the most serious implications, for example, clause 10. I hope that the Home Secretary will follow this, because the implications of what I have to say are serious.

Following the Handsworth riots in October, I asked the Home Secretary what action could be taken to speed up the payment of compensation under the Riot (Damages) Act 1886 and to expand the scope of that Act to take account of loss of income after riots. The Home Secretary gave me assurances that those issues were being considered. Indeed, he said that he shared my desire that the 1886 Act should be implemented in such a way as to bring as effective and prompt relief as possible.

However, far from assisting with such matters of great importance to innocent citizens who have suffered great material damage, the Bill ensures that in future very few people, if any, will be compensated under the 1886 Act. That is because the new offence of violent disorder will largely replace the old offence of riot. That is the view of ACPO and of the Home Office, which stated in its press release on the publication of the Bill:

"Riot . . . will be the least commonly used public order offence, reserved only for very serious cases"

and the Home Secretary confirmed that view today. Yet far from reassuring us that this grave charge will be sparingly used, the Home Secretary's assertion is worrying, because clause 10 confines eligibility for compensation under the 1886 Act and the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 to those affected by clause 1—the riot clause—which creates the new offence of riot which is rarely to be used.

It is unacceptable that those suffering material loss to their livelihood as a result of disorders should be deprived of compensation by the Government's juggling and manipulating the law in this way. We shall insist that the Bill be amended to remove that unjust treatment.

Both the new offence of riot and the other new offences of violent disorder and affray are defined far too widely, in a manner which goes against previous Government assurances and against the authoritative views of others.

In proposing the new offence of riot, the Law Commission stated that the offence should deal with persons using or threatening violence

"such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his personal safety."

Paragraph 3.17 of the White Paper said that the Government agreed with the Law Commission's proposed statutory definition. In proposing the new offence of violent disorder, the Law Commission defined it in relation again to a

"person of reasonable firmness present at the scene".

Again, the White Paper stated:

"The Government is content to accept the Law Commission's proposed statutory definition."

The same proposal and the same criterion apply to the new offence of affray. Yet for each of these new offences, the Bill, in clauses 1, 2 and 3, negates the Law Commission's proviso by the subsection which states:

"No person of reasonable firmness need actually be, or be likely to be, present at the scene."

That dilution of necessary safeguards in the creation of the new offences, each of which carries substantial penalties, is all the more disturbing in view of the judgment of the House of Lords in the Kamare case, in which the present Lord Chancellor participated. The judgment stated:

"The essential requisite was the presence or likely presence of innocent third parties not participating in the illegal activities in question; it was the danger to their security which constituted the threat to public peace and the public element necessary for the commission of the offence."

Nowhere are the protections more glaringly absent than in the Bill's version of the new offence of disorderly conduct. When the White Paper was published in May, I welcomed its proposal for the new offence. As an inner city Member of Parliament I am daily made aware of the misery caused to defenceless people—often pensioners, often women—by loutish conduct that goes far beyond boisterous high spirits. The Home Secretary has taken to quoting my welcome of what the White Paper said as some sort of endorsement. I only wish that he would require my endorsement of everything he does and that when I give my endorsement he would do what I endorse.

I should still welcome the creation, with appropriate safeguards, of such a new offence as was described in the White Paper. However, I have to say that clause 5 creates a new offence which has not the slightest chance of accomplishing what I advocate and what the White Paper proposed. Instead, it is fraught with the most serious dangers by its breadth of scope and lack of clarity.

Moreover, clause 5 seriously departs from specific commitments contained in the White Paper, which said of the proposed offence of disorderly conduct:

"The Government recognises that there would be justifiable objections to a wide extension of the criminal law which might catch conduct not deserving of criminal sanctions."

The White Paper went on:

"For this reason, the offence contains the safeguard that the behaviour must actually cause someone to feel alarmed, harassed or distressed (not that it is merely likely to do so)."

Yet the Bill scraps what the White Paper says is a necessary safeguard and specifically lays down that an offence is committed if behaviour or the use of words is "likely to harass, alarm or distress another person."

That was repudiated by the White Paper.

Again, the White Paper insisted, in italics, that the victim—as the White Paper called her or him—should have suffered substantial alarm, harassment or distress. The Bill does not contain the word "substantial". Yet again, the White Paper proposed what it called

"a sufficient maximum penalty of £100."

The Bill provides for a £400 penalty.

The Home Secretary seems to misunderstand what he is proposing. On the day of the publication of the Bill, he claimed on "The World At One" that the new offence of disorderly conduct would

"cover the kind of hooliganism where a group rushes up and down outside a block of flats terrorising people who live inside without actually causing a breach of the peace."

That is precisely what the Bill will not do.

First, the new offence does not require a victim, as was required in the White Paper. Secondly, the provision that the person charged is committing an offence only if he ignores a warning by the police is a complete fantasy. Can anyone imagine a gang harassing an old person on a housing estate, on hearing that the police had been called, deciding to wait until they arrived, wait to be warned and then persist in their behaviour? They would have run off long ago.

The Government, quite rightly, have included in the Bill a requirement for a police warning before arrest —

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Before charge.

Mr. Kaufman: Yes, before charge.

Mr. Hogg *rose*—

Mr. Kaufman: I accept the hon. Gentleman's point, even before he makes it. I apologise for my error.

The police are well aware that the offence is so widely drawn that it could be used at whim. That is a power that the police do not want, as the chief constable of Essex, on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers, told me in a letter stating:

"We are anxious to see a balanced approach which gives police adequate powers to maintain public order but does not lose the British police its reputation for restraint and impartiality."

Mr. Ken Weetch (Ipswich): Clause 5 is somewhat controversial. I have experienced a large number of complaints about loutish behaviour in shopping precincts in Ipswich. I have attended meetings with residents, shopkeepers and the police, who want to do something about the problem. However, they cannot do anything about such behaviour because it must relate to specific incidents, which they do not observe happening.

I would appreciate a strong lead from my right hon. Friend. Is he rejecting the clause in principle, or does he believe that the principle is worthy but the clause needs substantial amendment in Committee?

Mr. Kaufman: I am saying what I said when the White Paper was published last May. From my experience in my constituency, which is similar to my hon. Friend's experience, I know of the profound concern felt by those subjected to loutish behaviour that frightens them, but with which the police cannot deal under the present law. That is why I immediately welcomed the proposal in the White Paper. This clause will not deal with that sort of behaviour —

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Why not?

Mr. Kaufman: I was about to explain why not. Clause 5(5) requires a person to be warned by a constable and then

[Mr. Kaufman]

to persist in his behaviour before an arrest without warrant can take place. Let us take the example of old ladies who are regularly harassed. It is inconceivable that the louts would hang around for the arrival of the police, wait for a warning from a police officer and then meekly accept arrest. That is why I describe the clause as a fantasy. The behaviour to which my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) and I object, and which we want dealt with in the Bill, will not be caught by the clause.

If the Government could draft a clause that effectively dealt with the sort of complaints that so many hon. Members have experienced, I would, as I said nine months ago, look upon it with great favour. The problem is that the Government, after nine months, have found it impossible to draft such a clause. The clause that they have drafted fails to deal with the sort of behaviour that concerns my hon. Friend and myself, while creating an offence that has grave implications—not for those with whom we are trying to deal, but for other people. That is why I cannot accept the clause. If the Government put forward amendments in Committee to deal with such behaviour, clearly I should be prepared to consider them.

The offence in the clause will provide no protection for the vulnerable about whom I am primarily concerned, but will create circumstances in which the police will have the power to pick up anyone they choose of whose behaviour they disapprove. *The Times*, on 7 December, warned that the offence was

"extremely broad in its potential application"

and that

"police application of it will require tough monitoring if the old 'sus' problems are not to recur."

The *Daily Telegraph* leading article on 9 December described the disorderly conduct offence as "questionable", and went on to say:

"Parliament will have to ensure tight drafting to deter police excesses reminiscent of 'sus' and to prevent those who merely give vent to boisterous high spirits from obtaining criminal convictions."

I endorse those words. Unless appropriate amendments are tabled, the Opposition will oppose the clause.

Even more dangerous are the proposed limitations on the right to peaceful assembly, whether marches or open-air gatherings. Again, the *Daily Telegraph* rightly warned:

"The controversial new powers to impose conditions on the size, location and duration of demonstrations will clearly require sensitive policing if they are not to undermine freedom of assembly."

We object to the length of notice that will be required for marches and processions. The Bill provides for six clear days, while the Select Committee on Home Affairs recommended three days and the Association of County Councils said that 36 hours would be adequate. Ministers may point to Scottish legislation, which lays down a seven-day period, but there is a major difference between the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and this Bill. The Scottish Act provides that notice should be given to a local authority—the Regional Islands council. This Bill requires that notice is given to the police.

It is one thing for a decision about a march to be in the hands of a democratically-elected body, but another to force on to the police responsibility for imposing conditions that rest on political judgments. That is unfair to the police. Moreover, it is a role that the police simply do not want, as the chief constable of Essex has made clear.

Representatives of the Police Federation with whom I have discussed that point said:

"We do not want to have put into the hands of the police decisions which can be interpreted as political decisions."

I fully concur with the statement of Mr. Leslie Curtis, the chairman of the Police Federation, who said:

"The police of Britain must not be seen either as Maggie Thatcher's boot boys or as a people's militia."

The trouble is that the Bill goes a long way towards turning the reluctant and unwilling police into Maggie's boot boys.

The conditions in the Bill allow the police to impose on marches what can, in effect, amount to a ban by the police rather than by an elected authority. Of course, the police will use their discretion. They may, without conditions, allow a march by parents protesting against a road accident blackspot—but not one protesting against the arrival of cruise missiles. Indeed, the Home Secretary mentioned Greenham common in his speech. By doing that, inevitably they will be expressing a judgment on the merits of one against the other.

Moreover, if parents wish to demonstrate speedily and effectively, following an accident to one of their children, they will be able to do so only if the police agree to accept shorter notice. That limitation, based on value judgments that are inevitably subjective, is an unacceptable invasion of civil liberties.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *rose*——

Mr. Kaufman: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to proceed.

What applies to marches applies even more to peaceful open air assemblies, since the restrictions imposed in the Bill are unprecedented and, once again, can result in a de facto ban, although no banning power is contained in the Bill. The Government may claim that the new power of imposing conditions on open air meetings and gatherings can deal with disorder, for example, by providing powers to stop violence on a picket line, but, as the Home Secretary said, there are already ample powers to deal with violence and obstruction, whether on a picket line or elsewhere.

The Bill will give the police the power to limit peaceful picketing by small numbers of people. That the police may not necessarily use the power does not detract from its existence and, moreover, as there is no notice provision —we would completely oppose it—the power to impose conditions on assemblies is even more random and capricious than the limitations on marches. I cannot do better than quote a letter sent to the Home Secretary by the secretary of the Police Federation which, speaking of that power over assemblies, scornfully declares:

"It is ill conceived, totally impractical and entirely inappropriate to deal with the type of spontaneous disorder resulting from static demonstrations, pickets or football matches . . . we can see absolutely no merit in legislation that seeks to close a stable door after the horse has bolted and we suggest that this part of the White Paper has little or no merit from the point of view of practical application."

That is said by the Police Federation.

That dangerous innovation has less merit from the point of view of our traditional civil liberties. It is significant that in stating the circumstances in which conditions can be applied to marches, the Bill adds to the present limited criterion of "serious public disorder" the alterntive criterion of

"serious disruption to the life of the community".

It is significant that the "serious disruption" criterion can be applied also to open air meetings and gatherings. What is more, the Home Secretary has given an example of what that can mean. He referred to a demonstration outside Selfridges about South African oranges, and suggested that under the new powers the demonstration could be moved away from Selfridges. However, the whole point of such a demonstration is that it should take place at the point of grievance. By moving it away, the police would be making a political judgment. Moreover, they would be making an even greater and more fundamental judgment that the right to demonstrate is less important than the right to shop. It is a provision based on the view that demonstrations on matters of principle are not part of the life of the community. In a democracy, the right peacefully to state a point of view is at least as precious as the right to buy oranges, but the Bill tips the law against that right to state a point of view. The only defence for the Government is that at least they are consistent. The Prime Minister is ready to give to those attending open air meetings the same right of free expression as she gives to those attending Cabinet meetings.

Mr. Hurd: May I press the right hon. Gentleman—on the oranges rather than on the Cabinet? As he accurately said, the test is one of serious disruption. Is he saying that in his view there is no balance to be struck, and it would be reasonable for the demonstration that he said I gave as an example to disrupt Oxford street to such an extent that it was closed to shoppers in the weeks before Christmas? Would he think that that was carrying the right to demonstrate a little too far? Does he accept that there is a balance to be struck?

Mr. Kaufman: Of course, there is a balance to be struck, but it will not be struck by the provisions in the Bill because the police will define subjectively what "serious disruption" means. All that I say to the right hon. Gentleman is that there are powers already in the law to deal with the disturbance that he mentions. It was he who chose the example of Selfridges and the oranges. It was a good example because it shows that he regards shopping as more important than the right, in a democracy, of peaceful protest. If that is his point of view, it is as well that we should know that it is.

Apart from odd corners, this is in parts a silly Bill and in parts a pointless Bill, but above all it is a dangerous Bill. The Home Secretary talks of a Government strategy for dealing with crime but in fact the Government have no strategy for dealing with crime. It is likely that the main outcome of the crime prevention seminar at No. 10 last week, in so far as it has any result at all, is that burgled householders will find it even more difficult in future to get their insurance companies to pay up. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act, now coming substantially into force, imposes bureaucratic burdens that will reduce police effectiveness. The Public Order Bill will reduce further that effectiveness, through dragging substantial numbers of police away from fighting real crime to supervising and interfering with the rights of free peaceful assembly, and it will do so against the wishes of the police themselves.

What do police who have been involved in coping with disorder say about the underlying causes of that disorder? In his report on the Handsworth riots, Chief Constable Dear declared:

> "I would never seek to minimise the problems of being young, black and unemployed in a decaying inner city environment. Black youths suffer particularly from the effects of prejudice, unemployment and scarce resources. These and other ills cannot be ignored and deserve to be addressed by society as a whole."

There is not a word in the Bill, nor any other action by the Government, that addresses the ills that Chief Constable Dear says cannot be ignored.

Last month, Commander Alex Marnoch, who was in charge of Brixton at the time of last autumn's riots, and in whom the Home Secretary has such confidence that he is now being transferred and given responsibility for both the Palace of Westminster and Buckingham palace, stated: "if unemployment continues to rise and the stabilising middle-aged black population continues its exodus to safer areas, further major disturbances will be inevitable".

The article quoting Commander Marnoch stated:

> "He called for fresh initiatives from the Government, the local council, and education, housing and social services departments."

Commander Marnoch said:

> "'Unless there is an influx of extra jobs, or the population moves away, we are going to have serious problems.'"

Yet there is not a word in the Bill, nor any other action by the Government, designed to ward off the further major inevitable disturbances of which he warns. Indeed, last month's housing investment programme allocations for capital spending on housing are only 29 per cent. of the level when Labour left office. Last month's rate support grant settlement for the partnership authorities increases by £400 million to £2,600 million the amount of rate support grant that the partnership authorities have lost under the Government. Youth unemployment in Britain stands at 1,250,000, nearly three times what it was under Labour. Nearly half a million of those under 25 have been out of work for over a year.

While those scandalous facts persist, no legislation will have any hope of dealing with the dreadful disorders from which this country has suffered so grievously in recent years and months. At the end of his report on the Handsworth riots, Chief Constable Dear quoted these words:

> "'Utopia is not a republic of fraternity to be taken by violence. Neither can it be taken by men who have no vision of better things for mankind.'"

We in the Opposition reject the violence that is a curse upon the Britain whose values we cherish. We also reject the men and women who have no vision, the men and women who sit on the Government Front Bench. I call upon the House to vote for the amendment.

6 pm

Mr. Mark Carlisle (Warrington, South): The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) addressed the House for 49 minutes. For somewhat over half of that time we heard what might be looked upon as the right hon. Member's set speech on crime. It seemed to me to have precious little to do with the Bill that we are debating, although it may have a considerable amount to do with consolidating the right hon. Gentleman's position in his party. He spent the other half of that time making what seemed to me to be Committee points. With great respect, most of them were wrong, certainly as regards affray and clause 5. At no stage did the right hon. Gentleman give any reason for his announcement that the Opposition intend to divide the House against the Bill.

Before I turn to the Bill, upon which I intend to speak briefly, may I point out to the right hon. Gentleman that

[Mr. Mark Carlisle]

I am sure that a general debate on crime would be welcomed, but that is not what we are debating today. In answer to his set speech on crime, I would point out to him that today there are 13,000 more policemen than there were when his party was in office, and that we are spending a third more, in real terms, on the police than was spent at that time.

The right hon. Gentleman attacked my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department and suggested that one ought not to talk about increases in proposed expenditure. He ought to talk to his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and to all his colleagues. From 1979 to 1982 they did nothing but attack the present Government. However, their attack was based on the figures of proposed expenditure, for instance, upon education. I was told, not that we were spending more, but that we were cutting what was being spent; not on the basis that we were spending less than had been spent in the year before, but on the basis that we were spending less than it had been proposed by the previous Government should be spent on education. Therefore, the Opposition must get their act together.

As for the right hon. Gentleman's dissertation on the Shops Bill, I appreciate that he likes to parade his intelligence before the House, but he took rather a long time to tell us that if shops were not open there would be no shoplifting! That point may be factually accurate, but it does not add to this debate. I turn, therefore, to the Bill that we are debating.

There are two principles upon which both sides of the House may be able to agree. First, the maintenance of public order—the right for people to be able to walk about freely and to pursue their lives without fear of attack and intimidation, and particularly without fear of attack from the mob—is a fundamental responsibility of the Government. Secondly, the traditional freedom to protest, march and demonstrate is an equally important right, as is the right peacefully to picket. Those rights must be preserved in a democratic society. However, while we preserve those rights, we must safeguard the rights of other people so that the right to protest peacefully is conducted without interference, violence, intimidation or threats, and without infringing the rights of other citizens. That balance, to which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary referred this afternoon, is the balance that the Bill tries to assess.

I hope that the right hon. Member for Gorton will at least agree with me that we as a society are not being very successful about either of those issues. One has only to consider the degree of hooliganism and the riots in various areas of this country to realise that our society has not been very successful in maintaining order so that people can go about their lives without fear and intimidation. The scenes at the *Warrington Messenger* and during the miners' dispute show that we have not been successful in creating a balance between, on the one hand, the right to picket peacefully, and on the other the right not to be intimidated by threats. These are basic problems which the House should consider and which the Bill attempts to tackle.

The right hon. Gentleman is right when he says that the inadequacies of the existing law are not nearly so important in terms of controlling football hooliganism and maintaining public order as is the inability to enforce the existing law. I repeat, therefore, that it is far more relevant that now there are 13,000 more policemen than anything that the Bill can do. However, the fact that there are inadequacies and difficulties over enforcing the existing law does not mean that there are not certain areas of the law that are inadequate and need to be reformed. They have been identified by the Law Commission, by the Government and by Select Committee on Home Affairs, and they are referred to in the Bill. Despite what the right hon. Gentleman says, the Bill attempts to tackle the problems without the graphic widening of police powers that he suggests.

Many other hon. Members want to speak in this debate. I intend to deal with parts I and IV. I understand that part I follows the Law Commission's proposals. It is a sensible codification of the common law. With great respect to the right hon. Gentleman, I suggest that he should speak to his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) who is about to leave the Chamber. If he does so, I think he will find that he was wrong about the point that he made concerning affray. The law, as provided for in the Bill, on both riot and affray is consistent with the current law and the Law Commission's proposals. In any event, this is a Committee point. I may be wrong, but I am prepared to risk saying that I believe that I am right and that the law on affray at the moment is as is set out in the Bill.

As for clause 5, I agree with the right hon. Member for Gorton that there is room for argument about whether it is necessary to show that what was done was with the belief that it was likely to harass someone, or whether it is necessary to call witnesses to prove that someone has been harassed. But these are Committee points. There is genuine concern about a type of behaviour which causes alarm and harassment, but which is not dealt with at the moment. Again with respect to the right hon. Gentleman, his points on clause 5 were completely misconceived. He said that, because one cannot arrest a person without a warrant, it is similar to saying that one cannot proceed against him for that offence.

As for part II, the major part of the Bill, the background against which we have to consider it is the enormous increase in demonstrations and marches of all kinds in recent years. We are told that during the last 20 years there has been a fourfold increase in marches and demonstrations in London, and that during the last 10 years they have doubled. Demonstrations and marches take a great deal of police time and money. This has an enormous effect upon police morale. Saturday after Saturday and Sunday after Sunday large numbers of policemen are involved in policing demonstrations and marches. It is right, therefore, to examine whether the balance is right, or whether it can be varied to relieve the police of those problems.

The House ought to accept that "serious disorder" is not the only ground on which the police may impose conditions. The volume of traffic and the way in which people move around the country compared with 1936 makes serious disruption of the life of a community an equally fair test in deciding where the balance lies between the rights of the protester and the rights of the individual.

The Bill therefore needs to be tested against three questions. First, should those who organise marches have to give notice? Secondly, should there be a general power to impose conditions on the basis of serious disruption as well as serious disorder? Thirdly, should those conditions as a whole be applicable to static demonstrations as well as to marches? Any sensible assessment of those three

questions leads to the answer, yes, there is a case for asking those who organise marches to give notice; yes, there is a case for imposing conditions affecting serious disruption as well as serious disorder; and yes, there is a case for imposing similar conditions on demonstrations.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *rose*——

Mr. Carlisle: I hope that my hon. Friend will not mind if I do not give way. I am trying to make a short speech. I have almost finished, so it would be unfair to give way.

There may be arguments about whether seven days' notice is the right length, but again that is a Committee point. Many people have argued for the right to give notice to the police. The right hon. Gentleman says that he is worried about the additional pressures that will be put on the police, but surely it is better for the police to be informed in advance of marches and to be able to discuss informally with those organising them the routes to be taken to reduce the risk of disorder than to have the pressure of having to police at short notice marches over which the police have not been consulted.

Surely it is right that we should allow conditions to be imposed on the number, location and duration of demonstrations. The right hon. Gentleman says that that is an interference with the right to peaceful protest, but one must remember that those conditions can be imposed only where the police have reason to believe that there is likely to be serious disorder. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman is saying that the conditions imposed by the police when they fear serious disorder are a direct attack not on the fundamental right to picket or to protest peacefully, but on the fundamental right, which does not exist, to cause serious disorder, damage and disruption to others. One cannot look at the power to impose the condition without looking at the basis on which it is made. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman is wrong.

The right hon. Gentleman's amendment has three parts. First, it declines to give a Second Reading to the Bill because of the general increase in crime, which is irrelevant to the Bill. Secondly, it says that the Bill will not be effective in preventing disorder. Much of that is a matter of numbers rather than of the law. It goes on to say that the Bill will divert scarce police resources into this area. By requiring advance notice, by giving the power to impose conditions where the police believe disorder will occur, the Bill will not divert scarce police resources from other areas, but will in fact allow fewer people to be involved in policing demonstrations and more to be involved in other work. At the same time, the amendment says that the Bill seriously undermines traditional civil liberties. It is not civil liberties that are undermined by the Bill, only the abuse of civil liberties where those liberties are used in such a way as to intimidate or attack the rights of others.

6.11 pm

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): The right hon. and learned Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) underlined how necessary it is to strike a balance between the need to protect public order and civil liberties. Of course, that is correct and all of us can accept that. But the Opposition's complaint — my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) made it extremely effectively—is that almost every aspect of the Bill enlarges police powers and may diminish civil liberties while no measures are being taken to try to restore the balance. It is my right hon. Friend who is seeking to do that.

It is illustrative of the Government's attitude to these matters that the first Bill to be introduced since the Christmas recess, after all the experience that we have had over the past year or two, should be one that enlarges the power of the police, often without the police wishing to have their powers enlarged, and diminishes the rights of protest and does so in the face of much opinion — Liberal as well as Labour—throughout Britain. That is the major defect of the Bill which my right hon. Friend has so skilfully underlined.

The Home Secretary said that we must not act in panic or anger in dealing with such matters and I am sure that when he says that he means it. But some aspects of the Bill are undertaken and presented to the House in panic or anger, or at least as a result of panic and anger, as, for example, that which was felt in many quarters during the miners' strike. I remember vividly how panic and anger was pressed into the service of the Government on some of those occasions.

I remember the terrible night on which someone was killed when a boulder was pushed off a bridge in Wales just next door to my constituency. That was a tragic and terrible affair. I remember the panic in which the prosecution took place. I remember the charge of murder and the Prime Minister appearing on television that night and saying that it was murder. I remember the chief of police saying that it was murder. I remember the mood in my constituency at the time that those things happened and the mood in the court case that occurred soon after. I remember how the Director of Public Prosecutions, as some of us believed, went ahead with the prosecution in a mood of panic and anger, and how the jury, I am sorry to say, were also affected by panic and anger, as can happen.

But thanks to British justice—and all honour to those who did it—thanks to the Appeal Court and thanks to what happened when the matter was taken to the House of Lords, the charge of murder was changed to manslaughter, as it should have been from the beginning. That should be a lesson to us all. The fact that a person was killed was the worst part of the tragedy but the families concerned also suffered a terrible tragedy and I am glad to say that eventually the British courts upheld the proper sense of proportion. That is what we seek to maintain in the Bill and that is what my right hon. Friend was striving to sustain, and he did it extremely well.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Is the right hon. Gentleman trying in some way to diminish the gravity of the offence committed by those who toppled a boulder over a bridge into a car?

Mr. Foot: I cannot understand why the hon. Gentleman should make that intervention when I have underlined exactly the opposite part of the case. Indeed, I said so at the time and I have said so on every occasion that I have referred to it. My hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) has referred to the same matter. We have never diminished the horror of that event, but that is not a reason for British courts to operate in an atmosphere of panic and anger. That is what I was saying. It is a great credit to the British judicial system that eventually the highest court in the land said

[Mr. Foot]

that those of us who protested at the time were right and not some of those who joined the panic and anger. We should deal with all such matters as coolly as possible and not seek to exaggerate the dangers.

The Government have rushed ahead with establishing new penalties and crimes which interfere with the rights of protest. The new charge of disorderly conduct was criticised when it was proposed, not only by my right hon. Friend and the Labour party, although we criticised it strongly—not in the terms in which it was put in the White Paper, as my right hon. Friend has rightly said—and a fair judgment was made about that. According to *The Times*, there was a change. I do not know whether the accounts are correct. I know how reticent the Secretary of State has to be in revealing discussion in his Department but according to *The Times* his Department objected originally to the way in which the new charge of disorderly conduct was proposed. That may be a complete fiction on the part of *The Times* and may be dismissed, but I believe that many people in his Department rightly had anxieties about giving the police these powers which, in some instances, the police do not want. They may add to one of the many perils to our public order at present — the deepening division between the public and police in many areas. We must overcome that by Acts of Parliament, wisdom and a lack of panic and anger in dealing with such questions, including picketing.

It is rather suprising that the right hon. Gentleman said so much about picketing. He said that there has been no panic and anger but there has been a little action in panic and anger in proposing to deal with picketing under the Bill. The Bill does not say that it will deal with that at all. There is no reference in the decription of the Bill to dealing with picketing, and the name of the Secretary of State for Employment does not even appear in it. As far as I know, this is the first time that, in a Bill dealing with picketing, the Secretary of State for Employment has not had any say. We know that we have a peculiar Secretary of State for Employment in the other place, and one with other interests. A Bill to deal with picketing, its consequences and how the policing of it may be operated, has been introduced without any say by the Department of Employment in the matter. That means to say that the Government and the Home Secretary in particular did not make any effort to have any discussions with the trade unions about these provisions. It would have been more sensible if they had, because some of the parts of the Bill dealing with picketing will not be workable.

There are also major changes in the way that demonstrations can take place and are governed by police decisions. Again, the police do not necessarily want this power, but if they do, they are unwise. I believe that many policemen would prefer the process of decision-making to be similar to that in Scotland. There, matters are referred to the local authorities rather than the police, and we should consider extending that provision to this country. It is a great mistake in a Bill that generally enlarges the powers of the police at the same time greatly to interfere with the rights of demonstration. It puts the police into the position of having to judge which demonstrations are to be tolerated and allowed in particular circumstances.

The balance is against the Government. There was a good leading article in *The Guardian* when the Bill was published at the beginning of December and its conclusion still stands. It said:

> "Overriding all these serious problems, however, are the bill's new powers for advance police control over meetings, assemblies and mass pickets. Let there be no mincing of words. These powers mean that the police will be able to decide whether crowds of every kind can gather. They will undoubtedly be used to stop strikers from picketing peacefully. They will undoubtedly be used to stop protesters from gathering outside the South African embassy. They will undoubtedly be used against people who gather at nuclear bases. They will make protesting citizens into licensed visitors to their own streets. Yet it need not be so, not if the bill contained a positive right to assemble and march."

The last provision would require a balanced approach, but there is none in the Bill. The Government have not sought to protect the right to demonstrate as they should have done and therefore the Bill has rightly been condemned by all champions of civil liberties.

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): The right hon. Gentleman has just quoted from *The Guardian* leader:

> "They will undoubtedly be used to stop strikers from picketing peacefully."

The right hon. Gentleman is referring to clause 12, so will he point out, under that clause, where and how that can be so?

Mr. Foot: The police have the power, in certain circumstances, to say whether they will allow a demonstration, and that proves my point. The hon. Gentleman can join me. If he wishes picketing to be dealt with separately, that can be done. That would be the proper way to go about it. It is not right for the Government to have included propositions to govern picketing, as they have done, without any consideration of the contrary arguments and the general points concerned. As a result, there will be grave future industrial disputes about whether the Bill infringes the right, which many people thought was absolute, to picket peacefully. I am not talking about picketing with violence, because that is against the common law. Already, powers exist for dealing with that, as the right hon. and learned Member for Warrington, South said.

I shall comment now on another aspect of the Bill, which I dare say was a reason why the Government introduced the Bill so speedily—I am not objecting on that account. There has been tremendous publicity about football hooliganism and the Government have had to take some action. I do not object to some of the propositions, but some, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton has said, are unworkable and will not assist in solving the problem, but will make it more acute. It would have been more sensible to think out a proper solution.

Again, these provisions are unbalanced, because dealing with football hooliganism is only one aspect of the matter. We should ensure that football thrives. I sometimes think that the Government think that the way to stamp out football hooliganism is to stamp out football. If they do not take a whole series of other actions, football will be stamped out. The imposition of demands on both small and large football clubs are so great that the Government will drive many of them out of business. What will happen to law and order then? What happens if large numbers of football clubs cannot keep going? Many are trembling on the verge of bankruptcy now.

After the terrible tragedy at Bradford, lessons had to be learned. The Government should have come forward then

and offered financial assistance to all football clubs to enable them to carry out the measures required to make their premises safe. In my constituency there are not so many football clubs as small rugby clubs. Rightly, they are having to carry out new safety provisions as soon as possible, but they do not have enough money and therefore should have much more assistance from the Government, which would not cost all that much. The Welsh Sports Council has only about £3·5 million to spend and therefore could not possibly deal with the problem. However, if the Government had any imagination they could deal with the problem. The Home Secretary should not have introduced such restrictive measures without also introducing measures that would have allowed football clubs to carry on and to prosper.

This is not a minor matter. If many football clubs were driven to bankruptcy, the addition to hooliganism and to the dangers of riot or people expressing their feelings in violent ways would be enormous, but the Government do not make such book-keeping or understand it. After the Bradford disaster, they told the football clubs that they must speedily put their houses in order and put in new stands so that such things would never again occur. The Government are a good deal swifter in telling football clubs that they must spend money that they do not have in making their grounds safe than they are in dealing with manufacturers who, for example, offend against health and safety provisions. That is a different affair. The Government linger, do not take any action, cut the number of inspectors and do not mind if there are more breaches of the law.

I do not understand why the Government have such a hatred of football—perhaps it is because no one in the Cabinet understands what football is about or what happens at the weekends. Huge numbers of people depend for their excitement and interest on the way in which sport is conducted. All that the Government do is impose a few impractical restrictions—not all of the restrictions are impractical—and say that football clubs must carry them out. The Government will not give the clubs any aid to do so, and seem to feel that if the clubs go bankrupt, so much the better, because that is how the market system works. That is a mad way to deal with such a critical position.

The inner cities may have a worse problem, but other parts which are not described as inner cities face the same problem. In my constituency we have had 20 per cent. unemployment since 1979, and three out of four young people have never had a hope of a job in the area. That is the case in many parts, not only in inner cities. The Government have taken the largest amount of rate support grant from our areas—just as they have taken huge resources from the partnership areas—although we are hit by the heaviest unemployment, and are threatened with the gravest forms of disorder.

The huge increase in crime is not an accident, nor utterly undecipherable. I am not saying that it is all due to one cause, but anyone who imagines that mass unemployment, especially among young people, does not contribute to an atmosphere in which crime grows has not the faintest notion of the mood that prevails in many areas today. The division between north and south, or however it is described, is a division between favoured areas and those which are left to take the Government's brutalities on the chin and on every other part of their industrial anatomy. Those areas face the dangers, but the Government have not a glimmer of understanding for them.

The Government talk of balance in these matters. It may be no coincidence that the Bill is being introduced this Session when the greatest judge we have had in recent years retires from the Bench. I wish that the Government had listened to what Lord Scarman had to say, instead of to those who urged them to introduce the Bill. Lord Scarman held a balanced view. He said:

> "The social conditions in Brixton—many of which are to be found in other inner city areas—do not provide an excuse for disorder. They cannot justify attacks on the police in the streets, arson or riot."

Labour Members reiterate that. Lord Scarman continued:

> "At the same time the disorders in Brixton cannot be fully understood unless they are seen in the context of complex political, social and economic factors. In analysing communal disturbances such as those in Brixton and elsewhere, to ignore the existence of those factors is to put the nation in peril."

Lord Scarman made many proposals, many of which have never been carried out. I have not the slightest doubt what his view would be about the withdrawal of money from inner cities and areas such as my constituency. I have little doubt of the contempt he would have for this pitiful measure to deal with such a giant disease.

6.32 pm

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) who displayed his immense anxiety for liberty and freedom. That anxiety is as keenly felt by hon. Members on this side of the House as by the right hon. Gentleman. He raised many points about the Bill, but the Bill seeks to balance the rights of people and to define their freedoms and obligations.

This is not a hasty piece of legislation, as has sometimes been implied in the debate so far. It emerges from one of the most careful and profound considerations which began when my right hon. Friend, now Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Lords, introduced a review of public order in 1979. Many people, groups and institutions have contributed to the work of the review, the inquiry and the Bill. They include groups who have already been referred to, such as the Associations of Chief Police Officers of England and Wales, and of Scotland. They were carefully consulted, and as a consequence of some of their suggestions the proposals were amended before coming to the House for our detailed consideration. The Police Federation of England and Wales submitted a substantial review on public order, which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary took into account. Lord Scarman's report has also contributed to the Bill, as has the report of the Law Commission on public order offences, and the works of many other bodies and institutions.

Clearly, the Bill touches on important, difficult and controversial matters affecting freedom and liberty, but the degree of contribution to its clauses has been considerable during recent years. The Bill does not markedly depart from our philosophy of policing. On the contrary, an underpinning principle of the Bill is that the police will continue to employ the minimum force in the preservation of public order on the streets. The Bill does not dramatically extend police powers, but represents a careful effort to uphold traditional freedoms, such as the

[Mr. John Wheeler]

right to protest, march and picket peaceably, within a framework of law. Surely that is what we all want to achieve.

I am especially pleased to see a better definition of riot, and of the supporting offences of affray and disorderly conduct. The old common law definitions were in need of review. We should remember that riot involves the deployment of 12 or more people committing grave and serious offences. The Bill gives courts greater sentencing flexibility, and reflects the gravity of the offence of riot. It is right that it should be defined as one of the rarest and least prosecuted offences, and I hope that that will always be so.

The offence of disorderly conduct, which is new and is at the bottom of the scale of crimes that may be committed, is a necessary offence that should be included on the statute book. All hon. Members will have experienced residents' associations complaining about what a minority of people, usually youths, have done to terrify an estate and disrupt the peace and tranquillity of a community. We all know of the difficulty of the police in dealing with such incidents. The offence of disorderly conduct is satisfactorily set out.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that it was sensible to drop the word "substantial" which appeared in the White Paper. I speak from the point of view of one who has served as a magistrate and has had to try cases. It is extremely difficult for a court to say whether what occurred was "substantial" because it is a question of debate, degree and interpretation of what "substantial" may mean. The offence of disorderly conduct as defined in the Bill makes it clear that there must be a victim or group of victims who have originated the complaint to the police. It has been said in the House and elsewhere that this is a type of sus law offence. I was Chairman of the Select Committee that prepared the report that led to the House repealing the sus law.

Mr. Alex Carlile: The hon. Gentleman says that there is a requirement in clause 5 that someone—presumably a member of the public—should make a complaint to the police. I should be grateful if the hon. Gentleman would point out that provision, because I have overlooked it.

Mr. Wheeler: The clause does not specifically say——

Mr. Carlile: Then why say that it does?

Mr. Wheeler: If the hon. and learned Gentleman will allow me to continue, he will perhaps understand my point. Of course the clause does not state that there shall be a victim. I suggest that that is not said in almost all of the criminal law. The provisions create a series of offences based upon events. It is the prosecution's duty to produce the evidence to buttress its case before the courts. The offence of disorderly conduct is not a victimless crime. It requires a group of people or an individual to pose a complaint to the police and say, "We have trouble on our council estate. We need your attendance. We need you to take some action."

Mr. John Ryman (Blyth Valley): Surely that is an oversimplification. There are many cases in which prosecutions are brought in which, for one reason or another, the victim has not complained or cannot be traced. The evidence to the prosecution therefore consists of a police observation or something like that. Is not the hon. Gentleman wrong in saying that there must be a victim to produce affirmative evidence of the offence?

Mr. Wheeler: There must be a victim, even if it is only the state. If a vehicle excise licence is not obtained, there is a loss of revenue and the victim is the community. It is in that context that I deploy the term "victim".

The disorderly conduct offence is not a new sus law. I was Chairman of the Select Committee that prepared a report that led eventually to the House repealing that part of the Vagrancy Act 1824 which so many of us thought offensive and undesirable. Clause 5 is in no way a sus law. If it were, I would determinedly oppose it. I welcome the provision. It will make a significant contribution towards improving the quality of life of many ordinary people, especially in the urban areas where they are often at a great disadvantage because of the conduct of a minority.

It is important that the police should be notified about marches and parades. It is a matter of debate whether it should be seven days' notice or less. During the 17 months between 12 February 1983 and 20 July 1984 there were 112 marches in the city of Westminster in the heart of London requiring the deployment of more than 100 officers of the Metropolitan police. When a large march is taking place and the resources of the police have to be called in from all over the Metropolitan police area—this affects the lives of people elsewhere in London who are thus deprived of a police presence—it is reasonable that the police should have the opportunity to prepare for the march and to summon their resources.

The new power to deal with static demonstrations is reasonable and should help the police to control the type of events that cause distress. I remind hon. Members of the particularly unpleasant incident in St. James's square a year ago, which had such awesome consequences. I welcome especially the clause dealing with incitement to racial hatred. I strongly believe that people of every race and colour deserve the protection of the law against racial abuse and the kind of hate campaigns that some hon. Members, especially those from inner London, know can occur. It is right to give reasonable protection to all sections of the community. I welcome the provision to cover behaviour, words or written material intended to cause racial hatred.

The proposal for a new exclusion order system, which depends to some extent on the provision of a photograph, is reasonable and should offer some deterrence to football hooliganism. There is nothing new in this, because, 85 years ago, a black book was maintained in most police stations containing the photographs of habitual drunkards who caused disorder on the streets. Police officers who were going out on duty could peruse the photographs to ascertain those people from whom they might expect trouble and the action that they might need to take. With this measure the police will be able to use photographs through their collators' offices to prevent hooligans from going to football matches.

The Bill will be subject to the inevitable scrutiny of the Standing Committee, but it is a balanced package which seeks to ensure that the police and the courts have reasonable, but fair, powers. It tries to deal with the most controversial aspects of public life — the use of the

highway and the behaviour of people on it. I commend the legislation. I believe that it will be successful in reaching its objectives.

6.46 pm

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): The hon. Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler) was right to remind the House that the genesis of the Bill was not recent. Since Lord Whitelaw initiated the inquiry into public order, a succession of events have accentuated the need for the review that was introduced in the wake of the Southall riots. From time to time the Government give the impression, not of carrying out a deliberate review, but of responding by legislation to events as they arise. I take no general exception to that — indeed, the alliance supported, for the most part, the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985 to deal with football hooliganism. This Bill extends those proposals.

I listened with great attention to the Home Secretary, in the hope that he would underline and explain the Government's basic philosophy and objective in bringing forward this legislation with its sweeping changes in the codification of the old common law offences — in the light of the recommendations of the Law Commission — and with its important and, in some respects, controversial amendments to the Public Order Act 1936.

The introduction by the Home Secretary, in which he set out his thinking, was extremely exiguous. He merely stated that there were two considerations: first, that the citizen should be able to pursue his lawful business without interference or disruption by others exercising unreasonable means to threaten; and, secondly, that there should be rights of assembly. He did not say how he felt that the changes he was proposing in the Bill would increase police effectiveness to control an unacceptable breakdown of public order. That was the penumbra of his speech that was missing. It leads one to take the view that the Bill contains an element of gesture which is inappropriate when considering its merits.

The Government too often confuse law and order by linking them inextricably together. Of course it is right that the framework of the law should be such as to enable those who are charged with the responsibility of maintaining the law to do their job effectively. We must express considerable doubt about whether mere changes in the law render more effective the work of the law enforcement agencies. There is a strong onus of proof on those who seek to make changes in the law which in some respects curtail established principles and in others change practices and laws which over the years have been found adequate to provide for the needs of the police.

The Home Secretary has not explained the deficiencies in the existing public order law, or the fact that representations were made by some bodies and individuals, or why he thought it right to depart from the proposals contained in the Government's White Paper. His speech was empty of argument to persuade me that the changes are necessary or desirable. The right hon. Gentleman has conceded somewhat too much to those who feel less sensitive than they should about the rights of the individual in a democratic society. He produced a most convoluted argument to show that his proposal to extend controls over static assemblies and marches to those who threatened coercion was in some way a libertarian measure. He did not face the difficulty that traditionally the police have found little problem in controlling public meetings by the use of the criminal law.

The increase in the number of public demonstrations is not indicative of a growing problem of control. They might involve more police than before, and that perhaps is inevitable if we are to maintain the right of freedom of assembly to which we are, I believe, committed.

The common law powers, in particular the breach of the peace powers, available to the police have worked relatively well, and there is not the same pressing need for an extension of the controls contained in the Public Order Act 1936 as there was perceived to be in 1936. Merely because 50 years have elapsed is not a good reason, as the Home Secretary seemed to suggest, for enlarging the powers in the way that he proposes.

The issue which the Home Secretary hinted — he never stated it — was crucial in his thinking was the fact that it was necessary to exercise prior restraint over demonstrations which might threaten a breach of public order. I presume he feels that the common law remedies which have been customarily invoked by the police to deal with static assemblies are inadequate because they are exercised ex post facto. That is not strictly the case, because breach of the peace powers can be invoked before trouble occurs.

The argument about the need for such powers would have carried greater weight if the Government had shown the slightest inclination to use the civil powers which they took to themselves to control mass picketing during the miners' strike. It was conspicuous that those civil powers were not used. One can only assume that that was because the Government felt that it was inappropriate to use them.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *rose*——

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman always provides a descant to my speech, and because I enjoy his speeches I am delighted to give way.

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman frequently gets his facts wrong, but he is a nice chap and I always like listening to him. Civil powers belong to the employers in disputes, and they cannot be invoked by the Government acting as the Government.

Mr. Maclennan: The point at issue is whether the powers, be they civil or criminal, are effective. The Government went to great lengths to persuade the House that the civil power should be amended to deal with the circumstances which we now appear to be having to deal with by amending the criminal law. I am not persuaded that the Government were wrong to effect that change in the civil law, but they cannot claim that the civil law failed during the miners' strike and therefore the criminal law must be amended, because they never used the civil law.

Mr. Hogg: The Government do not have the power to invoke the civil law; that is for the employer.

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman is not as naive as he would sometimes like us to believe when he suggests that there was no communication between the Government and the chairman of the affected nationalised steel and coal industries.

Mr. Lyell: Will the hon. Gentleman clarify his party's position on this matter? It is accepted by the National Union of Mineworkers — the NUM suggested it — that six was a reasonable number of peaceful pickets. If a great

[Mr. Lyell]

mob of people who are likely physically to try to prevent others from going into work are standing beside those six and blocking the way, does his party oppose the fact that the police should have the power to say, "No, you must stand over there as one of the conditions of your demonstration"?

Mr. Maclennan: The police already have the power to take action if they apprehend that a breach of the peace will result from the presence of more than six pickets. It is an offence to cause a breach of the peace. It is that provision that gives the police the authority that they enjoy.

I supported the Government's view that those who considered that their civil liberties or those of their employees were at risk could invoke the civil law. I am not persuaded that the balance of the argument favours giving the police the power in respect of static assemblies that the Bill proposes. A fine balance must be struck between the need to protect the right of freedom of expresssion and the right to peaceful assembly in association with others, and the duty to protect individuals going about their lawful business from violence, intimidation and harassment. The Government have not dispatched the onus of showing that the law that distinguished between marches and static assembly 50 years ago should be altered.

The Government have not only extended the controls to static assembly, but they have changed the grounds on which the police may exercise controls on marches. The scope of the Public Order Act 1936 has been widened unacceptably. It is no longer confined to circumstances where the police believe that there will be serious risk of public disorder. The additional circumstance, where serious disruption to community life is feared, or where it is feared that an individual could be faced with intimidation or coercion, are unacceptable extensions of that power.

We agree that the requirement of notification is acceptable in principle, although we can argue in Committee about the length of time. The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) got it right when he distinguished between the Scottish case and that of England. Six clear days' notice is too long. The effectiveness of demonstration often comes from its spontaneity, but we can pursue that point in Committee.

My principal anxiety is that the Government have not given weight to the inhibition which the controls on assemblies and marches will place on freedom of expression. It is easy to drive opposition underground, but that can be considerably more dangerous to society than opposition that is freely expressed in an orderly way by a group of people appearing in public. The Government should not curtail freedom of assembly without producing more evidence to suggest that curtailment will have the desired effect.

I wish to discuss the new offence of disorderly conduct as defined in clause 5, which differs from the definition in the White Paper. This is one of the Government's more risky steps in the Bill and one which has been taken without any compelling reason. The alliance supported the view that there was a need for codification of the old common law offences, and we broadly supported the definitions of those new offences in the White Paper. We believe that there is a case for amending section 5 of the Public Order Act 1936 to create the new offences in clauses 4 and 5. However, the definitions in clause 5 are alarming.

With regard to disorderly conduct, when the White Paper was published we supported the view that there was a need to create an offence punishable by a fine for threatening or abusive words or behaviour which caused substantial alarm, harassment or distress. There is no such requirement in the Bill.

The Government strongly supported the original proposals in the White Paper, which set out the proposed limitations on the new offence. Paragraph 3.26 of the White Paper states:

"The Government recognises that there would be justifiable objections to a wide extension of the criminal law which might catch conduct not deserving of criminal sanctions. For this reason the offence contains the safeguard that the behaviour must actually cause someone to feel alarmed, harassed or distressed (not that it is merely likely to do so). Any degree of annoyance or disturbance will not suffice: because the offence would be concerned primarily to protect the weak and vulnerable, the proposed definition requires evidence that the victim suffered *substantial* alarm, harassment or distress."

The definition is not simply a matter for the Committee. An important issue of principle is raised. The Bill hands to the police a wide discretionary power which, if used insensitively, could degenerate into a serious exacerbation of the relations that exist between the more junior members of the police who come into contact with the public and those who are most likely to be involved in that type of offence, such as young people and ethnic minorities.

It is especially disturbing that the police will not be required to produce in court the person who is alleged to have been alarmed. In fact, there is no requirement that anyone has to be alarmed. The clause is sufficiently seriously defective to call into question whether the Bill should be supported on Second Reading. However, my objections are wider than that. The alliance supports the amendment tabled by the Labour party, and we broadly adopt its reasoning.

There have been some striking breakdowns of public order in Britain in recent years, which have understandably given rise to considerable public disquiet. Before we legislate to change the law, it is important to show that the proposed changes will produce the necessary effect. The Government did not discharge that duty in the speech of the Home Secretary tonight.

7.9 pm

Mr. Warren Hawksley (The Wrekin): I was glad to hear the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) say how the alliance will vote tonight, because I was not sure about the position from the arguments that he put. However, the hon. Gentleman must be grateful that he succeeded in doubling the representation of his party in the House today when the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) arrived during his speech. His speech showed the problems of the alliance, which does not know which way it is going on this and on many other issues.

I welcome the proposals in the Bill. I also welcome not only the Government's commitment but the Prime Minister's personal commitment to making law and order more relevant and giving it a high priority. We should welcome the holding of the conference last week to highlight the problems of law and order. That is what the public demands.

During the Second Reading debate on the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, I spoke about the fine balance between the powers of police officers to carry out their duties and the work that the public expects of them and the civil rights of individuals. I said on that occasion—and I repeated it in Committee—that the civil rights lobby seemed to be winning the day on many occasions. I hope that when this Bill goes to Committee the Government will reject any moves to alter the emphasis of the Bill towards the civil liberties lobby. During the 59 Committee sittings of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, it was alarming to see that nearly all the Opposition amendments had the stamp of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

Mr. Alex Carlile: If the hon. Gentleman was so alarmed by the amendments tabled to the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, why did he not express his alarm until about the 56th sitting of the Committee?

Mr. Hawksley: Had the hon. Gentleman attended the Committee as often as I did, he would have realised that I raised various matters in Committee. I was certainly there much more often than he was. It was interesting to hear the Opposition accuse the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill of creating bureaucracy for the police force, when their amendments to include so-called safeguards provided such bureaucracy. I do not understand how the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) could have made that point earlier today.

The public demand that the police have the power to stop a small minority in society — whether they be football hooligans, illegal pickets or a threatening mob of youths — intimidating the young and the elderly and endangering innocent lives or their property. People want action and they believe that this legislation will give them action. The right of an individual to live in peace without threat to his life or his property must be protected by the House, and this legislation will do so.

Television has reported acts of violence, terrorist acts which cause anxiety to many members of the public. It is unacceptable that many of those acts do not result in court appearances. When they do, we often discover that the powers which we thought existed do not exist. That is why we must give the police the additional powers that the Bill suggests. The need for the new offence of disorderly behaviour will be clear to anyone who has watched what has happened on television and seen in their homes acts which the public believe should be stopped.

With other Members of Parliament, I received literature from the NCCL in preparation for today's debate. I suspect that the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) will, like me, have received a letter from the Shropshire and Mid-Wales branch of the NCCL, which states that the new proposals would mean:

"You could be arrested for: organising a demonstration without police permission, taking part in a demonstration that has been banned, ignoring police conditions . . . ignoring police directions."

So what? Most of my electors would be grateful if the police had those powers if it meant that demonstrations would show respect for their property and for their lives. They believe that the police would use those powers wisely. It worries me that a body such as the NCCL should believe that citizens go round in fear of being mugged or arrested by the police. That is not the case in my constituency. My constituents fear being mugged and attacked, and believe that the police act as a deterrent and are their friends. That is how it should be; that is how the majority of the public believe it is. They do not accept the NCCL's arguments on that matter.

Those who oppose the legislation, especially its proposals on marches, are the same people who expect the police to respond under the present legislation when the National Front proposes to march through a sensitive area. They should support this legislation on marches and static demonstrations, because it gives the police the power to respond to the fears of those who live in the areas where marches are likely to occur.

Most hon. Members seem to believe that the sentences provided in the Bill are about right, although there has been criticism of one proposal. I am not worried about the sentences available under the legislation, but I question whether they will be used to their full. The public showed great admiration for Judge Michael Argyle when he sentenced a Chelsea football fan to life imprisonment. They believe that that example should be followed.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): With regard to the Chelsea football supporter who was imprisoned for life for that vicious attack, does the hon. Gentleman believe that the law is likely to be ridiculed if, on appeal, that sentence is greatly reduced, which most people believe it will be? Is that not ridiculing the law instead of having sensible law?

Mr. Hawksley: I was about to say, without dealing with that case—although I admired the line taken by the judge — that we must ensure that the appeal judges respond to that sort of public attitude. We need tough sentencing.

Mr. Alex Carlile: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it right for an hon. Member to support a sentence passed by a court of first instance when that sentence is subject to a pending appeal in which notice of appeal has already been filed?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): The sub judice rule does not apply when the House is considering legislation.

Mr. Hawksley: It is important to encourage and to support the judiciary in giving sentences that fit the crime. The time may come when the House considers the need not only for maximum sentences, but for minimum sentences, unless we see that the law is being used to the full. Our electors will insist that the House protects them.

One aspect of the Bill which causes me some concern —it will be considered in detail in Committee—is the Riot (Damages) Act 1886. We now have insurance and the Criminal Damages Act 1971 which help many people who would otherwise be out of pocket after their properties are damaged. I question whether, in this day and age, we need to retain that Act. Although riots may be less common under the new definition in clause 1, I should think that people could make their own arrangements to cover themselves against the risks covered in the Bill.

Also the Bill does not cover the people who deliberately trespass on private land with the purpose of committing a criminal offence. The National Farmers Union has brought that to our notice and I hope that the Committee will fill that gap in the Bill.

People have had enough. They have seen enough on television. They saw the violence by the miners last year.

[Mr. Hawksley]

They have seen enough of the hooliganism at football matches. They demand action. The Bill is a right response and I have great pleasure in supporting it.

7.20 pm

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): I stand here today proud to represent the people of the Tyne Bridge constituency but conscious, as are we all, of the tragic events which brought about my presence in the House. My predecessor, Harry Cowans, was not only an excellent representative of the people and a first class Member of Parliament; he was a personal friend for many years. Harry and I met before we became members of the Labour party. We joined the party at about the same time. We served together on Gateshead county borough council and, following local government reorganisation, the Gateshead metropolitan borough council. We were even members of the same social club. It comes, therefore, as no surprise to me to learn that Harry was well respected by hon. Members on both sides of the House. Tyne Bridge, the House and the country are the poorer for his untimely departure.

I know that his wife Margaret and his family would wish me to express personally their deep appreciation to all those who have been so kind and who have expressed sympathy and sadness. It is a great comfort to his wife and family to be reminded so vividly of the high esteem in which that bonny lad from Tyneside was held by Members of the House and by the staff here.

In Harry's maiden speech to the House in November 1976 he spoke of the difficult task that he faced in filling the shoes of his predecessor, Lord Glenamara, or Ted Short, MP, as he then was. Harry lived up to that task. He gave good account of himself as a Member of Parliament and was loved and respected in his constituency. Indeed, only last week I attended a ceremony at which a Tyneside metro car was named Harry Cowans in his memory.

Now it is my turn to say, as Harry said in his maiden speech,

"That is, indeed, an eminent and enviable record to follow." —[*Official Report*,24 November 1976; Vol. 921, c.111.]

My task will be to match that record and to represent the best interests of the people of Tyne Bridge. In so doing I shall follow in the very capable footsteps of Harry Cowans.

It will be my task to stand up and fight for the thousands of decent families in my constituency who suffer the frustration and indignity of unemployment, the thousands of young people who have been denied the opportunity to build decent lives for themselves, the thousands of elderly people who suffer from inadequate incomes and insecurity and the thousands who have jobs but also suffer from worry and insecurity as redundancy announcements become an almost daily occurrence.

As leader of Gateshead council for the last two years I know of the efforts by the local authorities in the area to overcome those and other problems. Many improvements have been made. I have also suffered the frustration of being prevented from progressing on anything like the scale necessary, by continual attacks on our rate support grant, capital spending and housing programmes.

Tyne Bridge constituency is contained within the Newcastle/Gateshead inner area. It is an inner city constituency with all the problems currently typical of such areas, which are prominent in all our minds. Its people face the difficulties of escalating crime rates, plummeting housing starts, high unemployment and low incomes. Yet, despite these cruel ups and downs of inner city life, the people remain resilient and retain the Geordie friendliness and good humour which so impressed the many visitors to the constituency during the recent by-election campaign.

Unfortunately, some mistake our conviviality for contentment and our resilience for resignation. I say to the House that the people of our inner cities are neither content nor resigned to accepting that the problems cannot be resolved. Indeed, discontentment and a refusal to become resigned to accepting inner city conditions have too often spilt over into violence on city streets. It is the frustration of knowing that there can be—there ought to be—a better way of life for themselves and their families but being unable to achieve it that generates anger. It is the need, the desire to escape from the problems that too often drives people into drug or alcohol abuse.

If the problems of disorder in the cities are to be resolved, and if harmony is to prevail, more emphasis must be placed on tackling the causes rather than the effects. That does not mean that we should be soft on crime. I am not implying that the Bill is totally irrelevant to the problems. Indeed, I welcome the measures proposed to combat racism and the repugnant literature that promotes it. However, my constituents who suffer from such activities might well feel that it does not go far enough. I have always believed that prevention is better than cure and that rehabilitation is better than revenge.

In its present form the Bill is unlikely to promote better relationships between the police and the community. It gives chief constables, and in some cases more junior officers, the power to make political decisions and to exercise political judgments. It undermines traditional liberties. It is restrictive and will not achieve its goal. Worst of all, it diverts our attention from the real questions —why these problems have arisen in our society and how we so arrange things that we reverse the trends.

So long as we concentrate more of our time on talking about combating disorder than we do about creating the conditions in which disorder need not occur we are not using our time or our imaginations in the best interests of our children. They will inherit the consequences of our failures.

We have witnessed some ugly incidents in recent years and of course we cannot stand by while crime rises, riots break out and disorder threatens the peaceful lives of ordinary people. But equally — no, principally — we cannot ignore the link between rising unemployment, poverty and deteriorating social conditions with rising crime, vandalism and unrest, particularly in our inner cities.

We must take measures to cure the disease, not merely treat the symptoms. The measures should be designed to protect and enhance freedom and democracy, not—as I fear will happen if the Bill is enacted in its present form —damage civil freedoms and individual liberties while doing little or nothing to relieve the frustrations and tensions of inner city life.

The Home Secretary has said that public order is the essence of any civilised society. But surely, if order can be maintained only by increasingly punitive measures, it is an indication that civilised behaviour is deteriorating and that society itself is therefore becoming less civilised.

Last year was international youth year. Young people all over our country were encouraged to think about the society in which they lived and to develop an understanding of the importance of harmonious international relationships. Yet, despite some marvellous work —nowhere better than in my constituency—too many of our young people were unable to find contentment and were driven to violence, vandalism and crime.

This year has been designated as the international year for peace. We all hope and pray for peace, but if we want peace on our city streets we shall have to do more than hope. Peace is something for which we shall have to work, and in ways that the Bill does not address itself to or take into consideration. We must begin in earnest to encourage investment in Britain, to restore confidence and to bring new hope to the regions and the cities.

In 1979, we were offered hope and harmony, but a lack of hope and a growing pessimism have destroyed harmony and created discord and disorder. When we mobilise our construction industry to resolve the massive housing problems, many of which we inherited from the 1950s and 1960s, when we begin to show real support for our engineering and new technology industries, when we generate real jobs and meaningful training and when people can plan for their future because they have secure employment, the calls for new hope and harmony in the years of youth, peace and industry may be rewarded by some identifiable results.

In a truly civilised society, the Bill would be irrelevant. Therefore, the challenge to civilised people is to create conditions that make unnecessary the measures that are proposed in the Bill. That must be our real and only goal.

7.32 pm

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): It is with particular pleasure that I have the honour to congratulate the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland) on his maiden speech. I think that Members on both sides of the House will agree that it was a maiden speech in the finest traditions of the House, being short, to the point, and from the heart.

I am sure that the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge will be the first to appreciate that Harry Cowans was held in great esteem and respect in this place. He managed to combine the ability to fight hard for his constituency and party with being well liked on both sides of the House. As I have said, I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his maiden speech. It is obvious that he is a man to be watched. Anyone who can bring 30 members of the Labour party into the Chamber at 7.31 pm is bound to do well. The newly appointed Opposition Chief Whip is in his place, and I am sure that he will be watching the hon. Gentleman.

I turn to the less pleasant subject of public order. I welcome the Bill and I suspect that that welcome will be echoed throughout the country, especially by those who live on housing estates that have been subjected to the spiralling lawlessness of the past 10 years. I was disappointed when Opposition Members suggested that the Bill was ill thought out. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is not a panic measure that has been introduced because of the miners' strike. Labour Members should appreciate that consultations on public order legislation began as long ago as 1979.

I always find the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) at his most unnerving when he tries to be nice, and he tried desperately to be nice this afternoon. I find it sickening when the Labour party masquerades as the party that cares for the aspirations of ordinary people. All in this House and all who watch television and read newspapers know that nothing could be further from the truth. We know what has been happening in the inner cities. We read reports about those who have been manipulating organised violence and intimidation. When it comes to the day of reckoning at the next general election and the electorate has to decide which party will form the next Government, perhaps it will ask where the Labour party was when the bricks were winging their way through the windows of miners' houses. Perhaps it will ask where the Labour party was when it came to condemning violence irrespective of its source.

On every occasion that the Government have brought legislation before the House to give the police the powers that they need so desperately to enforce the law and protect the citizen, what has the Labour party done? The answer is that it has voted against the proposed legislation. It even had the hypocrisy to vote against the prevention of terrorism legislation while almost at the same time condemning the bombing at Brighton. That is the party that is masquerading as the party of law and order. I believe that that charade will be seen through.

Labour Members have told us that they believe in civil liberties and the freedom of the individual. We know and they know for what their police committees stand. Civil liberties mean, in their terms, political control of the police.

I welcome the revamped offence of riot. It is only right and proper that its terms should have been changed to provide for 12 persons as opposed to three. Similarly, as a legal practitioner who prosecutes and defends, I am pleased that the law has been clarified and that a person of normal and reasonable firmness does not have to be present. The right hon. Member for Gorton seemed to think that that was a departure in the law. If he reads Smith and Hogan's Criminal Law, especially page 737, he will find that it has been the law for quite some time.

I move on to the more important offences regarding and affecting ordinary people. We talk about flashpoints and picketing and all that is involved when serious public disorder breaks out—we have seen shocking violence on picket lines and there has been shocking violence, and sometimes death, in public demonstrations — but although such events have increased in number over the past decade, it is merciful that they are still few and far between. They constitute the flashpoints and they are the matters that the media like to play up, sometimes, sadly, out of all proportion.

The Bill deals with everyday occurrences of violence and hooliganism and that is one reason why it should be welcomed, especially by many of those who are living within council estates and are terrified of opening their doors at night. They are terrified of going out on to the streets for fear of being assaulted or mugged. That is not a generalisation and it happens to be a fact. Only this morning I was prosecuting in a case in which young people had terrorised a whole community. They had set out to burgle flats in the area where they live. Indeed, they burgled the same block of flats in which they live. One of the prosecution's difficulties was that it could not get witnesses to say that these youngsters were terrorising the community.

Mr. Alex Carlile: So the hon. Gentleman lost the case.

Mr. Hayes: I am happy to say not. One of the difficulties in such cases, especially those involving hooliganism and harassment on the streets, is that members of the public telephone the police to complain but are not prepared to attend court as witnesses. They decline to do so because they are frightened. That is unfortunate but it is something that I can understand. That is why the offence of disorderly conduct is ideal for that sort of situation.

Mr. Alex Carlile: For attempted burglary?

Mr. Hayes: The hon. and learned Gentleman should pay more attention. I was giving an example of what happens on estates where young people control law and order — perhaps the hon. and learned Gentleman is listening now and will learn something. It does happen, people are afraid to come out; that was the example I was giving to the hon. and learned Gentleman. When this legislation is on the statute book, there will be added protection for the public.

I can understand some of the fears voiced by hon. Members and the National Council for Civil Liberties about harassment being substantial. This was in the White Paper — I think the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) would agree with me on that point. There was always the view that perhaps the younger police officers could take advantage of certain situations. That happened with the sus law, which we had to abolish, and quite rightly. It was open to abuse. There is a thin dividing line between what is harassment, what is riot and what is boisterous behaviour. For this reason I ask my hon. Friend the Minister, who is replying, to consider this carefully when the Bill goes into Committee.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: This is an important point and I think the hon. Gentleman should not simply ask the Minister but tell us precisely what he would do. If the hon. Gentleman is not prepared to do so, all his comments about recognising the doubts over this aspect of the Bill are simply pious nonsense. What would he do?

Mr. Hayes: With respect to the hon. Gentleman, I have just told him: the original word in the White Paper, "substantial", should be put in the legislation. The dividing line between boisterous behaviour, harassment and riot would then not be such a thin one.

Mr. Kaufman: Plus a victim.

Mr. Hayes: There is a very good reason why we cannot have a victim. I know that the right hon. Gentleman says that we should, as does the NCCL. People have been so frightened of their neighbours who have been terrifying them that they are not prepared to go to the police and become witnesses in court. Those of us who are practitioners recognise that this is a problem.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Does my hon. Friend not feel that he will have the same problem as our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in defining what "substantial" means and to what extent behaviour becomes substantial or less than substantial? Perhaps in those circumstances my hon. Friend will feel that it is better to leave the word out.

Mr. Hayes: I hesitate to disagree with my hon. Friend, who I know is very learned in these matters. However, by putting in the word "substantial" the difference between boisterous behaviour, harassment and alarm is absolutely clear. That is the point I want to get across.

With regard to processions and marches, the Opposition say that the proposals are a major infringement of civil liberties. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many of the powers that are codified by the Bill are contained in section 3 of the Public Order Act 1936. There is now the sensible requirement for consultation—this is what it is effectively — and contact between the organisers of the marchers and the police. Therefore, any flashpoints or any difficulties are likely to be sorted out beforehand. This has been the experience in the past. Many organisers go to the police and report precisely what they are doing. In the past local authorities have consulted with the police on these matters and it is absolutely proper that the police and the police alone make the decision.

It has been suggested by the Opposition that it is a political decision. How can the police be making a political decision when they are asked under clause 12 to consider the following:

"*(a)* it may result in serious public disorder, serious damage to property or serious disruption to the life of the community"?

Where is the political decision?

The NCCL has compounded that lie. In its press release it states:

"For the first time the police are going to be able to limit the duration, number or place at which an open air demonstration takes place on the grounds of serious public disorder, serious disruption to the life of the community, or intimidation. So a peaceful group of parents protesting outside the council offices about the lack of zebra crossings in their area, a picket outside a supermarket to persuade customers not to buy South African goods and even vigils outside churches could be moved on by the police even if there is no violence or threat of violence to persons or property."

Really, that is arrant nonsense.

Mr. Kaufman: No, it is not.

Mr. Hayes: I heard the right hon. Member for Gorton say, from a sedentary position, "No, it is not". I challenge him to look at clause 12 and tell the House how those examples from the NCCL briefing can possibly be banned within the terms of this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman has an opportunity—he shakes his head. Is he afraid to do so? It is more likely that he is unable to do so. The truth is that there will be no more major infringements of any public liberty or freedom of expression than there have been since section 3 of the Public Order Act 1936.

I view with certain concern the new test on major disruption in the community and I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to consider this when replying. We must never allow that test to become just a convenience and nothing more than that. The protection of the people must always come first.

The last matter I would draw to the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister is a point brought to the House's attention by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan). I found it quite impossible, listening to the hon. Member, to know whether he was speaking on behalf of the alliance, because we are not sure what the alliance is saying. A few weeks ago the hon. Member said that the SDP was all in favour of this legislation. Then we hear that the Liberal party is not in favour. Evidently, from what we understand, the alliance, for what it is worth, is completely split asunder on this

matter. For example, it appears that the Liberal party is against any form of requirement. *[Interruption.]* It is very difficult to make oneself heard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. There is too much noise.

Mr. Hayes: I am sure that there is an interesting conversation taking place on the Opposition Benches and I imagine that something exciting will happen when so many hon. Members have been removed from the various bars.

One aspect of the provisions concerning marches and processions worries me. People should have the right to a judicial review. That is a reiteration of section 3 of the 1936 Act. The difficulty is that that can be expensive and slow. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider that in Committee and see whether a legal aid fund could be established to help or, more importantly, will see whether some of the decisions could be transferred to a county or Crown court.

The Bill would in no way infringe civil liberties. It is an answer to the cry in the wilderness from many people in council estates who are desperately frightened because their estates have been turned into ghettoes of fear.

7.50 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, arising out of the statement made earlier this afternoon by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The House will recall that the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he had seen any letter from British Aerospace about the meeting between the Secretary of State and the chief executive of British Aerospace. The Secretary of State replied that he personally had not received any such letter.

As the House will recall, there was repeated questioning of the Secretary of State, and the impression that he conveyed was that he was not aware of any letter having come to the Government from British Aerospace. In reply to a specific question by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), the Secretary of State said—here I rely on my memory—"I am not aware of any letter from Lygo to anyone else either." I submit that that reply created the clear impression in the mind of the House that there had been no letter from British Aerospace to the Government, and questioning of the Secretary of State on that matter ceased.

I can only speak for myself, but I left the Chamber under the impression that the Government had rebutted the allegation that any letter had come from British Aerospace to the Government. The Secretary of State might claim that he was technically correct to say that no letter had been received from Lygo, but I am reliably informed—I do not think there is any dispute about this—that at noon today a letter was delivered by hand addressed to the Prime Minister, to No. 10 Downing street, from Sir Austin Pearce, the chairman of British Aerospace, and that the content of that letter related to a meeting between the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo, the chief executive of British Aerospace, and may well contain the recollections of the chief executive of British Aerospace about what transpired at that meeting.

There is no doubt that three and a half hours elapsed between a letter being given to the Prime Minister's office and a statement being made to the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in which he said that he had explained his own position and that of the Government. Despite repeated questioning, the information that I have given the House was not provided by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. In those circumstances, and as the Government will not deny that the letter was delivered at noon—I gather also that explanations of what he said have been given to the press on behalf of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry by his press department—the least I can ask for is that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry comes back to the House today.

So as not to do any more harm to this debate, which I apologise for having had to interrupt, I request, in the presence of the Leader of the House, that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry comes to the House after the Division at 10 pm to explain his remarkable conduct today.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I join the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) in wishing not to impair this important Second Reading debate. I shall certainly look at the point that he has raised. Perhaps we could consider it through the usual channels.

7.54 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): The House has today been given the rare privilege at this stage in a Parliament of hearing a maiden speech. That maiden speech, by my hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland), was made with clarity and wisdom. Although I am sure all hon. Members regret the sad circumstances which gave rise to the by-election, they will, I am sure, feel that my hon. Friend will be an honourable and worthy successor to Harry Cowans.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge said that we should concentrate on the causes rather than on the effects of crime and violence in inner cities. He urged us to cure the disease, not simply to address ourselves to the symptoms. We should bear the wisdom of that remark in mind when considering the Bill. I fear that the Government have not borne it in mind when presenting the Bill in an attempt to deal with the major problems in our inner-city areas.

This morning, Islington borough council published a survey on the level of crime in the area that I represent. It is a remarkable survey, drawn from detailed interviews with 2,000 households in the borough. It provides us with one of the clearest indications yet of the level of crime and the fear of crime in an inner-city area.

One of the survey's startling findings is that more than half of Islington's households have experienced crime in the past 12 months, and that 46 per cent. have experienced crime more than once. It shows that more than half of the women in the borough always or often avoid going out after dark because of fear of sexual attack or street robbery, that one quarter of the population always avoid going out after dark. It shows that more than one quarter feel unsafe in their own home and worry about their house being burgled, that the burglary rate in the borough is five times the national average, that the danger of burglary is 60 per cent. greater for black people than for white people and that women are 40 per cent. more likely to be assaulted on the streets than are men.

[Mr. Chris Smith]

The survey reveals much more, but the interviewers also asked for interviewees' priorities for tackling crime. They were as follows, in order of importance: sexual attacks on women, burglary, robbery in the street, heroin, drunken driving and racist attacks. The overwhelming finding of the survey is that people are worried about burglary, robbery and assault, which people such as those whom I represent experience too often and with increasing frequency. The survey also shows that only 50 per cent. of crimes were reported to the police, and that only 3·8 per cent. of all crimes were solved by the police.

It is against that background that I shall consider the Bill. The survey reveals the problems facing my constituents and many thousands of people around the country. People are concerned about these issues. Crime and the fear of crime are going up. Confidence in the policing and detection of crime is going down. The Government ought to address such issues, but I do not believe that the Bill goes any way towards that.

The first and major charge that I make against the Government is that the Bill is, by and large—there are some minor points that I welcome—irrelevant to the issues and concerns that face many millions of people in inner-city areas.

Parts I and II are the specific provisions that concern me. They concentrate on the offences of riot and the control of demonstrations, meetings, assemblies and so on. Those parts of the Bill contain a number of new provisions for offences and powers for the police to deal with them. Many of the new offences and powers are unnecessary. The police already have at their command a wide range of powers that permit them to prevent a breach of the peace if they believe that is likely to occur or is occurring. There is little in the Bill that will improve the situation.

The Bill is an attempt by the Government to seem to be doing something about matters that worry many members of the public. In many respects the new powers suggested in the Bill, and in particular the new offence of disorderly conduct, are extremely worrying. My right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) and my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch), in his intervention on the subject of shopping centres in his constituency, both raised an extremely important point about which all hon. Members who represent inner-city areas are deeply conscious. Many tenants of council estates fear the congregating gangs of young people. The tenants are afraid to leave their homes and wander around their estates. That does not happen only on council estates, but that is where the problem tends to be most evident, in inner-city areas.

The Government have not got it right with their new offence of disorderly conduct. That offence will not tackle the problem on estates. That problem occurred on an estate in my constituency through three summers, causing considerable distress to many tenants. The problem has been solved under existing legislation. It was solved by close and concerted action and discussion between the tenants living on the estate, the local police and the local authority that owns the buildings. The problem has been solved by regular patrolling by the police on foot through the estate and along the walkways of the various blocks. Entry phones have been fitted in the problem blocks, and there are regular meetings between police officers and tenant representatives to discuss the priorities of policing the estate and how that should be carried out.

The measures that I have described solved the problem. A new offence, which will catch all sorts of other considerations, does not need to be brought in to solve such problems. The situation does not require a new law that gives extra powers to the police in handling and dealing with members of the public. The situation needs good, sensitive, detailed policing, in concert with local people. That policy has achieved success on the estates in my constituency and I believe that it can achieve success elsewhere.

I am also anxious about the provision in the Bill dealing with marches, demonstrations and picketing.

Mr. Hayes: The hon. Gentleman said how much he applauds contact with the police. Will he therefore take the opportunity to condemn those Labour-controlled authorities which are refusing to allow the police to enter schools?

Mr. Smith: I commend the work of my local authority, which has extremely good relations with the police who sit on the police consultation committee of which I am a member. That committee meets regularly and has extremely good relations with the police. I also commend the work which many police officers—not all—are doing in Islington in coming into contact with representatives of the local community. I believe that such contacts ought to be developed nationally.

The Bill's provisions about marches and demonstrations worry me with regard to civil liberties and the power that they give to the police. My right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton was correct to point to the fact that the conditions that can be imposed on marches and static demonstrations under the Bill are entirely at the discretion of the police. The Bill gives powers to an unelected authority to determine the way in which democratic process and democratic protest can take place. I hope that we will be able to discuss those provisions in great detail in Committee.

I should also like to make a point that has not already been made. In London the power to ban a demonstration, which throughout the rest of the country will ultimately be in the hands of the local authority, will rest with the Home Secretary. No reference need be made by any police officer or the Home Secretary to a London local authority. I shall raise this point in Committee.

Having heard the speech by the hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Hawksley), I am worried that there have been proposals, particularly by the Country Landowners Association, and, as I see from some of the briefing material for the debate, supported by the Association of County Councils, to amend the law on trespass to prohibit public entrance on to private land and to make that an arrestable offence in some circumstances. The proposal from the Country Landowners Association would catch a family of four out for a stroll in the country. The Opposition will keep a careful watch on such amendments if they come forward.

There are some welcome provisions in the Bill, particularly in relation to incitement to racial hatred. However, those provisions do not go far enough and the disparity between the sentences available under part I and those proposed for the racial hatred offence make one pause for thought.

I wish that the Government would consider more seriously the proposals of my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) to try to deal with the major problem of racial harassment which many black and Asian families face in their homes, particularly in inner London. My hon. Friend's proposed Bill would go some of the way, and I wish that the Government would be less dismissive of his proposals than the Home Secretary was when my hon. Friend intervened during his speech.

My fear about the Bill, and particularly about the part that creates the new offence of disorderly conduct, is that it may worsen relations between the police and the community. The problem with creating new powers for the police lies in determining how they will be used. I fear that the drafting of clause 5 will ensure that police officers will be tempted to use their new powers in much the same way as they used the old sus law. The Government have denied that that is the intention, but I fear that it may happen. If it does, the Bill, far from creating order on our streets and preventing disorder, may do the precise opposite.

Order in society and the prevention of disorder rest on the acceptance by all parts of the community of the fairness of the laws and of the police officers who operate the laws. I fear that the Bill will destroy the balance. We have heard much in the debate about the necessary balance between protecting the public from disorder and ensuring fundamental freedoms and civil liberties. Of course that balance must be preserved, but I think that the Government have got it wrong.

8.12 pm

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): It would have been wrong for the Government to refuse to act on the events of the past 12 months and not to produce a Bill to deal with public order. I emphasise the words "public order", because the Bill is not a palliative for crimes of dishonesty or for individual assaults; it is a Bill about public order.

No one who witnessed the riots at Tottenhan and Brixton, the events at the Orgreave coking plant or the activities of the pickets outside pits could say that a Bill of this nature is not necessary. Home Office Ministers have my full and unreserved support in bringing forward a Bill which is necessary to deal with the evils of our time.

I am not surprised that the Labour party, along with the Liberals and the SDP, has come out against the measure. The Labour party has for years failed to tackle the problems of public order. Labour Members constantly harp on the need to keep a balance between freedom of speech, freedom of action and civil liberties. I believe that in all the circumstances the Bill more than adequately preserves that balance.

Standing behind the statements of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), the Opposition spokesman, are the Bernie Grants of this world. Mr. Grant today said that the report of the Metropolitan police on the Tottenhan riots was a lot of lies. Such Labour politicians make it their business to criticise the police at every opportunity and to harass chief constables — the case of Mr. Anderton in Greater Manchester is a classic example and we see similar action by Lady Simey in Liverpool.

The Bill tackles the problems of today — the riots outside the pits, the riots in the streets and the riots at football matches. It is not before time that such legislation has been brought before the House. Five new offences are created by the Bill and the law is codified. The offence of riot recognises for the first time the need to include violence towards property. That is important, and I am sure that all the Asian traders who had their shops wrecked in the Handsworth riot will be extremely grateful for that proposal.

My only criticism relates to the sentences for the new offences. I believe that the offence of violent disorder should carry a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment rather than five years. The maximum sentence for affray should be five years and not three years, and I should also like to see the maximum sentence for disorderly behaviour increased.

The offences have been created to meet the problems of today: riot to deal with the problems faced at Tottenham, Handsworth and Brixton; violent disorder to meet the problems of disturbances at static demonstrations and outside industrial plants; and affray to deal with the problems that the police face every Saturday night in tackling fights outside public houses and general disruption by those who have consumed too much alcohol.

Despite the criticisms made about the new offence of disorderly behaviour, I welcome it. It deals with a problem with which the law has previously not been capable of dealing. Those of us who represent constituencies with large housing estates and shopping centres know the problems faced by some of our law-abiding constituents who are intimidated by gangs of youths who do not actually do anything, but who frighten people and disrupt their daily lives. The new offence is the tool which the police need to deal with that problem.

I speak from experience. I opened the newspaper one morning to find that a riot had allegedly taken place at Skelmersdale in my constituency. When I investigated the matter, I discovered that the report had no foundation. A couple of windows had been broken and a small fire had been started in a health centre, but it never amounted to anything. People who are frightened by gangs of youths on shopping parades and housing estates will welcome the new offences and realise that, far from changing the fabric of society or diminishing civil liberties, they will be a useful adjunct to the powers that the police need to keep public order.

As a lawyer, I welcome the sensible alternatives included in clause 7(3). A jury in the Crown court will be asked whether it is satisfied that the offence of riot has been proved. If it is not, it may reach an alternative verdict on the second offence in the tier, violent disorder. Where the charge is one of violent disorder, a jury can reach an alternative verdict on affray. That is a sensible, modern solution to a difficult problem.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on including in the Bill the summary offence of disorderly conduct. If a jury is satisfied that someone's behaviour has been in breach of the law, but does not meet the standards laid down for other offences, it can still find that person guilty of the summary offence—something that is usually not open to a jury. That is a means of dealing with the reprehensible behaviour that brought the person before the court. I am sure that that sensible move will be appreciated by lawyers and juries throughout the country.

With the repealing of the common law offences in clause 9, we see the end of an era. Part I brings public order offences into the 1980s. We should welcome that rather than vote against it. Conservative Members recognise that that deals with the problems of today.

[Mr. Kenneth Hind]

Yesterday's answers will not solve our problems. The public will realise that it provides a substantial answer to our difficulties.

The right hon. Member for Gorton levelled a great deal of criticism at the provisions in part II relating to processions and demonstrations. I believe that it is not unreasonable to ask the organiser of a well-prepared demonstration, whether static or otherwise, to notify, and make the necessary application to the police six days before the proposed date of a demonstration, especially as any demonstration is likely to disrupt the life of a community, particularly if it is to be held in London. Surely the public are entitled both to know and to have some say about the proposed route so that serious public order can be avoided, together with damage to property and disruption of life. Part II of the Bill is intended to deal with that.

Those who wish to organise a proper demonstration have nothing to fear from those provisions. If they have nothing to hide and do not wish to disrupt the life of a community or to incite violence, they surely cannot fear going through the proper procedures and applying to the police for permission to hold their demonstrations. Contrary to what has been said about the necessity for checks to be imposed upon the new police power, if an organiser is not satisfied with the restrictions imposed upon a demonstration, he can apply to the Queen's Bench division of the High Court for a judicial review. That will develop a body of authority and precedent to guide judges. The organiser can also call upon the existing body or authority that has guided chief constables exercising a similar power under the Public Order Act 1936.

My only criticism is that where a chief constable or local authority applies under clause 13 for a three-month order banning a certain sort of demonstration, the Bill should include the right to apply to a court for a review of the refusal. My hon. Friend the Minister can consider two or three alternatives — first, through the Crown court with circuit judges or magistrates; secondly, the High Court's judical review procedure; and, thirdly, the possibility of applying to the county court.

In view of the comments of Bernie Grant in Hackney, and my awareness, as a Member of Parliament representing an area on the edge of Liverpool, of the outpourings of Mr. Derek Hatton, who says the most peculiar things, we cannot rely on the judgment of some lunatics to decide whether demonstrations should be allowed. There must be a neutral procedure, with the law applied on a neutral basis, to cover refusals or conditions imposed on any demonstration.

I welcome the introduction of the provisions in part III to tighten the law to deal with the mean and despicable offence of racial hatred. I hope that my right hon. Friend will reconsider the sentences for that offence because I believe that they should be tougher.

Part IV deals with football hooliganism, and is probably the most important part of the Bill. It recognises that unless we do something as a community, our national game will be ruined. Incidents such as those last year at Millwall and Brussels must be tackled. Far from the provisions being a breach of civil liberty, they take the sensible course and will keep hooligans away from football matches so that they can no longer ruin the country's reputation and make the life of the communities around football grounds intolerable. The punishment must fit the crime, so it is sensible to exclude the hooligans from football matches. By driving them away from the game, we stop them from offending the public and from bringing the national game into disrepute.

Despite the criticism levelled against part IV, I believe that its provisions are the only way to deal with hooliganism at football matches. We want football once again to be a game of which we can be proud and which will bring credit to our country.

The Bill is a realistic way to bring public order law into the 1980s. I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his Ministers on producing a Bill that is realistic and relevant to this period in our history. I am sure that the public will recognise that the Bill is needed and that they will support it when it becomes law.

8.28 pm

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): I do not intend to respond to the rhetoric of the hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind), other than to speculate that some of his remarks may have brought him within the scope of clause 5 of the Bill.

This is not a public order Bill; it is about extending the control of the state over public disorder. Much of that disorder is created either directly or indirectly by the activities of the state. What must concern us in this Bill, or in any public order legislation, is the way in which both the central and local states define their responsibilities for maintaining order within society. That takes us to the central issue of the role of the state in civil society.

In their rhetoric, this Government more than any other have addressed themselves to the role of the state. Even before the Government were returned in 1979, we had long speeches about the dismantling of the strong state—the paternalistic state—and allowing people to be free from state control, state welfarism and state paternalism or maternalism. Since 1979 we have learnt that the withdrawal of the state from large areas of life and the pursuit of economic policies which mean that large sections of the population become marginalised result in disorder. The free economy advocated so strongly by the Government is followed by the creation of a strong state to maintain that free economy, as Stuart Hall has reminded us on several occasions. Therefore, we cannot separate order in civil society from social and economic disorder within the boundaries of the state or, indeed, from international disorder, which often leads to manifestations —I find the continental word better than "demonstrations"—by people against international disorder.

Therefore, we must ask whether we want to see the state assuming a more authoritarian, coercive role such as that set out by the hon. Member for Lancashire, West and other Conservative Members, or whether we believe it is possible to maintain order by the pursuit of a range of economic, social and legal policies that can result in the communities, classes and minorities within the state being able to relate to the state and not being coerced to do so. That is the central issue that most Conservative Members have been trying to avoid in the debate.

I go further than that and stress that often there is a tendency in such discussions for Conservative Members to view society in a very simplistic, indeed myopic, way. They tend to think of society as out there to be controlled by Government through their law and order policies. They do not recognise the essential interaction between the state

and civil society at all levels of society and the operation of the state. Nor do they recognise that extra-parliamentary democracy or direct democracy is as much part of our lives as the politics of representational democracy that we see here in Parliament. Therefore, when we start the process of enacting legislation, as we are doing tonight, which affects the rights of individuals or groups to express their grievances, we must realise that that legislation has an important effect upon the whole of our democratic process. We must recognise that the form of legislation with which we are dealing arises directly out of the Government's failure in other areas of their policies.

It should not be seen as surprising that the groups that have been most directly affected by the economic crisis that the Government's policies have generated are those who behave in a deviant way. The Bill deals with such people — young people whose opportunities have decreased, black communities whose employment and housing prospects have declined and who find that conditions in the inner cities have deteriorated substantially, the long-term unemployed and the unemployed in general, and in particular those who live in regions that have been hard hit by the Government's policies. In 1979-80, in paragraph 28 of its report on employment opportunities, the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs stressed that there would be

"serious social disorder if there were to be very high and chronic levels of unemployment, particularly amongst the young."

That form of disorder was exhibited during the dispute in the mining industry and in other areas. Industrial disputes are not created by pickets; they are created by the breakdown of industrial relations, and that breakdown is created by the pursuit of different objectives by the employees and employers. We must recognise that that is so in any serious consideration of social policy.

Therefore, the Bill must be seen as part of the political programme of the new Right, which, so far, is still in the ascendancy in the Government, although today's events may have an effect on that. It is part of the new Right's policy to roll back the state in every area of life except coercion and control. Members of the new Right believe in regulating the actions of those of us who go against the Government's line of policy, by increasing surveillance and control, and increasing the number of offences against public order.

One of the things that concerns me very much is the way in which, in such debates, all forms of dissent and deviant behaviour are lumped together. The Home Secretary did it again this afternoon when he seemed to link those who dissent from or demonstrate against Government policy with all other forms of criminal behaviour. Dissenters and demonstrators are lumped together as deviants and potential delinquents. There is a wrapping up of demonstrations and manifestations of public concern — which is what demonstrations are — with other forms of criminal activity. That has been done in the reports of chief police officers and many press statements by the so-called law and order lobby.

In the community where I come from, processions and assemblies are a regular part of our life. Under the Bill, a procession or assembly is potentially a serious disruption of the life of the community, but in the Wales and inner city areas that I know it would be strange if manifestations did not take place. Resistance is often part of the life of the community, because the community is often threatened by the policies of economic and social disorder. I appreciate that some Conservative Members cannot take that. They should understand that in representing that point of view I am speaking for the community that I come from.

Mr. Hind: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that under the Bill the processions to which he refers will have no problem, but the National Front march that is likely to disrupt a predominantly black community will be banned and dealt with suitably? Therefore, can he not see the purpose towards which that part of the Bill is directed?

Mr. Thomas: All of us who oppose the Bill have been arguing that powers already exist to control such potential disorder. We do not require this form of public order legislation to do so.

It concerns me that the definition and control of different forms of manifestations will be a matter for the police. I refer to clauses 11 and 14. For example, clause 14(2) says:

"The senior police officer may give directions imposing on the persons organising or taking part in the assembly any conditions which prescribe the place at which the assembly may be . . . held, its maximum duration, or the maximum number of persons who may constitute it".

When I asked the Home Secretary about that issue during his speech, he denied that it was a major qualitative change in the right of assembly. Surely, if the right of assembly is to be demarcated entirely by the police officers at the assembly, that is a major change. We know what is likely to happen with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. We remember that the code of practice issued under the Employment Act 1980 referred to a recommended number of six people on a picket line, and it was for the police to decide, taking into account all the circumstances, whether the number of pickets at any particular place was likely to lead to a breach of the peace. The experience in the mining industry dispute in South Wales was that the police took that figure as the maximum and quoted the civil law as though it had criminal authority. The same will undoubtedly apply to the discretion on numbers, time, place and route. Those matters will be left exclusively in the hands of the police. If there is to be advance reporting of demonstrations, we need to look again at the possibility of it being on the basis of what happened in Scotland. It ought not to be on the basis that is provided for in the Bill. The police will become the arbiter of the right of people to manifest their views. This represents a serious change in liberty of assembly and police powers.

Other aspects of civil disorder are not covered by the Bill. It contains no provision to cover the kind of deplorable incident that took place this weekend in Carmarthen. On Sunday I visited Sue Pitman in hospital. She was injured by an employee of the private army, if I may so call it, or private security firm that is being used by Carmarthen district council to protect its public property against non-violent demonstrations — which may involve trespass—against the council's decision to implement the Home Office's policy on civil defence.

I am glad that the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Pudsey (Mr. Shaw), is on the Treasury Bench, as he is the Minister who is in charge of this policy. His colleague and friend, Mr. Eric Alley, has been visiting Welsh local authorities trying to get them into line with the Government's policy on civil defence. Carmarthen district council stands against the nuclear-free policy of Dyfed. The result is that there have been manifestations of feeling in the locality. On Saturday that manifestation resulted in

[Mr. Thomas]

serious injury to a non-violent person, Sue Pitman. I have known her for many years as a member of the peace movement. She would have shown no violence at all in her conduct at that demonstration. The police should have been there to maintain order and to protect the lives of people who were involved in a non-violent demonstration. If we are serious about public order, we need to be serious about the use of private security firms to protect property, as happened in Carmarthen.

The Bill does not represent a serious attempt to face up to the nature and causes of disorder in our society. It is part of the rhetorical flourish of this Government in defence of their economic and social policies. There is no need for the Opposition to predict what the result of that policy will be. It will create further disorder. The state will then seek further powers of repression. The spiral of repression will be increased. The victims will be those who are least able to bear the brunt of the Government's economic policies and the civil liberties which supposedly were part of the British liberal tradition when that tradition was still alive.

8.43 pm

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): This Bill is essentially about the right to go about one's lawful business, and about the legal right of enjoyment. We have heard much about the desire for peaceful streets, which I completely endorse. It may be true that 80 per cent. of the population live in towns, but 80 per cent. of the land area of this country provides the working and living environment for the rest of us. Change must be steadily and carefully considered, as I believe that it has been in the preparation of the Bill. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said earlier this afternoon that there has been no shortage of legal powers but that there has been a shortage of enforcement powers. Therefore, the common law has been revised and codified.

Hon. Members have said that people are frightened to open their front doors. Reference has also been made to the problems caused by alarm, harassment and distress. One of the Bill's purposes is to prevent the disruption of the life of the community. The hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) referred to the problems that he believes face the peace movement. As a direct result of the activities of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Cruise Watch in my constituency there has been a massive closure of traditional rights of way across Salisbury plain. Local inhabitants have thus been deprived of the age-old and traditional rights which they have enjoyed, despite the fact that Salisbury plain is an important military training area. Only the intervention of these outsiders has caused that deprivation.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) believes that the Bill's proposals are unjustified. His constituency is almost as beautiful as mine, but that beauty and tranquillity is not so threatened as it is in my constituency.

There are a number of areas of threatening action. I regret very much that the first comes from animal liberation and animal rights groups. I welcome the establishment of police unit co-ordination to pool information on dangerous and misguided acts. That is of direct relevance to the Bill. Militant animal welfarists, and others, increasingly trespass en masse on to farms, intending to cause injury to the occupiers and damage to the property. No effective remedy is available to the farmer unless he can identify which person in the group caused the injury or the damage, despite the fact that all those present deliberately entered his land and property.

The difficulty under the present law lies in being able to identify the offenders. Often they come to farms under the cover of darkness or they threaten a farmer and his family. This happened recently in my constituency. It causes farmers to fear for their safety. Clause 4 will therefore replace section 5 of the Public Order Act 1936, as amended. It will make it an offence to use threatening, abusive, or insulting words or behaviour in a private as well as a public place. This will be only of limited help. Similarly the new controls that will be available to the police concerning the imposition of conditions relating to demonstrations will be of assistance only in those very rare cases where a warning is given beforehand of the intention to hold a demonstration, such as an animal rights demonstration.

The Bill will have an immediate impact upon mass poaching and illegal hare coursing in rural areas. I have received a large number of representations about this from farmers and their families and from members of the public. Recently I received a letter from a farmer who pointed out that in general he tries to encourage the public to walk the footpaths, both public and private, on his farm, in the hope that while they enjoy their walk they will discourage the small percentage of unwelcome visitors from visiting their property. However, the problem with the mass poachers and the illegal hare coursers is that they frighten innocent people away to such an extent that a kind of no-go area is being created in parts of southern rural England. This is serious because of its economic implications for farmers. Farmers complain to me about the number of ewes that are becoming barren because of persistent dog worrying. Furthermore, a great deal of damage has been done to beef cattle because they have been chased by dogs. One farmer wrote to me and suggested that many of these people have no respect for people, property or livestock. He pointed out that farmers have had to mount special patrols to keep an eye on their livestock.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This is a most interesting point, but I am not at all clear what part of the Bill is likely to meet the problem that my hon. Friend is describing.

Mr. Key: If my hon. Friend will have the patience that we showed when we listened to his earlier interventions, he will find out.

The farmer was concerned because three types of sporting activity were involved: the desire to blood lurchers on hares ready for deer coursing, placing large bets on the ability of individual dogs to catch hares, and the blooding of dogs for the track. I have pursued, as far as I can, all of these cases. My inquiries led me to the National Greyhound Racing Club. Its response was that there was nothing in my complaints which gave rise to evidence that these people came from greyhound racing, but that they may be connected with the sport of coursing which uses greyhounds to chase live hares. On the advice of the National Greyhound Racing Club I took up the matter with the National Coursing Club on 6 December, but I regret to say that I have not heard from them.

The reason why this is all important and of relevance to the Bill is that the police are worried about their inability, because of the state of the present law, to cope

with this problem. The chief constable of Wiltshire is reported in the *Western Gazette* on 10 January as saying that already there are reports of people being injured by trespassers. He suspects that it will not be long before somebody says that people have been killed by trespassers. I shall write to my hon. Friend about that and I hope that he will undertake to look into the problem of illegal coursing and mass poaching as a matter of urgency.

Another area of particular relevance to south Wiltshire is the Stonehenge festival. This is not a sudden matter. The Bill has been carefully prepared and is not a rushed or panic response. On 10 November 1983 I initiated an Adjournment debate on travelling people and the build up of the Stonehenge festival which has taken place over some 10 years. I am glad to say that that debate was replied to by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in his previous incarnation in the Home Office. I said:

"The law is a living thing and must surely change to meet the changing needs of society . . . Above all, the rule of law must be seen to apply to all the people all the time. If the Government fail to act now, we will see an unwelcome increase in the trail of disorder and unhappiness spreading across the country from Haverfordwest and Brecon through Glastonbury to Stonehenge, Greenham Common, Norwich and Leicester, to Cambridgeshire, Sussex and Kent." — [*Official Report*, 10 November 1983; Vol. 48, c. 514.]

The Bill is a response which has been developing over many years and I welcome it.

In the community which faces these problems in rural Wiltshire there is much debate. In a recent editorial in the Salisbury *Journal* under the heading "Muddle at the Stones" the editor wrote:

"the Stonehenge festival story will complete its transformation from a crowd of scruffy dope smokers making a nuisance of themselves in a Wiltshire field to a major civil rights issue."

He said that the way of avoiding that was to allow the National Trust and English Heritage to have a controlled festival on the old site and that that required the swallowing of pride and the recognition that thousands of young people want there to be a festival. He said:

"It does not mean that they would be caving in to anarchy but it would be a way of reducing the influence of the Convoy."

That is all very well, but it shows the crucial misunderstanding of the problem of public order—that we can live in a peaceful society only when there is consent to do so on all sides. Unfortunately, in the case of Stonehenge there has been a lack of good will on at least one of the sides for many years.

In a report in *The Times* on 4 January 1986 the environment correspondent said:

"one of the co-ordinators of the hippy convoy which annually visits Stonehenge for the summer solstice festival gave a warning of 'a month of aggravation in June'."

The convoy co-ordinator went on to say that

"the festival would definitely go ahead in June on a larger scale than last year. There would also be a similar, smaller festival at the summer and autumn equinoxes and at the winter solstice. 'They will have four headaches instead of one'."

I must make it clear that every effort has been made to find a solution to the problem which will not involve the use of police or indeed the use of the law. Consultations on management versus confrontation were at an advanced stage two years ago. I visited California to learn about the American techniques of policing pop festivals which involved management, not confrontation. But it comes back to the fact that there is no reason why a considerable group of people should meet outside the law. The rule of law in our democratic society must surely be paramount. Many attempts have been made over the years to establish an organised festival. Indeed, that has openly been said to be unworkable and unwelcome by the festival goers who are self-confessed anarchists and fellow travellers.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), who I fought in the 1979 election, is not here. I had meant to tell him that I intended to mention that he told me that when he was leader of Camden council in the 1970s and dealing with the squatter problem in Camden it was with the same personnel who are now involved in this public disorder.

The problem of a controlled festival is that the peace convoy people have said clearly to me that even if there were a controlled and organised festival they would not attend it but still seek to have their own unlawful festival.

I know that the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) has been deeply concerned in the issue, and last June we had several talks about it. Ever since we first served together in Committee we have enjoyed friendly relations, but we fell out over this issue because he did not perceive the problem at the time that people were not willing to co-operate.

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): The hon. Gentleman is giving a one-sided view. It was he who changed sides. Initially, he was prepared to say that there were many people on the other side, as he has now defined it, who were willing to co-operate and make arrangements. English Heritage under Lord Montagu are not exactly innocent in all this. In fact, there are many sides to the argument. If there were not so many sides God would not have invented lawyers.

Mr. Key: That precisely illustrates the problem. Up to last year English Heritage and the National Trust were prepared to see that festival happen. Therefore, it was the duty of all those who had any influence to try to make it happen with the minimum of disruption and law breaking. That was what we were trying to do. The only people who can do anything about lawlessness and trespassing are the landowners and the police. The Government do not have a direct role. It is the landowners who decide whether they wish to go to the High court and the police who have to enforce the injunctions. There was no question of my changing sides; it was a question of the ground shifting underneath us. That was the problem as I perceived it.

Mr. Soley: The hon. Gentleman must acknowledge that many members of the Conservative party in Salisbury wrote to me to complain about what was happening, the style of policing and what happened on that day. He knows that because he has seen the letters.

Mr. Key: No, I have not seen those letters. I would be grateful if the hon. Gentleman would show them to me. That is the first that I have heard of them.

The Bill will not deal with the problem of festivals. The offence of trespass is particularly difficult to cope with and the Bill tries to address some of the problems surrounding it.

I want to take to task the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) who said that the Country Landowners Association had produced unacceptable proposals. The CLA has made representations on the Bill to the Government and it has consulted widely with various organisations, including rambling, mountaineering and other similar bodies. Unfortunately, those bodies have been in opposition because they have mistakenly seen

[Mr. Key]

the proposals as an attempt to exclude members of the public from the lawful use and enjoyment of rural land. That is not the case. The CLA is not trying to prevent or discourage people from the lawful use of the land, and nor does its proposals relate to accidental trespass. In fact, the latest position is that the Association of County Councils, English Heritage and the CLA have produced a common position and they hope that they will be able to influence the Government to include a new clause so that an assembly, in the words of the agreed statement, of three or more persons, but, in the specific request of the CLA, six persons,

"on any land which is wholly or partly open to the air, (not being a public place) shall be deemed to be a public assembly for the purposes of this Part if the assembly of those persons is without the consent of the person entitled to occupation of that land".

I do not believe that, on either side of the House, Members are against pop festivals or agaist the use of rural land by the majority of people. After all, some 75 pop festivals were held in the countryside last year, and 39 in London. The vast majority of them caused little trouble. History teaches us the folly of forcing opposition underground. We alienate young people at our peril. They have so much to offer and they are the future. However, that does not absolve us from upholding our responsibilities to the rule of law, which has evolved over more than 1,000 years.

Until there is reciprocal goodwill on both sides—I hope that goodwill will prevail—English Heritage and the National Trust will be obliged to seek the protection of the law, and the police will be obliged to enforce it. Therefore, Parliament must ensure that the law-abiding are properly protected and that law, which is a living thing, is properly updated and continues to guarantee the rule of law under which the majority of our people will wish to live and which protects their rights. I support the Bill.

8.58 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): As we debate the Bill we see on the face of the nation two particular expressions of which we should take special note. The first is the expression of disorder, which we see demonstrated by the rising level of crime. The second is that of frustration which we see in the rising level of protest against Government and the authority. In those two expressions we see a challenge of which we should take note. It is a challenge to reconcile certain freedoms, which all hon. Members should regard as important.

First and foremost, the public would rightly say that we must ensure the freedom to be able to walk our streets in peace and enjoy our homes in quietness. Secondly, the public would agree, rather more readily than many Conservative Members sometimes think, that we must struggle to maintain the freedom of members of the public, individually and in groups, from arbitrariness and injustice, whether imposed by the Government, the police, local authorities or any other form of authority.

The public hold dear, as a matter of tradition and expectation, the freedom to make peaceful and orderly protest against Government and public authority. They rightly hold dear their freedom not to be intimidated and not to be disturbed gratuitously by those who step far over the mark of acceptable public order.

It is beyond any doubt that the old common law public order offences need to be revised, codified and put in order. However, there will need to be a great deal of improvement to this Bill before it can be said to achieve that end and before it can be said to achieve the balance between an acceptable level of authority and authoritarianism. Whereas the latter is never acceptable, I hope that all of us agree that an acceptable level of authority is necessary.

I turn now to what I regard as the most important part of the Bill, at least from the practical everyday point of view of the administration of justice. I refer to part I, which deals with such offences as that of riot. There is no doubt that the old common law offences were very much in need of rationalisation and reform. However, the Bill is a prolongation of the reliance of the police and the courts upon unspecified and, really, inchoate offences. Those of us who have practised in the criminal courts of England and Wales know full well that juries are often extremely reluctant to convict of such offences. They are particularly unprepared to convict of these offences where such specific charges as assault, wounding or criminal damage would have been available. They are also influenced by the penalties that they know are available—penalties are much better known to the general public than they used to be—if the defendant is found guilty.

It is counterproductive and much more than unhelpful to impose draconian maximum penalties which may well be out of proportion to the conduct complained of. One of my major misgivings about clause 1, which creates the offence of riot, is that there are forms of conduct which, if not trivial, might be regarded on a balanced view as relatively minor, and which nevertheless could attract in theory the maximum penalty of life imprisonment. No sensible judge will impose a life sentence for such conduct, but a jury does not know that when it is trying a case. For one reason or another the jury may think that because the judge's summing up is a little pro-prosecution, as it occasionally is, he will pass a tough sentence if the jury records a conviction. The approach shown in clause 1, particularly in the provision of a maximum life sentence, will create precisely that type of practical problem. Do we really want a maximum life sentence for an inchoate, unspecific offence?

There is a real danger that a person using minimal violence, for example a push or a nudge, will, under the terms of clause 1, be liable to a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The definition of violence contained in clause 8 is circuitous, and of the sort that causes immense humour in the lecture room of first or second-year at law school, but does little to specify the type of violence that should be subject to criminal sanction and condign punishment.

Under clause 1, in certain circumstances a dozen lively students throwing tomatoes at an Education Minister visiting their student union just after a grant cut could be guilty of riot, and subject to a maximum of life imprisonment. A dozen mothers pushing or shoving at the chairman of an education committee outside a nursery school which is facing cuts could be liable to the maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Those would be ludicrous consequences.

The most effective demonstration that I ever saw consisted of a large number of mothers with their prams and pushchairs walking backwards and forwards across the A41 trunk road between Chester and Birkenhead because the previous day a child had had an accident there. They wanted a pedestrian crossing, and their demands had been

ignored for years. If they were pushing their prams into a policeman of reasonable firmness who was afraid for his safety, they could be guilty of the offence of riot under clause 1.

The Government have the measure of the offence wrong. A life sentence should be available only for the most terrible crimes, but that is not what is provided for in the Bill. In a lesser way, violent disorder and affray, which are equally inchoate offences, give rise to the same problems, as each provides for a severe maximum sentence for the crime concerned.

Regarding the offence of disorderly conduct in clause 5, I do not propose to rehearse what my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) read to the House from the White Paper. The Government have turned the White Paper's arguments on their head. I do not understand why, despite the careful efforts of the Home Secretary to explain. It is important for our busy and sometimes oppressed police force, and for the public, that we should keep out of the criminal calendar conduct which does not deserve a criminal sanction in a reasonable and reasonably robust society. I hope that we believe that we should be living in a reasonable and reasonably robust society. If so, we should recognise that clause 5 seeks to apply criminal sanctions to what should not be criminal offences.

I am concerned at the broad application of clause 5 to dwellings. It does not apply if both parties concerned are in a dwelling; but it applies, for example, to an argument over the garden fence between two neighbours who disagree about who should pick the apples from an encroaching apple tree. Surely that should not come within the scope of criminal law.

One of the key problems of public order is that the rights of peaceful protest and assembly, which, together with freedom of speech, form the basis of the right of political dissent, exist under current law only in the negative sense. There is, for example, no defined legal right to demonstrate or to attend a meeting, yet those freedoms are a crucial part of the relationship between the Government and the people. I believe that we shall never create a satisfactory law to deal with processions and assemblies until we state those rights in positive form in a Bill of Rights or something similar.

When faced with the one option offered to us — provisions of the present statutory type — we must ensure that the measure does not go further than is reasonable. Seven days' notice is too long. It is rightly said that spontaneity is sometimes the essence of a demonstration which is in the public interest. The right to apply for judicial review is an inadequate protection against an incorrect and unfair decision by the police because an application for judicial review under order 53 of the rules of the Supreme Court does not generally come before the court during the period in which one would want to have the meeting or procession. I join those hon. Members who have called for a right to apply to the county court judge in the local summary civil court for a review of the merits of the decision to prohibit a meeting or impose conditions. Certainly, a summary procedure is required to enable a review on the merits of a meeting to take place.

I shall make some final and brief points in an effort to let at least one Conservative hon. and learned Member participate. I welcome the provisions in part III, which deals with racial matters and harassment. Religious groups have not been included. Some of the worst oppression and harassment this century in Britain and the world has been against various religious groups. I ask the Home Secretary to consider whether, by a simple drafting amendment, religious groups can be included in part III.

I turn now to football exclusion orders. If it were possible to have a practicable system of membership cards, football ground exclusion orders would work well, but without them the system would be absolute nonsense. That type of law brings the law itself into disrepute because it is unenforceable. It may do a great deal for the false beard and moustache industry, but it will not do anything to protect us as it was intended to do. The sanction is imposed at the wrong time. Those who have been excluded but break the exclusion order and go to a football match will probably — this is human nature — behave well when they go to a match in breach of the exclusion order. Thus they may in fact be sentenced to imprisonment after going to a football ground and behaving well. The emphasis should be upon the court which deals with them for the original offence passing a sentence sufficiently severe to ensure that they do not do it again. I hope that when the Bill comes back to the House we shall see that this part has been radically altered if not removed from the Bill altogether.

9.14 pm

Mr. Nicholas Lyell (Mid-Bedfordshire): I am pleased to have a brief opportunity to welcome a Bill to modernise the law on public order. When it has been through a constructive Standing Committee, it will be a worthy successor to six years of useful law reform under this Government.

I am confident that the Bill passes the test which requires a balanced legal framework in which the police have the powers necessary to prevent and deal with public order, while freedom of speech and the liberty to protest continue to be safeguarded.

I wish to make two brief points. The first relates to marches and demonstrations. It is 50 years since the Public Order Act 1936 was passed, and it is fair to say that London today has become the demonstration capital of the world. On average there has been a major demonstration — one involving more than 100 police in attendance — every week over the past several years. The great majority are peaceful, but not all. If such demonstrations are to go off peacefully, they require careful organisation, not just for the sake of the public, but for the marchers. The Bill's proposals are sensible, because they merely require organisers to do what most reasonable organisers are already doing.

The power to impose conditions on static demonstrations or assemblies is a logical and necessary development in view of the disorders, not just during the miners' strike, but of the past 10 years. One can remember Grunwick and Warrington as well as the miners' strike.

We hear much from the Left about the right to work, but it is wrong that under the cloak of freedom of assembly those who truly wish to go to work should be prevented by threats to life and limb from an organised mob, with the police able only to keep a way open by linking arms and struggling against it, while those who plan and organise it, or who continue to take part, contrary to police directions, should be untouchable.

[Mr. Nicholas Lyell]

Disorderly conduct has attracted a great deal of attention in the press and during the debate. I believe that a skilful formulation has been achieved. The wording that the offender

"has reasonable cause to believe that the use of the words or behaviour is likely to harass, alarm or distress another person"

does not merely leave the matter to the police officer's subjective judgment, but causes the court to consider whether the offender knew that what he was doing was thoroughly unreasonable and unpleasant to other people.

It is right that we should seek to protect the elderly and the defenceless against cruel harassment such as occurs in too many flats and housing estates. It is not fair to expect such victims to go to court. Although there may be some risk that the offence could be used unreasonably by some police officers, the answer is not to deprive the community of the necessary protection or the police of the necessary powers. The answer lies, as is increasingly happening, in the good training of young police officers and the inculcation of and insistence upon high standards throughout the force.

I have been lucky enough—or unlucky enough—to be a member of the Standing Committee on almost every major law and order Bill during the past six years. I see the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), which shows that it will be a pleasure once again if I am lucky enough to be selected for this Standing Committee. No such Bill arrives fully fledged on the statute book. All Home Office draftsmen will probably draft restrictively, on the basis that it is easier to give away than it is to recoup.

This is a well balanced Bill. It helps the maintenance of normal public order, while preserving the principle of peaceful protest. I believe that it will protect and enhance the liberty of our society as a whole. I wish it well and, after a constructive Committee stage, a safe path to the statute book.

9.19 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): It is a pleasure to begin by welcoming my hon. Friend the newly elected Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland), who made a well-structured speech. I sat on the Committee that dealt with the abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan counties with his predecessor, Mr. Harry Cowans, whom we all greatly miss. Harry made a great contribution to that Bill and I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge will be welcome in Committee, should the Bill receive a Second Reading, to follow through the arguments that he put so well tonight.

Following what my hon. Friend the Member for Tyne Bridge and other hon. Members have said, the Bill must be seen in the context of the disastrous failure of the Government's law and order policy. My right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) was absolutely right to link that failure to the crime rate. The Government were elected in 1979 and in 1983 on a get-tough policy to deal with crime. They got tough. Britain has more people in prison than any other country, except Turkey. However, the policy has been a disastrous, embarrassing and frightening failure for many people in Britain. The problem is not only one of rising crime. There have been riots of a number, nature and intensity that this country has not seen for more than 100 years—all that from the law and order Government. That is what makes people so angry about Bills such as this, which have nothing to do with the causes of those riots. If the Government were serious, they would do something about the causes.

Some factors would have caused problems for any Government. The first is the move from the inner cities to the country and, to some extent, to the suburban areas. That move reverses the trend of the previous 100 years. What the Government have done that has been so wicked and that has had such a devastating effect is to rip the sticking plaster off the inner-city areas by making devastating cuts in public expenditure.

The Government have created long-term youth unemployment, which, with the ripping apart of the fabric of the social structure of the inner cities, is a deadly combination. What occurs is a rise in what I prefer to call the alternative economy instead of the black economy. It is an alternative to the existing economic system, which has broken down. In that context, people work while drawing social security benefit, they steal and engage in drug dealing, but the crucial factor is the style of policing. The majority of police convictions are obtained through information from the public. As that information dries up, the police must resort to more desperate measures to get evidence to obtain convictions. They do so by stop-and-search techniques, which have been used before, or by breaking into houses and flats, which has happened recently.

The police are not the cause of the problems, but they are frequently the trigger. For that reason, my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton was right to quote the Police Federation as saying that the police do not want to be seen as "Maggie Thatcher's boot boys". We must do something to take the police out of the front line, but the Bill puts them right back into it.

Under the previous Home Secretary, the Government's response was to make even tougher noises and to try to use the police as a private army. He recommended hanging to his party conference, but was happily got off that hook by his Back Benchers, who persuaded him to vote for hanging for terrorists only. That was the most stupid thing for which to vote.

The present Home Secretary has a more sophisticated approach. He knows what some of the problems are, and he is trying to do an about-turn. There was that bizarre conference at Downing street last week, which involved two or three hours' discussion, with 50 people speaking for three minutes each. That was all they got. Many of the things said there were already known. Indeed, most of them were packaged and were being carried out by Labour-controlled authorities before their finances were cut.

If the Home Secretary believes in what he said at Downing street last week, I challenge him to give a guarantee now that any local authority that funds a crime prevention policy or a victim support scheme will not be rate capped or cut when that is taken into account. Let him give another guarantee that all the crime prevention and victim support schemes that were paid for by the GLC and the metropolitan authorities will be restored in full to all those local authorities. If they are not, they will become meaningless.

The Secretary of State's handout talked about 1·3 million houses needing special measures to help to make them secure from burglars. The cost will be about £500

million. Where will the money come from? Will the local authorities have to pay it? But they will be rate capped, so that is not on. The Home Secretary is in the deadly position of trying to introduce a policy in which he believes, but which the Prime Minister will not allow him to carry out. Unless he takes action similar to that taken by the previous Secretary of State for Defence, I suspect that the Secretary of State will become a meaningless and sad figure trying to deliver a policy which he knows is right but for which money will not be made available.

The Government's law and order policy has failed because of their savage attack on our economic and social structure. More seriously, the Government are now engaged in an equally savage attack on the basic democratic rights of our people.

Mr. Lyell *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Soley: The hon. and learned Gentleman might shake his head, but he cannot have considered the detail of the Bill. He had better understand it, because ultimately it will affect his people just as much as it affects ours. The people will be angry about the Bill. The Bill says that the police will decide whether a demonstration or assembly should be allowed at certain places or along certain routes, and will determine the numbers, if they believe that disorder, damage, disruption or intimidation is likely. The use of the word "disruption" is most dangerous to democracy. We are talking about comparing the right to go shopping with the right to express one's feelings in a demonstration. We must consider that carefully.

One matter that troubled me greatly was paragraph 4.22 on page 27 of the White Paper, which said:

"The Committee therefore suggested an additional test which would enable the police to impose conditions on a procession in order to prevent serious disruption to the normal life of the community."

The normal life of a democratic community involves the right of assembly and the right to demonstrate. If we remove that, we remove one of the roots of democracy.

Evidence was given to that Select Committee by the Association of Chief Police Officers, which expressed similar views and went on to say that the disruption could be the dislocation of bus services. We do not need demonstrations to do that. The Secretary of State for Transport does it far better than any marcher or demonstrator could. That is usually perfectly lawful, although the Secretary of State for Transport has been before the courts once or twice. Perhaps I should offer my services, as a former probation officer. We can all make one mistake, but two or three in a row suggest a tendency towards recidivism.

The point is that Walter Bagehot is alive and well. The concept of the efficient and decorative parts of the constitution, about which Walter Bagehot warned the country so many years ago, still applies strongly. We can bring all of London to a halt for visiting dignitaries from overseas or for the lord mayor's show, but people dare not go out on the streets to demonstrate their feelings, anxieties or anger about a political, economic or social policy. That is the difference, and that is why I say to the hon. and learned Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mr. Lyell) that the Bill is dangerous.

At times, we believe that the only part of democracy that matters is the representative part, when we come here and speak on behalf of the people. That is a vital part, because it gives the medium and long-term expression of people's views, and sometimes the short-term, too, but when people are deeply angry about something they must be able to express their views, whether they relate to a school crossing, as the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) said, or to much more important affairs of state. The Government are closing a safety valve on democracy. If they go down that road they can make the police impose any conditions, and we might end up like the Poles or the South Africans. The people will reject that absolutely.

Government Members have ignored the fact that all the clauses make it clear that the most senior police officer present at a demonstration or assembly can decide the numbers and the route. That most senior police officer might be only a constable.

Clause 14 outlaws picketing, which can be regarded as a dangerous activity. A police constable, or the most senior police officer present, can limit numbers and move people away from an area. That means that the police can determine how people picket, how many are allowed to picket, and so on. The police should be determining whether an offence has been committed and by their presence deter an offence. That is what the police want to do.

It is interesting to see how the Government's policy has changed. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) drew my attention to the Government's Green Paper on trade union immunities, which flies in the face of the Bill. On secondary picketing, it says:

"to stop everyone from entering a given area would mean creating areas where, if only temporarily, the right of passage along the highway and the right of free speech for the purpose of peacefully communicating and persuading no longer applied. Moreover, whatever the details of the proposal, it would again seem that the services of the police were being enlisted on behalf of the employer."

The Government accepted that. Why do they not accept it now? Why have they gone back on what they said in their Green Paper and their response to it?

The police are being put right in the front line. What will happen when a police officer says "I think there are too many people here and I want some of you to go away"? That is emotive. People feel strongly. Several thousand people might be present, or only several hundred, and a police officer will have to tell some of them to go away. The Home Secretary says that the police can do that already. Perhaps they can, but the Bill gives legal power, backed up by sanctions, which will make the problem worse. That is why the Labour party is making it clear that we expect people to have a special, defined right to demonstrate and assemble.

If we do not have that, we shall end up before the Strasbourg court again. What will happen when people who want to demonstrate are not allowed to do so and they go to Strasbourg? I am becoming fed up, because we have a marvellous reputation under previous Labour, Tory and Liberal Governments for human and democratic rights. Today, Britain is brought before that court more often than any other country in western Europe. What is happening to our reputation under this Government?

Even if one accepts that the conditions are necessary —I am not convinced that they are—the case for the conditions being decided by the police does not exist, not even in the interests of the police. The police should not be dragged into the political arena, and they do not want to be. They do not want to decide whether a demonstration

[Mr. Soley]

should take place, which route it should take or how many people should be there. Such decisions should be made by an elected authority, if we decide to go along that road, so that those who are prevented from carrying out their democratic rights can complain to elected representatives. Such decisions should not be made by the police.

The hon. Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler) told us that it was important to put riot in its proper perspective. He told us also that riot was an extremely serious offence. The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery adduced some good arguments on that score. The hon. Member for Westminster, North seems to forget that under the Bill a riot can consist of 12 people threatening to fight one another at a private party. For that, the Government are proposing to introduce a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery is probably right, inasmuch as the courts will not normally impose such a sentence. However, it will jack up — the hon. Member for Westminster, North, being an ex-prison governor, should know this better than anyone else — prison sentences, because for any serious offence of that nature a long sentence will be imposed.

I have a specific question for the Home Secretary to which I hope the Minister of State will respond. In answer to an intervention by the right hon. and learned Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle), the Home Secretary said that the courts would decide what were prescribed football matches. The Bill does not provide for that. We are told in clauses 29(4) and 31 that the Home Secretary will make the prescriptions. First, I should like to know whether my interpretation is correct. Secondly, will the Home Secretary be prescribing World Cup matches? Will they be included?

Like the 1936 Act, the Bill has been introduced theoretically to deal with racism. We welcome the provisions that deal with racism as far as they go, but they do not go anywhere near far enough. I am left wondering why the consent of the Attorney-General has to be given before a prosecution can be initiated. Racism is not an excuse for taking away the democratic rights of the people. There is a problem of racism in Britain—a desperately serious one—and it is one to which we must address ourselves. At times of economic distress there is a search for scapegoats, and scapegoats are often minority ethnic groups.

If we are to tackle that problem, the Government should initiate and support a campaign against racism. They should not produce a Bill whose overall effect is to undermine democratic rights while pretending that they are dealing with racism, when in fact they are not. My hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) raised an important argument when he said that the Government should do far more to deal with racism.

The Government are attacking basic democratic rights, dragging the police into the political arena and ignoring the very problems that have been the focus for the Bill. Until there is some understanding of the Socialist principle of more equity between the distribution of wealth and power, the riots that have broken out on our streets will continue to distort the fabric of our society. As the social survey trends showed recently, as the rich become richer, the poor become poorer and unemployment increases, we can expect more disorder and more crime.

As long as the Government go down the dangerous road of trying to use the police to cope with the consequences of a disastrously failed social and economic policy, so the problems of the police on the street will become increasingly difficult. As a result, the people will become increasingly frightened about their welfare. The sad feature is that minority groups will be the first to be picked on; they are in the front line when it comes to racism.

This is a bad Bill and it represents a lost opportunity. So many things could have been done to codify properly common law offences. So much could have been done to improve the law in this area generally. The Government have chosen to ignore the problem and to carry out an attack on the democratic rights of the people of this nation in a way that will undermine their rights of assembly and demonstration in a manner that we have not seen this century, and I include in that my comments on the 1936 Act.

9.38 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Giles Shaw): May I commence my response to this debate by referring to the elegant and eloquent maiden speech by the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland). I wish to associate with the remarks made by those on this side of the House and say that we do indeed carry a warm respect for his predecessor the late Harry Cowans. Harry Cowans was a much beloved figure here—a man of great charm and character.

The hon. Member for Tyne Bridge spoke well and spoke with experience and as a dedicated representative of that grand part of the world. As leader of the council in Gateshead, his knowledge is that of somebody whose roots are in his constituency. We wish him well and we look forward to his further contributions in our debates in the future.

The hon. Member used the phrase "prevention is better than cure." I suspect that it is in the context of prevention that we seek to discuss the Public Order Bill. Before turning to the personal contributions made, I would like to say that we considered matters in this Bill carefully and over a considerable period, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made clear this afternoon.

We recognise and expect—indeed hon. Members on all sides have stressed this—that these matters deserve the most thorough examination that Parliament can afford. I look forward to the detailed discussions in Committee. We are dealing here with issues which lie at the heart of a free society: with the rights of people to live their lives peacefully and free from violence and intimidation. We believe that we have got the balance right. But it would be wrong for me to pretend to the House that the Bill is perfect. Certainly our minds are not closed to improvements.

Widespread support has been expressed for the changes in the racial discrimination provisions and there has been considerable support for the exclusion orders. However, I notice that there are some problems. The rest of the Bill has received a less generous welcome from Opposition Members. In my view, most of their criticisms fail to address the basic purpose of the Bill, which is to prevent the traditional freedoms of assembly and protest from turning into weapons of intimidation and harassment.

This Government fully uphold the right of everyone to protest, to march, to assemble, to demonstrate and to picket — so long as these activities are carried out

peacefully. But we do not believe that these rights are absolute or that they cannot be and have not been abused. Hon. Members must ask themselves whether the right to march is a right to be exercised whenever one chooses, regardless of the effect on the rest of the community; whether the right to picket is a right to intimidate and obstruct those who wish to go to work; whether the right to assemble is a right to prevent others from going about their lawful business. The truth is that none of those rights is unfettered: they are not licences for the activists and the militants to impose their views by force on other people.

There has been reference to the White Paper. It contained considered views and refers to the longstanding origination of this measure. There are certain matters in it which are not to be proceeded with, and I should explain to the House what they are.

First, there was the proposed power to ban a single march. The police felt that if they had power to apply for a ban on a single march—for example, by the Militant Tendency, or CND — it would lay them open to accusations of political bias in an area where they already have to tread very carefully. At present under the Public Order Act 1936 they can apply only for a ban on all marches in an area, or certain classes of march. This ensures an even-handed approach—which I trust will commend itself to the House.

The second matter that we have not pursued is the possibility of enabling a police authority to recover policing costs from demonstration organisers when police conditions are broken. This was a consultative proposal in the White Paper, and the response was overwhelmingly against the idea. It would be difficult to calculate the costs involved. I am sure that hon. Members on both sides of the House agree that it is right not to proceed with that.

The White Paper also considered the possibility of enabling magistrates to bring in alternative verdicts, not simply in regard to public order offences. The majority of those who responded to our invitation to comment on the idea favoured the introduction of alternative verdicts in magistrates' courts and thought that they would be a major innovation. We have concluded, however, that if such action is to be taken it should cover the full range of offences for which alternative verdicts might be available. We have therefore decided against making any such provision in the Bill, as alternative verdicts could have related only to public order offences.

There has been a full and frank exchange of views today. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) made a robust speech and I am grateful for his comments about notice of marches and assemblies. We shall have to bear his comments in mind.

The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) mentioned picketing and people's rights. We fully support the right to picket and have no intention of interfering with the right of peaceful picketing. However, there is a difference between peaceful and lawful picketing and picketing which provokes violence and intimidation. Those who suggest that only mass picketing can be effective must be trying to legitimise intimidation and violence.

The right hon. Gentleman also said that there should be a statutory right to demonstrate. The Bill will not affect traditional rights to demonstrate peacefully and lawfully. It is a basic assumption in public order law, as with other law, that people are free to do something unless there is a rule to the contrary. If we provided a right to demonstrate or to march, the presumption that the law gives other rights would be undermined. The right of peaceful assembly is in any case guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights.

My hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) mentioned judicial review, as did the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile). I accept that it is not always the speediest form of redress but it has worked speedily. In 1984, there was a ban on a Sikh march in London due to be held on a Sunday. The organiser sought judicial review of the ban from a High Court judge the previous Saturday morning. I believe that there is a good prospect of judicial reviews continuing to provide speedy redress.

My hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler) reminded the House of the Bill's long gestation. It goes back to the events of 1981 and the Law Commission. He is right to welcome the powers concerning static demonstrations, which will help to provide information to the police and allow them to impose conditions of duration, location and time. He will recall that that does not include the power to ban.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) sought a new philosophy behind the Bill. The philosophy behind it is the desire to ensure that the rights of the minority to protest are preserved, but that the rights of the majority to live peacefully are also preserved. My hon. Friend the Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Hawksley) said that the public were greatly disquieted by television coverage of recent disorders.

The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) mentioned the problems of sensitive policing and the need to organise such policing in communities and estates. I see that he is nodding assent. If so, he must agree that it is important to establish consultative committees which represent communities fully, to which the police can give their full attention and with which the police can discuss various issues. I hope that such consultative committees will be established throughout London, especially in Labour-controlled boroughs.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) made a substantial contribution to our discussions once again. He asked about appeals to the High Court concerning applications for a ban that are refused by the local authority. That is certainly something for the Government to consider, but, at the moment, as the Bill makes clear, we do not intend to do that. That is one of the clauses that ought to be considered carefully in Committee.

My hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) raised the question of the protection of monuments in relation to the new offences contained in the Bill. I advise my hon. Friend that the powers to impose conditions on a static demonstration would apply to assemblies in public places in the open air. It would therefore seem that monuments open to the public would come within the ambit of the Bill. I hope that that will give my hon. Friend some encouragement.

The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery again referred to a Bill of Rights. That is not part and parcel of the measure. There are substantial arguments against proceeding along that line in a country that has not had the written constitution that he might prefer. I understand why

[Mr. Giles Shaw]

he seeks to ensure that in the discussions on the Bill he will keep a close eye on the various aspects that affect the liberty of the individual.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) asked me a direct question about exclusion orders. If my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will allow me to say this, I would admit that a correction should be made to that. The courts will not have discretion to decide the scope of the exclusion order, only its length. Exclusion orders will, of course, ban offenders from all prescribed matches. The hon. Gentleman will recall that the Government's intention is to prescribe football league matches, international matches and other matches involving league clubs. There is no present intention to prescribe football matches abroad. That should correct the impression given by my right hon. Friend.

Last but by no means least, I turn to the contribution of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). The right hon. Gentleman was in one of his most expansive moods and he managed to cover a vast amount in the vast amount of time that he took up. It was not one of his more exciting performances and I think that the old Gortonian club will be pretty disappointed and that that ancient brigade, the old Ardwickhamists, will, I am sure, be a little upset at his remarks. His speech did, however, contain two or three nuggets of importance.

The right hon. Gentleman raised an issue in relation to compensation. I advise him that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, clause 10 of the Bill, which refers to that matter, makes only a marginal change to the eligibility for compensation by bringing the test into line with the new definition of riot. In future, claimants will have to show that damage was caused during rioting by a crowd of 12 persons or more, rather than by the present minimum of three. The Government have not studied details of previous claims, but I believe that the majority of claimants who were compensated after the 1981 riots would still be compensated under the provisions of the new Bill. Now no new prosecutions for riot will have to be brought and convictions obtained before compensation is claimed. That is the position.

Mr. Kaufman: That is clearly a very important matter. Is the Minister saying that clause 10 provides that the payment of compensation under the Riot (Damages) Act 1886 or the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 will be available only where people are charged with riot under clause 1?

Mr. Shaw: That would seem to be the case in relation to riot in the conditions outlined in subsection (1). No doubt charges will be made and compensation sought under other clauses, but riot damage compensation is confined to clause 1. If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to pursue the matter further, I shall be delighted to take it up.

The main part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, and of the speeches of many other hon. Members, involved the new offence of disorderly conduct. The right hon. Gentleman devoted much of his speech to that offence. It appears to be common ground between us that we should seek to deal with anti-social behaviour. We know how much misery can be caused by gangs of youths to many people in our inner cities and elsewhere. There seems to be general agreement that we should look for an offence to cover such behaviour.

Many hon. Members have referred to the experience of their constituents and I take it that there is wide support for the new offence, although I noted that the right hon. Member for Gorton did not give a direct reply when his hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) asked whether he supported the offence of disorderly conduct. The right hon. Gentleman said that he supported the concept, but not the offence as defined in the Bill.

We ought to find out exactly where the right hon. Gentleman wishes to go. I invite him to table amendments in Committee so that we can see precisely where he stands. I believe that we are agreed on the concept, though we understand the importance of drafting. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will wish to make it clear to the House where he stands on disorderly conduct. We can certainly look at the drafting, but we must not resile from the need to describe in the Bill an offence that will bring substantial support and encouragement to many of our constituents.

The Bill has taken a great deal of time to prepare. It had its origins many years ago in the Law Commission report, in the events of 1981, in the discussions about what happened in Southall, in Lord Scarman's report and in the discussions that surrounded events at Grunwick, Warrington, Orgreave and Armthorpe. All Conservative Members, and I trust all Opposition Members, will agree that it was necessary to update public order law and to meet the immense public disquiet and the problems associated with public disorder.

It is clear that hon. Members are motivated by a need to bring more than a semblance of order and peacefulness to various activitities in our country. We are seeking to codify and update the common law offences, to bring them into a new form and to take forward many of the recommendations made, not least, by the Select Committee on Home Affairs. We have also tried to ensure the rights of the minority in relation to peaceful protest, the expression of views and marches and assemblies and to ensure that the rights of the majority are not overruled by a minority.

That is why we are so keen to see that there is a constructive exchange of views between the organisers of marches and the police. That is why we have inserted in the Bill provisions that do not allow the banning of assemblies, but provide for conditions to be applied on the duration, location and numbers involved in assemblies. We are not talking about the removal of statutory rights. We are trying to ensure peaceable arrangements between those who want to protest and those who live in communities. We have established for the first time the need to look at offences against property as well as against persons during riots. We are very clear about our duty — it is to all citizens, wherever they live; it is to everyone, not simply a single group. We must ensure that their environment is not unnecessarily disturbed.

The Public Order Bill is the most important piece of legislation to be brought before this House for decades. It provides the context in which our democracy can live and develop without threat, intimidation, disruption and violence.

Mr. Walter Harrison (Wakefield): I have sat in the Chamber for two hours listening to the debate. I have discovered that a week is a long time in politics, and so too is a minute a long time in politics. I know that the Government are pressing——

Mr. Carol Mather (Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household) *rose in his place and claimed to move*, That the Question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to*.

Question put accordingly, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 202, Noes 289.

Division No. 32] **[10.00 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S.)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kilroy-Silk, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, M.
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'dse)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Torney, Tom
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Ray Powell.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Best, Keith
Blackburn, John
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Farr, Sir John
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David

Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter, *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parris, Matthew
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ian Lang and
Mr. Michael Neubert.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 41 (Amendment on second or third reading.)

The House divided: Ayes 292, Noes 201.

Division No. 33] **[10.14 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Best, Keith
Blackburn, John
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Farr, Sir John
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney

Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter, *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parris, Matthew
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Donald Thompson and
Mr. Francis Maude.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S.)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kilroy-Silk, Robert

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, M.
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon John *(Monklands, East)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Torney, Tom
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 42 (Committal of Bills).

Westland plc

10.27 pm

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Leon Brittan): I am most grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to make this statement as I should like to clarify what I said earlier today, and to apologise to the House if what I said gave a misleading impression.

This afternoon in making my statement to the House I was asked whether the Government had received a letter from British Aerospace concerning the meeting which took place between Sir Raymond Lygo and myself on 8 January. I replied that I had not done so. In answer to further questions as to whether any member of the Government had received a letter from Sir Raymond Lygo, I replied that I was not aware of any letter from Sir Raymond Lygo to any one else either. There has since been an announcement by 10 Downing street that a letter was received there which the Prime Minister saw just before coming over to the House. It was not from Sir Raymond Lygo, but from Sir Austin Pearce, the chairman of British Aerospace, and was marked private and strictly confidential. Although I was made aware of the existence of the letter minutes before I left for the House I had not been informed of its contents, nor did I know whether Sir Austin Pearce was prepared for its existence to be made public. In view of the fact that the letter was marked "Private and strictly confidential," it was essential that I took great care in what I said to protect the strict confidentiality attached to it by Sir Austin Pearce, while answering questions accurately.

I understand that since I made my statement, Sir Austin has agreed with the Prime Minister's office that the existence of his letter can be disclosed, although not its contents. I had no intention of misleading the House in this matter, and therefore wished to come to explain this sequence of events immediately. If it is thought that I have in any way misled the House I apologise unreservedly.

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): If the Secretary of State had made an unreserved and unqualified apology, we would have been happy to accept it. I remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman of the sequence of events. The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) asked about a letter. The Secretary of State replied: "I have not received any such letter." That is quite true. There were questions from other hon. Members. At one point, my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) asked about a letter from the chairman of British Aerospace, who happens to be Sir Austin Pearce. My hon. Friend finished his question by saying that the Secretary of State "should come clean."

The verbatim reply by the right hon. and learned Gentleman was: "If it helps the hon. Gentleman, I am not aware of any letters from Sir Raymond Lygo to anyone else either."

In case the Secretary of State seeks to draw a distinction between a letter from Sir Raymond Lygo and a letter from Sir Austin Pearce, I remind him that, later in the exchange, my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Brown) asked: "is the Secretary of State aware of any letter received by Her Majesty's Government from British Aerospace?" The matter could hardly be more clearly put. The Secretary of State replied: "As to the first

part of the question by the hon. Gentleman, I have already answered that point in reply to the hon. Member for Bolsover."

Any reasonable person would have accepted from that sequence of replies that the Secretary of State did not know of any letter from British Aerospace. He has told us today that he did know that such a letter had been received by the Prime Minister. I think that the Secretary of State should now say—[HON. MEMBERS: "Resign."] Let us see how things develop. He should now say, "I am unreservedly sorry for having misled the House of Commons to the extent that I implied that a letter had not been received when it had been."

On the issue of confidentiality, I say to the Secretary of State that I appreciate that there might be a problem about a letter marked "Private and confidential". He should have said precisely that to the House—that a letter had been received which had been given on a confidential basis and that he could not take that matter further because of questions of commercial or other forms of confidentiality. That would have had the merit of being a truthful answer to the House of Commons.

Throughout the whole of that performance this afternoon, the Prime Minister sat in silence. She had more knowledge than any other hon. Member because she was the recipient of that letter and, no doubt, had read it before she came across to the House of Commons. In that circumstance, why did the Prime Minister not even lean across to the Secretary of State, who was within inches of her throughout the whole of the debate, and correct him if he was at some stage misleading the House? I ask the Prime Minister to apologise to the House tonight or tomorrow for what was said by the Secretary of State.

The House of Commons will not be satisfied that it knows the full truth about this rather confused matter until the terms of that letter are published so that they can be compared with the account of the meeting given by the Secretary of State this afternoon.

Mr. Brittan: At the outset and at the conclusion of what I had to say, I made it clear that if the opinion of the House was that my answers were misleading, I would apologise unreservedly. I should have thought that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) could at least give me credit for that. As it happens, I do not think that the answers that I gave bear the interpretation that he has put upon them. If he thinks that they gave that impression, I am content to apologise and withdraw. On any view, I have unequivocally set the record straight tonight at the earliest opportunity that I could. *[Interruption]* If the right hon. and learned Gentleman says that he asked me to do so, I can assure him that I had taken the decision to do so before he made that request.

As for saying that the letter was marked "Strictly private and confidential", the right hon. and learned Gentleman should be well aware that in matters of this kind it is the existence of the letter as much as its contents that is strictly private and confidential and that the confidentiality is one imparted by the author of the letter and no one else.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): How can the Secretary of State claim that it was not his intention to mislead the House when he now explains that he gave his answers, as he did, because he did not wish to acknowledge at that stage the existence of a letter whose contents were marked "Strictly private and confidential"? Was it not clearly his intention to conceal from the House the existence of that letter? In pursuance of that letter was he given guidance by the Prime Minister before those exchanges, as he did not appear to be given any during them?

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman is not on a correct point. I had to tread the narrow path of not breaking the confidentiality of the chairman of British Aerospace and answering the questions accurately. I readily concede that in doing so I answered the questions strictly, but I answered them to the best of my ability. If I failed to answer them in a way that the House considers to be completely satisfactory I have indicated my readiness to apologise. I know that the hon. Gentleman will accept that.

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): May I put it to my right hon. and learned Friend that if the writer of a letter, for his own reasons and in his own interests, chooses to mark that letter "In confidence" it would be a breach of confidence for the letter's existence to be disclosed.

Mr. Brittan: That is the view that I took.

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): The House of Commons is always generous to anyone who makes a fulsome apology. Does the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry not realise, however, that the way he has apologised tonight shows that he does not know the difference between evasion after evasion, after question after question was put to him; when he told the House that he was speaking only for himself and for no one else; when he said that there was no letter from Sir Raymond Lygo; and when he replied to my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Brown)? In those circumstances, whatever the nature of the original letter, there was an hour of questioning available when his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister could have told him what the position was, and for him to have told the House when he should.

Mr. Brittan: I do not accept the right hon. and learned Gentleman's strictures. I should have thought that what I said to the House is a completely clear account of what occurred, and expresses a readiness to apologise to the House for any misleading impression given. I should have thought that any attempt to extract more than that was motivated more by a concern to extract the maximum from this matter than a concern for the truth.

Sir John Page (Harrow, West): Is my right hon. and learned Friend rather surprised that a private and confidentially marked letter should have had such a wide circulation to my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) and apparently a large number of Opposition Members?

Mr. Brittan: I think that I had better not comment on that.

Mr. Roy Jenkins (Glasgow, Hillhead): Is it not the case that, although the behaviour of the Secretary of State has been pathetic, the behaviour of the Prime Minister has been much the more extraordinary? It was clear from halfway through the exchanges this afternoon that the crux of the exchanges was the question of whether there was a letter from British Aerospace. For the Prime Minister to

[Mr. Roy Jenkins]

sit there for half an hour and allow the Secretary of State to mislead the House was a most extraordinary procedure. Although what the Secretary of State said may just be within the formal bounds of the truth, the margin is so narrow that we shall count our spoons quickly whenever they are together again.

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. Gentleman was not in the House—[HON. MEMBERS: "Yes, he was."] I did not spot him. If he was there, he was there—[HON. MEMBERS: "Apologise."] I certainly apologise. I did not see him. If the right hon. Gentleman is unable to appreciate any of the consequences of receiving a letter that is marked "Strictly private and confidential", whether that is a matter for me or for my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, he is quite unaware of the normal obligations that exist in society.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Does my right hon. and learned Friend believe that the highly personalised politicking that has been going on will in any way help the workers of Westland, the board of Westland, and those who depend on the future of this industry? Since the Opposition already have a full Supply day on Wednesday to debate this subject, and since my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is to speak on that occasion, would it not have been more appropriate had the Opposition waited until Wednesday, when my right hon. Friend would have communicated the contents of the letter, had they been material to the shareholders' meeting, which has now been postponed until Friday?

Mr. Brittan: I agree with my hon. Friend that we have moved a long way from Westland.

Mr. Robert C. Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): Is the Secretary of State aware that, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) so rightly said, an unqualified apology is received very sympathetically by the House. He has exposed himself by making this statement at least as a stranger to the truth. If I can remain in order by describing the conduct of the Secretary of State tonight, he has disgraced himself, but the Prime Minister has disgraced the House of Commons and the country by her silence this afternoon.

Mr. Brittan: I do not think that that commentary calls for any counter-commentary.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Does my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State accept that this is not a time for semantics or qualification? Does he not feel that his inglorious part in this long and unhappy chapter should come to an end?

Mr. Brittan: I accept neither the description nor the conclusion.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Does the Secretary of State recall that when I asked the question, I referred to any letters from the chairman of British Aerospace. In his answer, as was recounted by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), he said that no letter had been received from Sir Raymond Lygo. That was not the question that I asked him. The House will always accept an apology from someone who unwittingly misleads the House, but when a Minister, under close examination, knowing of such a letter, misleads the House, not unwittingly but deliberately in cahoots with the Prime Minister, he has no alternative but to go—and to take the lady with him.

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman is not correct in his description of what I did because he fails to give any weight whatsoever to the fact that a letter was received marked "Strictly private and confidential", the existence of which I was not at liberty to disclose.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that anyone who has listened to what he has said and has heard what has been said against him would accept that—with the exception of those right hon. and hon. Members who want to make mischief—he has given the House a reasonable explanation and an adequate apology?

Mr. Brittan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): This afternoon I asked whether it would not be more accurate—*[Interruption.]* to say that if the Secretary of State did not read the letter, the Prime Minister did. Was that not an opportunity for one colleague at least to say to another on the Government Front Bench what the truth was? Why did the Prime Minister not take that opportunity to save a lot of time and trouble for the House and to say quietly and gently what the truth was?

Mr. Brittan: The confidentiality attached to that letter was not something which the Prime Minister had any more right to waive than I. It was a confidentiality imparted by Sir Austin Pearce and it was for him to decide how he wished that letter to be treated.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. These matters will be discussed when the issue is debated on Wednesday. Mr. Nicholas Ridley.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry South-East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I accept your ruling about the termination of questions, but is it not in order to point out that a large number of hon. Members who were present this afternoon for the statement asked questions based upon the answers then given by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry? A few of us would like to find out whether his selective amnesia is permanent or only temporary.

Mr. Speaker: It would be impossible to have a complete re-run of what happened this afternoon—*[Interruption.]* Order. This is a very narrow statement and we have a full day's debate on the matter on Wednesday.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: No.

Seat Belts

10.49 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): I beg to move,

That the continuance in force of the Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (S.I., 1982, No. 1203) be approved.

The purpose of this evening's debate is to enable the House to consider whether it wishes to continue the decision taken by Parliament in 1981 that drivers and front seat passengers in cars and light vans should be required by law to wear their seat belts.

The House will recall that the decision to make belt wearing compulsory was taken only after years of argument——

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I cannot hear a word that my hon. Friend is saying.

Mr. Speaker: Nor can I. I ask hon. Members to leave the Chamber quietly.

Mr. Mitchell: The purpose of this evening's debate is to enable the House to consider whether it wishes to continue the decision taken by Parliament in 1981 that drivers and front seat passengers in cars and light vans should be required by law to wear their seat belts.

The background, as the House will recall, is that the decision to make belt wearing compulsory was taken only after years of argument, both inside and outside Parliament, over the case for such a measure. As the controversy had raged so fiercely and had continued for so long, Parliament took the view that there should be one further opportunity to consider the entire issue again after an initial period and decide in the light of experience whether compulsory seat belt wearing should continue indefinitely. Hence the provision in the Transport Act 1981 that the regulations, under which compulsion took effect, would lapse automatically after three years unless this House and another place resolve that they remain in force. The three years expire at the end of this month and the time has therefore now come to take a decision. Just in case there is any misunderstanding, let me make it quite clear that the issue is simply whether to make the regulations permanent or allow them to lapse; there is no provision for modifying the regulations or renewing them only for a further limited period. I remind the House also that the law on the restraining of children in cars is not subject to the review procedure. It is not covered by tonight's debate and will continue in any event.

Although we are returning to an issue which has been discussed many times before in this House, there is, of course, one important difference between tonight's proceedings and all the earlier debates. On those occasions we could look at the issue only in terms of what people thought would or would not happen in the event of seat belt wearing becoming law. Tonight we can consider what actually has happened. Instead of merely speculating, we have moved into the business of observing and recording. Rather than relying on endless hypotheses, we have real facts to work on.

To ensure that all the relevant information is available to Parliament, the Government have conducted, as we promised, a comprehensive monitoring programme, designed to study the practical effects of the belt legislation from every possible angle. The results are set out in our report published last October, which I trust all hon. Members will have studied. The report provides a full statistical analysis — carried out by departmental statisticians and the Transport and Road Research Laboratory—of seat belt wearing rates and the effect of seat belt wearing on casualty trends. It also includes detailed studies by hospitals and universities on the consequences of seat belt wearing in terms of the nature and severity of road accident injuries.

As seat belt compulsion continues to arouse strong feelings in many quarters, with particular attention focusing on the interpretation of all the statistical evidence, the Government thought it right that, in addition to our own monitoring exercise, there should be an entirely independent analysis of all the statistics carried out by expert assessors from outside the Government. We are most grateful to Professors Durbin and Harvey of the London School of Economics for undertaking this task. Their report was published as a clearly separated annex to the Department's own report.

What does the evidence tell us? First, it tells us that there has been instant and wholehearted acceptance of the seat belt law on the part of motorists. Up to the end of 1982 the proportion of drivers and front-seat passengers wearing belts never exceeded 40 per cent. Immediately the law came in, the wearing rate rose to around 95 per cent. and has remained consistently at that level, with no sign whatever of any fall off. This is a remarkable achievement, especially when we consider that in no other country with a seat belt law has the overall wearing rate even begun to approach the sort of level that we have here. Our own observations have been confirmed by the police, who report that the law has been almost entirely self-enforcing.

Why should the public adapt so readily to the seat belt law, when their previous attitude was no more than halfhearted? The most likely answer must surely be that the seat belt law came just at the right time to catch the tide of public opinion. The majority of people had, I believe, all but decided for themselves that wearing a seat belt was a sensible thing to do to reduce the risk of death or injury in the event of an accident. All the legislation did was clinch that decision for them. The law was accepted because it equated with what people judged to be in their own interests.

The next question must be whether people's faith in seat belt wearing has been justified in the light of experience. I will say straight out that in our view, the answer has to be an unequivocal yes. This is the opinion, not just of the Department of Transport, but of all those who have been directly involved in research on seat belt wearing. It is a view shared by virtually the entire medical profession, the police and all those working in road safety.

The evidence to support this conclusion is set out for all to see in the Department's report, backed up by the independent assessment of Professors Durbin and Harvey. The most striking facts are surely these: since the seat belt law took effect, there has been a substantial net reduction in road casualties—at the very minimum, an annual saving of 200 deaths and a further saving of 7,000 serious injuries. On a large sample of some 14 hospitals which are generally recognised as representative by the medical

[Mr. Mitchell]

profession, there has been a reduction of no less than 25 per cent. in the admission of car accident victims to wards, with a comparable fall in bed occupancy.

The 200 deaths and 7,000 serious injuries prevented are net figures which take account of changes in the number of rear seat passengers and pedestrians involved in accidents. No one making a proper study of the evidence could seriously argue that trends as clear as these are merely a coincidence. They can only be a direct result of the massive increase in the use of seat belts.

Some people, I know, are worried that there is a debit as well as a credit to seat belt wearing. The notion that seat belts encourage drivers to take risks they would not otherwise take has had a lot of attention from the media and from groups concerned with the safety of vulnerable road users, but, despite exhaustive analysis inside and outside the Government, there is no material evidence to support this allegation. The theory has been studied in this country—it has been studied throughout the world—but nowhere has it been in any way substantiated by the facts.

In any case, let me make it quite clear that the annual saving of 200 deaths and 7,000 injuries to which I referred earlier are net figures, arrived at after allowing for every possible relevant factor, including increases in casualties among certain road users. Seat belt wearing has to be seen as an outstanding success in terms of reducing casualties. Experience since the law took effect has confirmed the results of the earlier research conducted here and abroad. Wearing a seat belt substantially reduces the chances of death or serious injury in the event of an accident.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Mitchell: I was hoping to speak briefly, as I know that many hon. Members wish to speak. If there are questions to which I must reply, I shall ask leave of the House to do so.

With the case for seat belt wearing demonstrated so emphatically, the Government's view is that the right course must be to establish the law permanently. Given the evidence that we have, to abandon compulsion at this stage would make no sense from any angle.

There is still, of course, the argument that, however strong the case for wearing a seat belt may be, the decision should remain a matter of individual choice, rather than be enforced by law. I do not lightly dismiss that point of view. This Government are, after all, fully committed to minimising the regulation of people's lives, but I hope that even those for whom this argument had force earlier will be ready to reconsider their view in the light of experience over the past three years. I originally had considerable doubts about the principle of compulsion, but, in the light of the evidence that I have studied, I am persuaded that the law should be allowed to stand.

The House needs no reminder from me of the possible consequences of road accidents for the victim, his family, his friends and colleagues and the community at large. Experience over the past three years has shown that one way of minimising the risk is by the simple act of putting on a seat belt. Ninety five per cent. of drivers and front seat passengers are taking advantage of that facility. I hope that their decision to do so will be endorsed by the House on our first sitting day in European Road Safety Year.

11 pm

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): I congratulate the hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) on her new appointment. We shall miss her and we wish her well and thank her for all that she has done for road safety during a long and successful stay at the Department of Transport.

I have supported the compulsory wearing of seat belts on every occasion that the issue has been debated since I was elected in 1974 and nothing that has happened since the Act was introduced three years ago makes me want to change my mind. Indeed, I should welcome an extension of the provision to cover coach drivers and those occupying the front seats of coaches and many commercial vehicles. One of the last acts of the hon. Member for Wallasey at the Department of Transport was to make compulsory the fitting of rear seat belts to new cars, though the compulsory wearing of them is not to be introduced at this stage.

I am worried about some of the statistics provided by cyclists' and pedestrians' associations and by the Friends of the Earth. They show an increase in the number of casualties, though, as the Under-Secretary said, the overall figure is still highly satisfactory.

I an not convinced that the increased number of injuries to cyclists has anything to do with the wearing of seat belts. It is suggested that people are driving with less care and that cyclists and pedestrians are at greater risk. I suspect that the fact that more people are riding bikes means that cyclists are at greater risk anong our increasing traffic problems. We should make better provision for cyclists, rather than change the seat belt law. The increased number of accidents involving pedestrians is worrying and needs to be investigated.

As we said in a recent debate on road safety, too many drivers are going too fast, not only on motorways but on A roads, and often in appalling weather. I do not know why that should be so, but it is a fact and the only way to deal with it is to provide greater police surveillance to catch those who break the law on too many occasions.

Medical opinion, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the AA and the RAC urge us to make the seat belt law permanent. I am certain that they are right and I shall vote accordingly, as will most of my colleagues.

11.4 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I join the congratulations to my hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker)—I hope that she will shortly be my right hon. Friend—on her preferment.

It is a great pity that the question whether we should continue to be forced to wear seat belts or become criminals, which is an issue affecting more than 20 million people in Britain—and on which many hon. Members were persuaded to vote originally on the basis that it would be only an experiment and that ample opportunity would be given to us to discuss the issues—should be dealt with in a derisory one and a half hour debate at the end of a busy day.

Furthermore, there was no point in assuring us that we would be given an opportunity to express our view to the Government when no opportunity to amend the motion has been given to us. The motion was tabled so late that we had no opportunity even to table a token amendment. One is always particularly angry when one's own side does not quite play the game.

When listening to my hon. Friend the Minister, one would have thought that the matter was beyond argument. It would have been reassuring if the three-year experiment in seat belt compulsion had proved to have saved lives and serious injuries overall, but, alas, it has done no such thing. Even those of us most concerned about the loss of personal freedom involved in the nanny state forcing us to belt up might be obliged to concede that a saving of 200 or more lives and 7,000 serious injuries per year would be a reasonable enough return for the irritation, incovenience, and even the 7,000 prosecutions a year that the experimental law has produced.

Unfortunately, the claim being made by the Department of Transport has not been proved by the evidence. Yes, of course drivers and front seat passengers no longer go through windscreens with the same frequency—18 per cent. fewer of the former and 25 per cent. fewer of the latter have died from such injuries. Of course, injuries to neck, chest and legs may well be less serious. However, there has been an alarming increase in back seat passenger deaths of 27 per cent., of pedestrian deaths of at least 14 per cent. and of cyclists' deaths of more than 40 per cent. It would be naive to think that there was no connection between that and compulsory seat belts.

If there has been no increase in the number of car crashes since compulsion, how is it that so many more poeple are dying in the back seats of cars? The Department cannot explain that. If there is 3 per cent. less cycling traffic yet an increase of 13 per cent. in fatalities among cyclists over 19 years of age and of 55 per cent. among those over 69 years, it can hardly be BMX bikes causing all the trouble, as some embarrassed defenders of compulsion have claimed. The Department's experts explain those figures as a mystery or a coincidence.

Even if the 200-plus deaths and 7,000 serious injury figures were beyond doubt, if all that has happened is that instead of drivers and front seat passengers being killed, more back seat passengers, pedestrians and cyclists are being killed, the case for seat belt compulsion begins to look less than convincing.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West) *rose*——

Mr. Lawrence: This is a short debate, and I have already complained about the shortness of time. Therefore, I cannot give way.

The evidence is that the BMA, ROSPA and other reputable bodies, in their quite understandable desire to find a simple solution to the carnage on our streets, may be overreaching themselves in their enthusiasm to place reliance upon those figures.

To begin with, the contradiction between the total fatality statistics and the serious injury statistics has led the Government-appointed, totally independent analysts, Professors Durbin and Harvey, to say:

"we are unable to provide a completely satisfactory explanation of the differences between the figures for KSI"—

that is killed and seriously injured—

"and killed for rear seat passengers, pedestrians and cyclists."

They have chosen to depend rather more for their conclusions on the serious injury figures. Yet the BMA's own evidence to the Select Committee on Transport was that the definition of serious injury extended from a broken finger to total paralysis resulting in death after 30 days, that 70 per cent. of injuries to cyclists were not reported, that only one in four casualties classified as seriously injured are in fact seriously injured and that, therefore:

"the existing definitions upon which records are based are misleading."

Bearing in mind that we were originally promised a saving of 1,000 lives a year, can that be a sound basis for relying on the statistics to prove conclusively that compulsion saves lives and serious injuries?

As *The Lancet* said on 11 January,

"There will be regret that the evidence on deaths is not more one-sides and disappointment that the measure has fallen short of its promise."

There is also the evidence from other countries. If seat belt compulsion had been saving lives, it would have shown up in the statistics of other countries that turned to compulsion years before we did in the United Kingdom. But just the opposite has been revealed. A study of 18 countries has shown that the reduction in deaths and serious injuries in countries without compulsion was greater than in countries where seat belt wearing had been made obligatory and where the law was enforced. The Department of Transport commissioned an internal report to test the validity of that study. That report has never been published. The Department's yellow book, which has been provided in the Vote Office as a document for use in the debate, makes—rather strangely—no reference to the experience of other countries. All of us in the House know that, whenever Governments can rely on the experience of other countries, they do so. Why was there no such reference? The answer may have been discovered by the *New Scientist* columnist, Mick Hamer, on 7 February last year. I shall read some extracts from his article:

"Evidence that the compulsory wearing of seat belts may not have saved lives has been hushed up by Britain's Department of Transport . . . An internal DoT report, which is still confidential, says that the introduction of a law making the wearing of seat belts compulsory in other European countries 'has not led to a detectable change in road-death rates'. Indeed, the report says that legislation might actually increase injuries."

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): What report?

Mr. Lawrence: The article goes on to say:

"Using a simple statistical model, the DoT estimates that the introduction of a seat-belt law 'was followed by an increase in injury rates'. The report says that 'in practical terms this probably means that the law will have no effect'. However, the report says bluntly that 'the results are not compatible with the department's "1,000 plus 10,000" estimates for front-seat vehicle occupants'."

Mr. Sheerman: What report?

Mr. Lawrence: This is a report that the Department has, which has not been released, and which fell into the hands, by routes that the hon. Gentleman will know only too well, of the *New Scientist* columnist. As the hon. Gentleman has not read the report, perhaps he will care to listen to more extracts from the article:

"The confidential report estimates that there will be an increase of 2·3 per cent. in deaths among car users, although this is not statistically significant. It also estimates that the number of deaths among other road users could climb by 150 a year. The report, however, questions whether this result is statistically reliable . . . Again, the DoT found that making drivers belt up had no significant effect on injuries among car users. However, it did find a significant increase in injuries among other road users: 'The predominance of positive effects (increased numbers of injuries) is alarming.'

The report estimates that the number of injuries to pedestrians will rise by 11 per cent., and the number of injuries to other road users will also rise, by around 12 per cent. to 13 per cent. . . .

Eight European countries introduced laws making drivers belt up, from Finland in 1973, to Denmark and West Germany in 1976. The DoT estimates that the effect of introducing the law was to increase road accidents in every country."

[Mr. Lawrence]

Where is that report? If the *New Scientist* has seen a copy of it, can we not also see it? If compulsion has failed to reduce casualties anywhere else in the world, can the figures relied on for Britain be all that reliable?

Perhaps the most obviously unacceptable feature of the Department of Transport's claim is that the reduction in overall fatalities of at least 200 and of 7,000 serious injuries per year since 1983 following seat belt compulsion is due entirely to seat belt compulsion. What an extraordinary claim. Has no life been saved as a result of all the new safety devices in new cars, and has the number of injuries not been reduced? For all the road improvements, has there been no benefit in a reduction in the number of deaths or injuries? For the increase in police control cars, and the improvement in motor cycle testing regulations, has there been no benefit? Most surprising of all, despite the almost simultaneous campaign in 1983 against drunk driving, reinforced by the new evidential breath test machine, which has resulted in 38,000 more breath tests, 23,000 more prosecutions, not one saving of life or of serious injury has been claimed—nothing, nil, zero, nix, zilch. That is despite the fact that elsewhere the Department has claimed a 23 per cent. reduction in deaths during the drink-driving hours of 10 pm to 4 am against a reduction of only 3 per cent. in driver deaths outside those hours.

If the claims for the success of the anti-drink-driving regulations have been understated, or not stated at all, it follows that the success of the compulsory seat belt law has been overstated, and we are entitled to ask by how much it has been overstated. Is it utterly impossible that all of the 200 lives may have been saved by the drink-driving regulations alone?

Those hon. Members, whether for libertarian reasons or because we are suspicious about swallowing without challenge every unsubstantiated claim that is made by our masters in Whitehall and are not inclined to accept the exaggerated claims made for seat belt compulsion, owe a huge debt of gratitude to one man, Dr. John Adams of University College, London. He has patiently and relentlessly researched the subject and has done the work upon which I have been able to base this speech. In answer to the question: why do seat belts not save lives and injuries? he would, I think, reply that just as wearing a safety harness makes the rock climber more adventurous, so the safety of a seat belt may well make the driver marginally more reckless. It is accepted that improved car brakes do not necessarily achieve more than to make the driver brake later and at a faster speed. If that consumption of performance benefit applies psychologically to braking, why should it not also apply to seat belts?

Dr. Adams concludes a recent article that he wrote with these words:

"If one trusts the accurate numbers (fatalities) rather than the large numbers (injuries), if one allows the reduction in drunken driving a reasonable share of the credit for the decrease in fatalities in 1983, and if one considers the evidence relating to other countries, the balance of the Department of Transport's own evidence tilts strongly in favour of the conclusion that there has been no net life-saving benefit attributable to the seat belt law, only a shift in the burden of risk from the best protected to the most vulnerable road users."

Those are the real facts and those are the real conclusions.

It may be that enough has been done to show that the three year experiment, having failed to produce any more convincing evidence than the foreign experience has produced for the saving of life and serious injuries, means that we should be allowed to return to the voluntary wearing of seat belts, subject to the constraints to wear them that were imposed upon us by the insurance companies and the courts. However, such a reversion may be unrealistic in the present climate of opinion, and I do not ask for that. But are we not entitled to ask the Government to extend the experiment for a further period of time so that they may have the opportunity to produce more convincing statistics than have so far been produced?

I ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to withdraw the motion and to submit another in due course to extend the experiment for a further three-year period. That would not involve the dropping of compulsory seat belt wearing for the time being. An amendment that I would have tabled, had the Government allowed me an appropriate opportunity to do so, would have asked just that.

11.19 pm

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): At a social occasion last summer in my constituency a young man came up to me and said that he had started to wear a seat belt because the law said that he had to do so, but that he had resisted it until then because he believed many of the arguments advanced by some hon. Members. A notable example of those arguments has been reiterated by the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence). However, this young man said, "Last week I was in a road accident and there is no doubt in my mind that as a consequence of that road accident, had I not been wearing a seat belt, I should be dead or so severely injured that I would not be out and about tonight. So I suppose I have to thank you, and the likes of you, by persuading me, through the law, to wear a seat belt, for the very fact that I am here and able to speak to you this evening." That spoke more eloquently to me than anything else that I have heard, certainly this evening, about what the general public believe has been the advantage of the law that Parliament passed three years ago.

Reference has already been made to the hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) and I, too would congratulate her this evening on her apparent elevation to the Foreign Office, even if the consequence of that will be that she will suffer the attacks, not of my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott), but of myself in another incarnation. We believe that it is being seen as promotion, and we wish her well because she has supervised this issue with great assiduousness.

I have a slight interest to declare in this debate. As chairman of the seat belt survivors club, I have been in contact with a large number of people who have had their lives saved and who have been saved from serious injury because over the years they have worn a seat belt in accidents that would otherwise have rendered them dead or infirm.

I admit that over the years I have become a zealot on this issue. I wore my seat belt for many years because I thought that it made common sense. Nine years ago this Sunday I was involved in a head-on collision with a Land Rover, and only as a consequence of wearing a seat belt was I saved from almost certain death. That certainly concentrated the mind and gave me an enthusiasm for the issue.

I have always believed, and I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House who have supported the measure have believed, that this was a matter of common sense. We are reassured by the fact that over the three years since the law came in, what was a matter of great controversy, of almost endless debate in the House and repeated votes, with large majorities in favour, is now a matter of no controversy at all. The vast majority of motorists put on their seat belts now with no more thought than they give to making sure that the doors of the car are firmly closed behind them.

Ninety four per cent. of motorists are now using seat belts. The statistics that the Minister gave are eloquent testimony to the success of the measure. The Minister is a brave man this evening to come to the Dispatch Box and admit that he was one who was not convinced but has now had conviction forced upon him. He is not alone in that. One of the most vivid speeches in all the debates on the subject that I can remember was that by the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths), who gave his personal testimony to his scepticism on the issue and the conviction that was imposed upon him by his experience as a Minister at the Department of Transport and the vivid recollections that he had of the casualty wards in hospitals and the sight of the road accident victims within them.

This is without doubt the single most successful road safety measure that Britain has ever seen. It costs nothing in civil liberty and financial terms, and it has saved so much. It has saved the suffering and the pain that goes with the road casualty figures every day of this life. It has saved our nation at least £130 million. More than that, it has saved countless numbers of maimings, blindings and cripplings, which are the real human manifestation of the road accident statistics that are represented in the savings that have been put forward over the past three years.

The hon. and learned Member for Burton made virtually the same speech tonight as we heard three years ago and in practically every other debate beforehand. *[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) says that the hon. and learned Member did not vote.

Some have chosen to support Dr. John Adams's theory of risk compensation, and this is an attractive and eloquent theory, put forward by somebody whose mastery of the statistics gives him a bogus authority. Is his theory worth anything? If it works in this case, why does it not work in every other case where preventative measures have been taken in road safety? Are we to abandon all sfety measures for people on the roads and in their cars simply because a questionable, flimsy, tendentious theory suggests that those who are belted have more confidence and start knocking down pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists? I am sure that the vast majority of the population would reject that theory, and they have shown that they have done so by the act that they continue to wear their seat belts.

Some have said that the numbers saved from death and serious injury are smaller than was suggested by the proponents of the measure when this issue was last debated in Parliament. That is so, but the estimates were never likely to be precise, any more than the statistics used this evening are precise. We know that if the usage rate were to go from 94 to 100 per cent., the chances are that the targets established on the guesses and best estimates would be met.

At least 200 more people a year are alive who would otherwise be dead, and at least 7,000 who would otherwise be seriously injured are able to get around. We are told that there has been a 25 per cent. reduction in admissions to hospitals of front seat road accident victims, and a 30 per cent. reduction in hospital inpatients from road accidents. There has been a 40 per cent. reduction in major and minor brain injuries among those injured in car accidents. Are these not testimony enough to the valuable and life-preserving measure?

Three years ago, thanks to the skill and opportunity of Lord Nugent, a former Conservative Transport Minister, in the other place, this House had a chance to embrace this life-saving legislation. As it always has done, the House gave the measure its support. The evidence has been clear. People have been saved, and we must therefore consolidate that success.

11.27 pm

Mr. Gary Waller (Keighley): Some believe that there is no philosophical issue involved in this matter — in other words, if any measure such as this saves lives, it is justified. There are others for whom the matter is equally simple. They argue that it is entirely a matter of individual freedom, and that expediency cannot override principle. Finally there are those—among whom I count myself—who are perhaps the majority in the country, who accept that some element of freedom is compromised, but on the whole, are prepared to put up with such an impairment of their freedom if there is a clear safety benefit.

It goes without saying that if one is involved in an accident when wearing a seat belt, one stands a better chance of avoiding death or serious injury than if one is unbelted. The statistics show clearly that following the introduction of compulsory front seat belt wearing, more drivers and front seat passengers are surviving than before. Those who are blind to argument would say, "End of story", but those who are anxious to get at the truth will look at the position of other road users, because of the possibility that drivers will act differently if they feel more secure.

Those who want to pour scorn on such a hypothesis may do so by appealing to subjective observation. At first sight, that seems reasonable. Most people say that they do not feel that they are taking a greater risk because they are wearing a belt, and nobody has been able to detect whether drivers wearing a seat belt drive faster or more dangerously than they would if they did not. To suggest that such a difference would or could be detected is to distort the theory that driving behaviour is altered by perception of risk.

Unfortunately, fatal accidents happen every day, but every day many millions of miles are covered by motorists, and a fatality occurs once in every 1,000 million miles driven. The difference in behaviour only needs to be infinitesimal and, certainly, immeasurable to have an effect on the casualty rates.

More people may see the point of the argument, if we reverse the process. Take away a seat belt from a rally driver, and who would deny that he would drive more cautiously? If he crashes the result may be more calamitous, but is it not more likely that he will take great care to ensure that he does not crash, and will he not take a fraction of a second more when he encounters a bend, and brake a fraction of a second early to increase his chances of reaching his destination? Enough of theory. Let us see what has happened in practice.

[Mr. Gary Waller]

Professors Durbin and Harvey, who were commissioned by the Department of Transport to carry out an analysis of the statistics, rely mainly on the figures for those killed and seriously injured, rather than on fatalities alone. Where the change in fatalities appears to support the risk-compensation hypothesis they fall back on the number of those killed and seriously injured. However, those figures are open to misunderstanding and misreporting.

A serious injury may require the casualty to remain in hospital for only one night. The Transport and Road Research Laboratory says that 59 per cent. of serious injuries to cyclists are never reported to the police, and the British Medical Association claims that the figure is even higher. Therefore, the figures of those seriously injured are open to extreme doubt.

What do Durbin and Harvey say when they find fatalities that are inconsistent with the view that seat belts bring about a safer environment? On page 51 of the Department's report, they state

"The fact remains that we find the large proportionate increase in rear seat passengers killed hard to understand . . . We are reluctant to accept changes in driving behaviour as an explanation since these would be expected to lead to a corresponding increase in numbers seriously injured and there is no evidence of such an increase. We must therefore leave the sharp rise in the number of rear seat passengers killed as an unexplained mystery, at least until more evidence is available."

Had the House had an opportunity to extend the experimental period, as my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) suggested, more such evidence could have become available. Regrettably, the House has not been granted that option.

In the two years following the introduction of compulsion, the increase in deaths among rear seat passengers was 18 per cent. Durbin and Harvey were also at a loss to explain increases in casualties among cyclists and pedestrians. When we examine the figures more carefully, we find that the increases did not occur for cyclists and pedestrians killed because they came into contact with heavy goods vehicles, but, because they were hit by cars and light vans, most of whose drivers were wearing seat belts. On page 31 of their report, Durbin and Harvey accepted that the evidence was unmistakable. They said

"There remains strong evidence of a substantial increase in numbers of cyclists killed in accidents with cars."

As they pointed to an increase of about 40 per cent., that conclusion was unavoidable.

Even for those who accept all the arguments favouring compulsion, the fatality statistics for motorists must be a serious disappointment. In 1977 the then Labour Minister, Mr. William Rodgers, forecast that 1,000 lives a year would be saved. By 1982 the Department of Transport suggested a figure of 700 or fewer, and on this morning's radio a spokesman for the BMA was talking about 200. *The Lancet* admitted

"There will be regret that the evidence on deaths is not more one-sided and disappointment that the measure has fallen short of its promise."

The fact that the Department's chosen statisticians, Durbin and Harvey, neglected to take into account was the concerted effort against drink-driving which also began in the first part of the same year, 1983, with the introduction of the evidential breath testing machine and the jump in prosecutions. There was a significant drop in the number of drivers killed who were found to be over the limit and 160—curiously close to 200—fewer drunken drivers died in 1983 than in 1982. Most significant of all, the number killed between 10 pm and 4 am, often described as the drink-drive hours, fell by 23 per cent. compared with a drop of only 3 per cent. at all other times of day. The Department's statisticians attributed all the savings to seat belts but the evidence points in a very different direction.

The Lancet said, referring to Dr. Adams, that it was

"unhelpful of the Department of Transport to have suppressed an evaluation supporting his doubts."

More charitably, I would say that the 1981 evaluation of the experience of compulsion in other countries was not intended for publication. Nevertheless, it accepted Adam's finding of an increase in pedestrian injuries in every one of the eight countries which had introduced compulsion and described the statistical odds against achieving eight such positive results as one in 256. It also warned that the predominance of increased casualty rates for pedestrians was "alarming" and noted that

"since pedestrians account for 20 per cent. of casualties in Britain and the law effect seems positive for them"—

in other words, casualties increased—

"closer scrutiny is called for."

That seems to be a serious understatement.

Given that the evidence points to a seriously increased risk for non-motorists, it is not surprising that alarm has been expressed by representatives of pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Motorcycle organisations noted that despite new safety legislation passed by the House and despite a proven reduction in drinking and riding, casualties among motorcyclists did not fall. The representative of the Pedestrians' Association on the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety drew attention to the fact that the organisation had ignored some of Durbin and Harvey's findings and the representatives of the Cyclists Touring Club and Friends of the Earth, who had originally favoured compulsion, also changed their minds when they saw the effects.

Mr. Sheerman: Does the hon. Gentleman admit that those three organisations did not change their stance to one of anti-compulsion but merely said that they would be neutral and that they are only three out of 48 members of PACTS?

Mr. Waller: The three representatives to whom I have referred are now decidely against compulsion, having previously supported it.

One major motoring organisation quotes as fact figures for casualty savings which the most ardent pro-compulsion lobbyists would not dare to claim as proven. Another claims that at least the net effect is probably positive. In effect, an increase in casualties among pedestrians and two-wheelers is regarded as acceptable if there is a sufficient reduction in driver and passenger casualties. I hope that Ministers disagree with that attitude, but if some of the evidence produced by the Department itself is to be accepted the conclusion that in endorsing the regulations we accept a transfer of the burden of risk from the best protected to the most vulnerable is inescapable. If one examines the department's own evidence fairly it points, regrettably, in that direction.

My hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, whom I, too, congratulate on her new appointment, said in defence of compulsion—and the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) made the

same point—that she had received a number of letters of thanks from motorists saved by seat belts. The graves of those who died because some drivers took greater risks bear no distinguishing signs and my hon Friend the Minister will not be receiving any letters from them. Nevertheless, if one takes the fatality statistics as the only ones with which one cannot argue, if one considers the effects of drink-drive legislation which were ignored by the statisticians, and if one considers the international evidence, and if one asks why more pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists have died than one would have expected, only one conclusion is possible — that we should not approve the regulations today.

11.39 pm

Mr. Roger Stott (Wigan): It would be impertinent if the Front-Bench speakers took more than the minimum time in this debate, because this is a House of Commons matter. Each hon. Member must make up his or her mind whether to agree with the proposition. I do not intend to spend a great deal of time advocating my support for the points made by the Under-Secretary of State. That is not to say that I do not believe implicitly or fervently in what he said, but I believe that I should give other hon Members time to deploy their arguments.

I do not know what motivates hon. Members to walk down a particular Damascus road, but I note that the Under-Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Transport have decided that the evidence compiled by their Department has convinced them that the way in which they voted the last time this matter was discussed was wrong. I presume that they will reverse that decision and vote in favour of the continuation of the compulsory wearing of seat belts. I do not say that in a malevolent sense; I say it in a spirit of good will to them, because I believe that they have now had an opportunity to look objectively at the overwhelming evidence that has come forward since the experiment.

I appreciate the efforts, work and commitment of the hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) in all the road safety matters that we have discussed since she has been a member of the Government, especially since she has been concerned with transport. There are not many measures during the six years of the Conservative party's term in office with which I am proud to be associated. There is little legislation that I would commend to anyone. I am, however, proud to be associated with the 1981 transport legislation. The hon. Member for Wallasey deserves credit for ensuring that it reached the statute book. She is right in claiming credit for the lives that have been saved and the accidents and fatal injuries that have been prevented as a result of the wearing of seat belts.

It would be academic of me if I were to rebut the views of the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) with a typewritten script from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety on the virtues of compulsory seat belt wearing. I doubt that I would convince him of its arguments. Many important people concerned with road safety support the council's claims, including the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Automobile Association, the British Medical Association, the Casualty Surgeons Association, the Child Accident Prevention Trust, the County Road Safety Officers Association, the County Surveyors Society, the Institute of Road Safety Officers, the Medical Commission on Accident Prevention, the Motor Conference, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. I concede that the Cyclists Association and Friends of the Earth might take a different view and might disagree with the overwhelming evidence on the compulsory wearing of seat belts which the House has received during the past three years. I accept that in a democracy they have an absolute right to do that, in the same way as I accept that Dr. Adams has a right to proffer his analysis. Unfortunately, my record shows that the hon. Member for Keighley did not vote in the last Division on this issue. I refer him to *Hansard* of 28 July 1981 where I took Dr. Adams to task for his assertions that the compulsory wearing of seat belts would not be beneficial. Dr. Adams tilts at conventional windmills. I do not disregard that. Long may he continue to do so, but I believe that on this occasion, as on the last, his evidence is seriously flawed. He has not satisfied me——

Mr. Lawrence: The hon. Gentleman is an ordinary Member of the House.

Mr. Stott: He must satisfy me as an hon. Member. The fact that I am propped up against the Dispatch Box gives me no more rights than the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence). Dr. Adams has failed to convince me that what he is saying is correct. I do not believe that it is.

There is abundant evidence to support our case. The compulsory wearing of seat belts has saved lives and has prevented injuries to and the disfigurement of many car drivers. If the House of Commons is about doing anything it is about doing that. I rest on what I said a little earlier: this is one piece of legislation with which I have been proud to be associated during the past six years. I shall vote for its renewal this evening.

11.45 pm

Mr. Roger Moate (Faversham): Like the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) I feel a sense of pride at having taken some small part in the legislation which we enacted some years ago. It was not achieved without a great deal of battling over many years. That is why many of us feel a great deal of pleasure at, in the words of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary when he introduced the measure, the public's wholehearted and instant acceptance of the measure. In that we do not include my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence), but that would have been rather too much to hope for.

One of the most striking things has been, despite all the prognostications of the opponents, that the public have accepted the measure as a commonsense one that contributes greatly to road safety. That is in stark contrast to their forecasts at the time.

It has been suggested that my hon. and learned Friend made the same speech that he made several years ago. That was not a fair accusation because he has completely shifted the grounds of his argument. It is significant to recall the forecasts made by the opponents of the measure. First, they forecast that it would be unenforceable by the police. That was a common cry. In fact there have been a dramatic increase to about 95 per cent. in the public wearing of seat belts. I am sure that my hon. and learned Friend is big enough to admit that there have been no problems over enforceability. We were told that there would be massive resentment by the public against this measure which would cause animosity towards the police. That, again, has not happened.

[Mr. Roger Moate]

My hon. and learned Friend significantly admitted that fewer people might be hurled through windscreens and that there would be fewer front seat deaths. The measures opponents were denying that some years ago. That was the point of their argument. They said that that would not happen. I am sure we can at least agree that there has been a significant reduction in front-seat passenger deaths. That is important proof of the sense of the legislation.

I find extraordinary the ground onto which the opponents have moved. In effect they are saying that this safety device is so effective that it makes people complacent and that therefore other deaths result. That is a strange argument and I hope that we do not try to apply it too often in the sphere of safety. If one carried the argument to absurd lengths, one might do away with brakes, because brakes make drivers more careless. If they had no brakes they would drive so much more carefully and fewer injuries would be inflicted on pedestrians and cyclists. We might do away with fire extinguishers because they make people careless about fires. My hon. and learned Friend is admitting that this safety device works so well and drivers are so confident of it that it increases their carelessness.

My hon. and learned Friend and my hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) started by admitting that there had been an inexplicable increase in rear-seat accidents, and deaths of and injuries to pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists, and cited that as evidence that the wearing of seat belts causes injury to others. That is absolute nonsense. The facts remain as shown by a range of inquiries, including an independent assessment that at least 200 lives a year have been saved. My hon. Friend and others say, "We heard a figure of 1,000 a year". That is true, but my hon. and learned Friend will remember that, in those debates, many of us said that even if only 100 lives a year were saved, it must be worth doing.

My hon. and learned Friend's arguments about civil liberties, which sound strange when applied to the rules of the road and are quite inapplicable in that area, subside into nothing when compared with a saving of life on the scale about which we are talking.

Mr. Lawrence: What assessment does my hon. Friend give to the success or otherwise of the drink-driving regulations?

Mr. Moate: My hon. and learned Friend must remember that we are talking about net figures, and about increases in some other figures that could equally be attributable in that way. The figures have been carefully analysed by independent assessors. My hon. and learned Friend will not accept them in a month of Sundays, but other independent assessors and a mass of evidence say that we have at least achieved that worthwhile and significant reduction in casualties on the road. After all these years, I should have thought that my hon. and learned Friend would start to see the sense of the argument. Even if he remains an almost lone and obstinate voice on this issue — [HON. MEMBERS: "He is not alone."] I said "almost".

The point is that the majority of the British public accepts this as common sense. If my hon. and learned Friend fears that the legislation causes more injuries to rear-seat passengers, I hope that he will follow the logic of his argument and accept compulsory restraints on rear-seat passengers to help to reduce casualties on the road. But even then, I fear that his phoney arguments about civil liberties in this instance will always be more important to him than reducing the carnage on our roads.

11.53 pm

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): One could be forgiven for having a feeling of déjà vu this evening. Three and a half years ago, we spent a long time in the same company listening to similar speeches, and some of us spent many hours arguing the matter in the Committee that considered the Transport Bill. But, while listening to the speeches of the few remaining opponents to the measure, I was wondering why they feel so strongly after all the evidence that has been presented to us. This is not only the most effective road safety legislation in the history of this place, it is the most closely monitored. No legislation has been under such a microscope. It has been monitored by an independent medical committee, it has been sent by the Department of Transport to two independent statistical assessors at London university, and it has been assessed by every professional organisation involved in road safety.

When I intervened in the speech of the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller), I was pointing out that the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety—which I have the honour to co-chair—has 48 members, 45 of whom support the continuation and the making permanent of this legislation. Of course, there will always be some disagreement in any argument. I applaud the fact that Dr. Adams, as he did three and a half years ago, sticks to his argument that the risk compensation theory is correct. After three-and-a-half years the evidence is against him. Every other authority, including Dr. Murray MacKay, London university, the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Surgeons, and everyone who has monitored the situation agree.

Listening to some of the arguments one would think that statisticians were opposed to the measures, not politicians. We must judge on the best technical and scientific advice available. My hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) mentioned the Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Association which has changed its mind. The evidence is in.

Why do some people still oppose the measure? There is an element of guilt they cannot shove off. I do not wish to be unpleasant, but perhaps those who stopped the legislation from becoming reality for over 10 years have some responsibility for 2,000 people being unnecessarily killed and for 70,000 people being unnecessarily injured. That is a very heavy responsibility and I am not surprised at the guilt felt by the opponents of this measure.

I intervened in the speech of the hon. Member for Keighley. I have the evidence. The Friends of the Earth are not against the measure but are neutral, as are the pedestrians' organisations. He said that I was misleading the House. I was telling the plain, unvarnished truth.

Several other hon. Members want to speak and I want them to have that opportunity. One of the nice things about the legislation was that it came from the Back Benches. It was not ministerial; it certainly was not Governmental, and it was not initiated by the Labour Front Bench. We stand firm, remembering that day three and a half years ago when a combination of the two leaders of our great parties and their Chief Whips not only put every obstacle

possible in our way, but decided that the vote should be on the night before the royal wedding on a one-line Whip after Ten o'clock.

In the last three and a half years we have seen one of the nicest things with which most of us have been associated. So many speeches in the House result in nothing. So many speeches result in legislation which damages our country rather than improving it.

Mr. Walter Harrison (Wakefield): I hope that my hon. Friend will identify which way the then deputy Chief Whip voted.

Mr. Sheerman: There was some enlightenment behind the Chief Whips.

This legislation has delivered life. It has delivered freedom from serious injury for so many people that it would be a disaster if we voted to reverse that process. We can go on to apply science to the problem of road accidents. This is what the measure represents. It represents people looking with intelligence at measures. We are not seeking apple pie solutions, but scientific solutions to a problem. There are many other ways to cut serious injuries and deaths on our roads. Let us build on this success and go forward. This is not the end of the road but the beginning of saving lives and preventing serious injury.

12 midnight

Mr. Peter Griffiths (Portsmouth, North): I have in front of me briefs from the British Cycling Federation and the Cyclists Touring Club, both of which state unequivocally that they trust that we shall vote no at the end of the debate. I do not know how that can be held to be a neutral position. The words used are "Vote No", and such wording has never been neutral in my vocabulary.

A motor vehicle can be dangerous, and for that reason we license people to drive on the public highway. If they transgress seriously, we remove their right to drive. Otherwise, we assume that they are responsible citizens carrying out a legal activity for which they pay extremely heavily. It is no part of the duty of the House, or of any Government, to legislate to force people to do that which the House or the Government believe will be good for them and them alone.

The only person who can be helped, assisted or saved by a seat belt is the person who wears it. If we were debating measures controlling the design of motor cars and providing for safety for those with whom the motor car comes in contact—*[Interruption.]* I wish that the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) would listen instead of making remarks from a sedentary position. I did not interrupt his speech.

If we were producing legislation to provide measures to make the motor car more safe, when driven carefully, for other road users, it would have my fullest support. However, we are being asked permanently to infringe the right of choice of individuals who are responsible. If they are not responsible, they should not be allowed to drive upon the public highway.

It is an essential freedom that we should be allowed to choose to what extent we shall be mollycoddled. The seat belt has many disavantages and it is uncomfortable for many people. Even if belts are well designed, they restrict one's ability to turn round to see what is coming from behind. It is not a universally helpful piece of apparatus. Unless it is clear that it helps others, there is no reason to impose it upon the long-suffering motorist.

Mr. Norman Miscampbell (Blackpool, North): Is it not abundantly clear that most accidents are not head-on collisions? The majority involve glancing blows. The person who is retained in the driving position has far more chance of controlling the car and helping the third parties to whom he might run into than has the driver who is not so retained. It is not a matter of helping the driver alone, who is able to control the vehicle because he is in the driving position and has not been projected through the windscreen.

Mr. Griffiths: It is not part of my argument to suggest other than that the driver and front-seat passenger benefit from wearing a seat belt if they are in an accident. The motorist has the element of safety that is provided by being inside a steel cage and he may benefit from wearing a belt, but there is some evidence, the statistical reliability of which it is difficult to assess—I speak as someone who taught statistics in the classroom — that there is a likelihood that there are more vulnerable road users who will be disadvantaged if a driver takes greater risks than previously. These road users are pedestrians and cyclists.

If the evidence suggested that other road users benefited from motorists using seat belts the case would be open and shut, but the evidence leaves a great deal of doubt. As there is a division in the House—my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) feels strongly on the issue and there are others who feel just as strongly—and an element of doubt, I can think of no reason why we should have to make a permanent decision this evening.

Why can we not have an extension of the trial period, during which we would attempt to keep the other variables as constant as possible? Over the past three years we have had rapidly changing variables, which have been referred to by others, and I shall not rehearse them. Would it not be reasonable to mention, for example, the increase in the use of laminated glass for windscreens as having some effect on the number of drivers and front-seat passengers who are less seriously injured in head-on collisions? Why should we assume that that has had no effect? Better designed steering wheels and cockpits, improvements in brakes, tyre performance and in roads and the building of more motorways are all factors that could be taken into account and could account for some of the reduction in death and injury.

If it is so obvious that seat belt wearing is desirable, why is compulsion necessary? Is it suggested that drivers are so foolish that they will not do what is obviously sensible? Is it not rather the case that about half the motorists thought that seat belts increased their safety and the safety of others, and that about half did not? The half who did not now accept the law because we are basically a law abiding nation and because it is obvious to traffic policemen whether a motorist is wearing a seat belt.

I have no doubt that we could increase safety by insisting that every driver wears a full safety harness. Where do we draw the line? I suggest that we draw the line at letting sensible people who have been given a licence to drive on a public highway decide, so that we retain personal freedom and concentrate the Department's

[Mr. Griffiths]

efforts, and perhaps ours, on finding means of avoiding injury to people other than drivers and front seat passengers.

12.7 am

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): I shall not follow the hon. Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths) down all of the devious routes of illogicality through which he has just meandered except to say that seat belt wearing has to be compulsory because compulsion made seat belt wearing increase from about 30 per cent. to 94 or 95 per cent. The argument that there should be a test period, during which, presumably, all advances in safety are to be held back while we establish the effectiveness of seat belt wearing, is utterly illogical.

It is interesting that the only arguments that have been advanced against the proposal have been made by the provisional wing of the lunatic fringe of the libertarian lobby. All seek, by querulous, quivering, specious argument to deny the paramount fact that, thanks to the three-year trial period, 1,000 people who would be dead if we had not made seat belt wearing compulsory are alive today. What is more, some 18,000 serious injuries have been avoided during the same period. That is the supreme fact that they are quibbling against. No wonder their argument becomes so specious and illogical.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson), I have been a committed supporter of the compulsory wearing of seat belts ever since I was involved in a serious accident in which my life was undoubtedly saved because I was wearing a seat belt. I was a new Member of Parliament and had not realised that I had been elected to the driving seat of a car rather than a seat in the House of Commons. I spent most of my time going up and down the A1. After a few months, I was involved in an accident, but my life was saved because I was wearing a seat belt.

One of the few achievements open to Back Benchers, especially under this Government, is that, with the benign superintendance of the hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker), who has now transmuted to other things, on which we congratulate her once again—it is a chorus tonight—we have eventually succeeded in getting seat belt wearing made compulsory. It was later than it should have been and much later than in other countries, but we did it. It was a major social advance, thanks to which we have a 30 per cent. saving in deaths and injuries to front seat passengers, a 20 per cent. saving in slight injuries to front seat passengers, a 25 per cent. reduction in the number of hospital admissions, a 39 per cent. reduction in brain injuries, a 53 per cent. reduction in facial wounds and a 40 per cent. reduction in lung injuries sustained by front seat occupants. Those are the achievements of the trial period.

Mr. Bermingham: Does my hon. Friend agree that, if the motion is passed, we should seek an assurance from the Minister that he will continue to monitor the statistics so that we may see the outcome of the measure? Secondly, perhaps the Minister will look again at the construction of the seat belts used in our motor vehicles.

Mr. Mitchell: I welcome my hon. Friend's suggestions. There is much to be done in those areas and we should encourage that work to be done.

We cannot gainsay the huge statistical improvements that have been made, at minimal cost, because, for practical purposes, the legislation has been self-enforcing. To go back on making seat belts permanently compulsory would be to throw several tons of baby out with a small drop of bath water.

Tory Members cannot now revive all the libertarian arguments that a basic element in British freedom was the freedom to go head first through a windscreen and that that was the touchstone of British liberty. Therefore, they are driven on to the arguments of Dr. John Adams, of the department of geography at University college, London.

The logical conclusion of Dr. Adams's argument is that if being safe encourages people to take more risks—and that has not been proved; there is no evidence that people drive faster when wearing seat belts—drivers should be made unsafe, more exposed and less comfortable. They should not have brakes, and all the improvements in interior comforts and safety should be abandoned. The logical conclusion of Dr. Adams's work is that all car drivers should be riding bicycles, so that they are exposed to the environment around them and the safety factor will be strengthened.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety has put those arguments in their true light. It is claimed that, internationally, there has been no improvement, but that claim is based on a starting year of 1973 and several countries introduced compulsory seat belt wearing in that year and some did so before that. The true starting year is 1970. Road accidents date for 21 developed countries over a 10-year period show that countries without seat belt laws suffered an average 6·6 per cent. growth in road accident deaths, while countries with a seat belt law enjoyed an average 17·8 per cent. reduction in fatalities. That is the statistical change resulting from a true measure as opposed to that taken by Dr. Adams in a manipulation of the figures.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety goes through Dr. Adams's other arguments to show how illogical they are. For instance, there is no statistically significant rise in the number of pedestrians, pedal cyclists and rear seat passengers who are seriously injured. There has been an increase in the number of fatally injured pedestrians and pedal cyclists, but the numbers are too small to be statistically significant.

We are driven to the conclusion that Dr. Adams's arguments are specious and would not justify the gain that has been made in the saving of lives and the avoidance of injury to drivers and front seat passengers.

It is disgraceful that the Friends of the Earth are sitting on the fence and that organisations such as the Cyclists Touring Club, the British Cycling Federation and others should oppose the extension of the legislation. This is not an argument between cyclists and drivers. It is an argument about how we save lives, and the legislation has demonstrably done that.

I welcome the proposal to make seat belt wearing permanently compulsory. I hope that within not too long a time we move from there to make compulsory the wearing of seat belts in rear seats.

12.14 am

Mr. David Mitchell: Many hon. Members have paid tribute to the work of my hon. Friend the former Minister of State in this area, and wished her well in her new responsibilities. I join with them in that.

The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) supported the measure, but called for more investigation into the increase in the number of accidents involving cyclists. I agree with him, and will see what we can do to further the discovery of the causes of such accidents.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) admitted that there had been an improvement in the figures for injuries to those sitting in front seats—a point mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate), but he and my hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) thought that more back-seat passengers had been injured, and more pedestrians and cyclists killed and injured. They suggested that the reason for that might lie in the campaign against drinking and driving.

We do not know for certain the reason for the increase in injuries to back-seat passengers, but the most likely reason is that more people have been using back seats because they have not wanted to sit in the front and wear seat belts. There may have been a rise in the number of pedestrians and cyclists killed, but the figures of 200 lives saved is a minimum net figure. It is based on the most pessimistic assumption and allows for the possibility that the increase in the number of injuries to rear-seat passengers, cyclists and pedestrians has been due to the compulsory wearing of seat belts. Without allowing for that possibility, the annual saving of lives would be between 450 and 500. The net figure is a substantial 200 lives saved.

On the campaign against drinking and driving, the reduction in the number of deaths began in February 1983 when the seat belt law was introduced, not in May 1983 when evidential breath testing machines were introduced. Therefore, there is not the correlation that my hon. and learned Friend suggested.

Hon. Members have suggested that I have changed my view. Quite frankly, that is true. In the light of the evidence, I am wiser now than when I took another view. I would have preferred not to have found it necessary to apply compulsion, but I am persuaded by the evidence that it is a major advantage.

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3 (Exempted Business).*

The House divided: Ayes 217, Noes 25.

Division No. 34] **[12.15 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Baldry, Tony
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blackburn, Dr. John G.
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Bright, Graham
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'll)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Faulds, Andrew
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Flannery, Martin
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gregory, Conal
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Harvey, Robert
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Haynes, Frank
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Janner, Hon Greville
Jessel, Toby
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter, *(Fareham)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCartney, Hugh
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Malone, Gerald
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxton, John
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
O'Neill, Martin
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pawsey, James
Pike, Peter
Pollock, Alexander
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Prescott, John
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robertson, George
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Sheerman, Barry
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Speed, Keith
Spencer, Derek
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thurnham, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wallace, James
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*

Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Welsh, Michael
Whitfield, John
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Michael Neubert and
Mr. Tim Sainsbury.

NOES

Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Budgen, Nick
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Forrester, John
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Lawrence, Ivan
Loyden, Edward
Ottaway, Richard
Parry, Robert
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Proctor, K. Harvey
Redmond, M.
Skinner, Dennis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Viggers, Peter
Waller, Gary
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Christopher Murphy and
Mr. Peter Griffiths.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the continuance in force of the Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (S.I., 1982, No. 1203) be approved.

Oldchurch Hospital, Romford

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

12.30 am

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): I begin in this inevitably short debate by welcoming my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert), within whose constituency lies the hospital of which I am speaking tonight and who, as hon. Members will be aware, is unable, due to his rank on the Treasury Bench, to contribute to our proceedings. I know from conversations with him that he echoes everything that I shall say tonight in defence of a proven and well-loved hospital and local unit.

Perhaps there is an additional reason for welcoming my hon. Friend, because back in April 1980 he initiated an identical Adjournment debate which reads as well now as I am sure it sounded on the occasion. Sadly, this is the second time in six years that hon. Members in the relevant health district have had to come to the defence of the radiotherapy unit at Oldchurch. I am pleased to say that my hon. Friend was successful in 1980, and I hope that I and other hon. Members pressing this evening for its retention will be similarly successful this year.

At the end of September last year the North-East Thames regional health authority published a report prepared by Coopers and Lybrand Associates, management consultants, which was issued, I stress, with the aim of improving the resources devoted to the treatment of cancer within the region. It is also important to stress that to date the report has neither been discussed nor approved by the regional authority. None the less, the central recommendation of that report is that the existing nine radiotherapy units within the region be reduced to five, four of these being in inner London and one at Broomfield, north of Chelmsford. Thus, the Oldchurch radiotherapy unit would be closed and we are led to believe by the regional officers that 90 per cent. of Barking, Havering and Brentwood patients would be expected to use Broomfield hospital.

The proposal to close that unit is simply unacceptable. It is unacceptable to the community health council and to the district health council, from whose reports I am tonight drawing considerable information. It is unacceptable to Barking and Havering local medical committee and to Havering borough council. Perhaps most important of all, it is unacceptable to the people of Barking and Havering who may have occasion to use the hospital and the unit and who, even more than in 1980, have demonstrated their support by signing petitions against its possible closure.

My hon. Friend the Member for Romford will remember that in 1980 we received some 60,000 signatures to retain the unit. Over the past few months 130,000 people have signed the petition in support of retaining the unit. One might therefore say that if my hon. Friend's persuasiveness, backed by those signatures several years ago, was sufficient, perhaps I should not say any more tonight, because the argument is overwhelming.

I emphasise tonight why opinion against this proposal is so united. It flies in the face of logic. Half of the regional population now lives in the region of Essex, and the regional strategy since 1978 has reflected the decline of the population in central London and the growth of the population in outer London and Essex. Despite this, the

report proposes that four of the five centres should be in inner London, with only one centre for the whole of Essex. I can think of no better recipe for ensuring that a large number of people have to travel excessively long distances, and unnecessarily so.

Secondly, the original report was littered with errors —I have counted more than a dozen. The authority should be ashamed of that report, on reflection. It was wrongly claimed, for instance, that at Oldchurch hospital there was no planning computer or simulator. This is important, because the report referred to just such equipment to demonstrate the inadequacy of the treatment at Oldchurch hospital. However, both these pieces of equipment have been in use in the hospital for some time.

The estimates of the incidence of cancer in the North-East Thames area do not tally with those of the Office of Population Centres and Surveys, and, perhaps most important, the report's estimates of the times taken for journeys to the new centre are at best hopelessly inadequate, and in some cases simply untrue. This is, for many people, arguably the centre of the opposition of the report.

I have already said that it is expected that 90 per cent. of the people in the Havering and Barking district will be expected to travel to Broomfield. What will they face if they travel that way? The district health report says that if patients go by car from Barking to Broomfield they will take approximately 70 minutes in the most favourable traffic conditions. In the morning, late afternoon and early evening, travelling times can be very much longer.

By bus, people may go from Barking to Romford, taking 40 minutes, and then from Romford to Chelmsford —an hourly service—which will take approximately 55 minutes, forgetting the time that it takes to wait for the bus. The journey to Broomfield from Chelmsford is another 15 to 20 minutes, followed by a quarter of a mile to the hospital. The cost for that is £3·25 return. If they go by rail, simply from Romford to Chelmsford takes a half to three quarters of an hour, and then they have to get to Broomfield. If they come from Barking or Dagenham, they have to get to Romford first. The cost merely of going from Romford to Chelmsford is £3·80.

Hon. Members may wonder why I am quoting the cost, but pensioner constituents from Havering or Barking travelling outside London find that their concessionary fares do not operate, and they now incur an expense where one was not incurred before. I hope that hon. Members will recognise that that is a not unimportant factor for cancer patients, many of whom are elderly. The report specifically mentions, no doubt to recognise the excessive weight of travel, the provision of some 100 hostel beds at the Broomfield hospital. The implication of hostel beds that was made in the 1980 report has now been made a reality.

Hostel beds are no substitute for service at a local hospital near where one lives. I quote the Barking and Havering local medical committee, which says:

> "Cancer sufferers particularly require the support of their families as a very important adjunct to the high technology therapy provided by the Cancer Treatment Centres and this can best be provided if the patient, while undergoing active treatment, and after treatment, can live at home with family and friends around. This support cannot be maintained in a hostel setting several miles from home with difficult access by public transport."

It is not even equality of patient care.

Let us look, as I hope my hon. Friend will do, at the actual cost. I quote again from the community health council submission:

> "The actual cost of providing a six week course of treatment at Oldchurch is approximately £100 per week—a far more economic way than by means of hostel treatment plus the necessary treatment at a centre elsewhere."

All this is for patients who, by the very nature of their illness, are facing treatment that is debilitating and tiring and which, perhaps more than the treatment for many other illnesses, requires them to be treated close to where they live, rather than engage in unnecessary and lengthy transport. In the words of the report, Oldchurch hospital is the only centrally located regional cancer unit within the North-East Thames region. It is exceedingly well served by road and public transport, whether bus or rail, from virtually anywhere within Barking and Havering.

The hospital has a department which works closely with the neurosurgical, gynaecological and ENT departments, all of which are at present on the Oldchurch site, and none of which as yet exist on the Broomfield site. Hon. Members who were present at a lobby here a few months ago will remember how consultants stressed the importance of the link between such departments and the treatment of cancer service, not least because often patients who attend one department are found to have potential cancer needs, and vice versa. It is important that we take advantage of the existence of those departments on the present site.

The report states that attention should be given to the need to specialise for certain rarer types of cancer treatment. Hon. Members recognise that need, but let it not be at the price of requiring the large majority of patients who are suffering from the more common forms of illness to travel long distances. It does not have to lead to that. To suggest that specialisation requires the closure of local hospitals is a false and misleading theory.

Oldchurch is a much loved and supported hospital. The voluntary support which sustains it is considerable. Last Thursday the radiotherapy unit took delivery of a new £1,500 computer which was bought entirely from voluntary funds. That is a tiny fraction of the £45,000 collected by a prominent local personality, Mrs. Nellie Sims, from outside her local florist shop, all of which has gone to provide equipment or furniture for the unit. Those figures give an indication of the popularity of the hospital and the way in which the community supports the existence of the present unit.

Since May an appeal has been launched for £1 million to buy a body scanner for the hospital. The appeal is headed by Steve Davis — a well-known international snooker player. In seven months the appeal has raised £250,000, and by Easter those concerned expect to order the scanner. Those are tremendous sums and are a great tribute to the community. That would not happen if the hospital were not regarded as an integral part of the community.

Time will not permit me to go into all the alternatives. The district authority has submitted plans for an enlargement of the Oldchurch site, which should be considered closely as a more credible and reasonable alternative. I welcome steps to increase the funding for radiotherapy in the North-East Thames region in general, but not at the price of closing Oldchurch hospital.

I have two personal reasons for feeling strongly about the matter. My father-in-law has just finished a course of

[Mr. Robin Squire]

treatment at the radiotherapy unit and, like all other patients at the unit, is full of praise for the care and attention which he received. I would hate to see him at 77 having to spend such a large amount of time each and every day for five or six weeks travelling backwards and forwards on long journeys unnecessarily. Similarly, I would object on behalf of all my constituents who faced a similar journey.

Secondly, my hon. Friend the Member for Romford and I remember standing out in the cold on Budget day 1980 to receive the petition organised by, among others, a lovely and vivacious lady called Brenda King, herself a cancer sufferer. We undertook to do what we could to save the radiotherapy unit at that time and we succeeded. A year or two later, Brenda King died. She is commemorated by a stone at the hospital, but the best commemoration for her would be not just for us to see off the threat to our local unit once again, but for my hon. Friend the Minister and the regional health authority to find a way to remove the periodic threat faced by a local service which, as I hope that I have shown in this short debate, is needed, is well supported and must continue.

12.45 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Ray Whitney): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) on taking the opportunity of the first Adjournment debate of 1986, on a day which has been of considerable interest in the House, to raise a subject of crucial importance and concern not only to my hon. Friend and his constituents but to a number of other Members present today and their constituents. Following the exchange in the House on 10 December, when I answered a question from the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Atkinson), I am aware that the subject has caused a great deal of controversy not only in Essex but in north-east London. I also look forward to the Adjournment debate on Wednesday when my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark) will be discussing the future of the radiotherapy unit at Southend. If, in the time available to me today I am unable to cover all the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch, I hope to do so in writing after the debate.

It is important to place the issue in perspective and I am grateful for this opportunity to do so as we must all take careful account of the concern caused by the North-East Thames regional health authority's review of cancer services. Some of the reactions in the region generally, and perhaps in my hon. Friend's constituency, have involved a certain amount of misconception about what is at stake. It is right that the issues at stake should be debated fully, but we must set the terms of that debate on a fair, clear and sound basis, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch sought to do in his contribution today.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Not on the Coopers report.

Mr. Whitney: The hon. Gentleman may have his own views about that report, but I am responding to the contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Hornnchurch to today's debate.

First, we must consider the motives that led the regional health authority to decide upon a reveiw of its cancer services. I am sure that my hon. Friend recognises that it was not a matter of looking for savings as a result of some financial straitjacket. My hon. Friend will appreciate the considerable expansion that has taken place nationally with the devotion of an increase of some 20 per cent. in real resources to the Health Service generally, supplemented in the coming financial year by an increase significantly higher than the projected rate of inflation. That is a reflection of the concern manifested by the Government and by the Department in providing adequate health services.

Cost-cutting was not the purpose of this project. The aim was to consider the way in which services, including radiotherapy, were provided for people suffering from cancer and to ascertain the methods available to the region to improve their quality. That was the mainspring of the exercise.

It is not for me to judge whether the report got the project right. I hope that hon. Members agree that setting such a review in motion was a justifiable venture by the regional health authority. The need was clearly set out in the regional strategic plan, which was published in July 1984. I hope that hon. Members agree that it must be right for regional health authorities constantly to take hard looks at the services they provide, or services will stagnate and we shall not improve patient care.

The proposals involved in these reviews are often unsettling and difficult to accept. We should as a principle recognise at the start that it must be right for the Health Service and the health authorities to debate these issues. There cannot be a sensible and constructive debate if we instinctively attribute reasons for a proposed change to a desire to save money. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch recognises that.

Mr. Dobson: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Whitney: I recognise that the hon. Gentleman will always achieve that particular misattribution. I hope that he will be brief.

Mr. Dobson: I think that I speak for hon. Members on both sides of the House. I have heard no one suggest that this exercise is intended to save funds. I think that the concern in north-east London and in Essex is that the exercise is based on an extremely shoddy, second-rate and inaccurate estimate of people's needs. No one is accusing the health authority of trying to save funds.

Mr. Whitney: If we have achieved acceptance by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) that in this instance it is not a matter of saving funds, we have already made progress in the debate.

The report argues the medical case for concentrating specialised cancer services, including radiotherapy, in specialised centres. It believes that that would improve the quality of care and service provided to patients. Is the report right in proposing that the north-east Thames region needs five such specialised centres, compared with the present nine radiotherapy units? More controversially, if there is agreement on five of these specialised centres, where should they be located? I note the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch about the concentration in London, leaving just one centre in Essex. The report maintains that its proposals would improve services to patients in the whole region.

These are intrinsically difficult issues. They are not made more difficult or controversial by the report.

One of the points that always arises is that of accessibility. Many of the services required by cancer patients can and should be provided in every district, as my hon. Friend said. As I understand it, the report is clear on that point. More specialised services cannot be provided, not because there are insufficient resources but because it does not make medical sense to provide them.

Services such as radiotherapy must be established to serve a relatively large population so as to attract sufficient patients to enable clinicians to sustain and develop their expertise. If there is too wide a dispersal of facilities and staff such expertise is not developed, and that is detrimental to good patient care.

The issue in the case of North-East Thames is not just the number of centres but their location. In an ideal world, everyone would have immediate access to all the services that they need. For the reasons that I have given, that would not be medically feasible, even if we had unlimited financial resources.

With specialist care we must draw the balance between poorer access to a more distant but potentially better service. Those are the issues raised in the report. It is not for me to judge the arguments for or against those or any other points. The position is clear. As my hon. Friend said, the report was put out to public consultation in September 1985 and the comments ended on 31 December 1985.

The health authority's working party has now been charged with reviewing the report, and its findings will be considered in the spring by the authority. I have no doubt that the points made so effectively by my hon. Friend will be taken fully into account when the authority comes to consider the report and the working party's findings.

Should the region agree to changes in the way that cancer services are provided—either those recommended in the report or those arising after full consultation and debate—there will then be, as my hon. Friend is aware, full local consultation in the usual way. If the proposals for changes or closures are opposed by the relevant community health councils the matter will be referred for a decision via the region to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

The views of the Barking, Havering and Brentwood DHA to any proposal to change the nature, size or location of the specialised care currently given at Oldchurch hospital will plainly be important. The RHA will no doubt pay close attention to them. The location of regional specialty services has however to be discussed on a wider basis to see what is finally in the best interests of all the region's patients. The effect on the hospital as a whole of any proposed closure of the Oldchurch hospital unit will need to be assessed. It would not be appropriate for me to prejudge the issue except to say that there are innumerable district general hospitals which do not have this service.

I am sure that the regional health authority will take full account of the worries that have been expressed, but I hope that my hon. Friends will convey to their constituents, who are anxious—I recognise the depth of their anxiety—that as I understand it this proposal was designed for and committed to the improvement of those vital services and to the development of specialised cancer treatment services within the region and the area. I hope that the debate will be carried forward on a firm understanding of the principles and without——

The Question having been proposed after Ten o'clock on Monday evening and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at One o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 14 January 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

Nuclear Tests (Compensation)

1. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to review the provisions under which former service personnel could pursue a claim following injury in United Kingdom nuclear tests.

9. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has plans to seek to compensate ex-service men and women for ill-health arising from nuclear tests.

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Norman Lamont): Section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947, which bars such claims, is currently under review. However, it is open to former service personnel who believe that they have suffered injury which is attributable to service to apply to the Department of Health and Social Security for a war disablement pension. Nevertheless, it remains the Government's view that no one was harmed as a result of exposure to ionising radiation from the United Kingdom test programme. The matter will be reviewed when the results of the National Radiological Protection Board survey are available later this year.

Mr. Davies: Is it not clear, particularly as a result of the findings and recommendations of the Australian Royal Commission, that significant numbers of British ex-service men who served in the Pacific were unnecessarily exposed to nuclear radiation? Is there not a clear moral responsibility on the Government to waive the provisions of section 10 to allow compensation to be paid to those people whose health is suffering?

Mr. Lamont: There were 202 different conclusions in the report, and they require careful study. We have had some meetings at official level with the Australian Government. Later this month the Foreign Secretary and I will meet Senator Evans, the Australian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and we shall discuss the findings of the commission.

Mr. Lewis: Is the Secretary of State aware that there is a stong feeling among ex-service men that the NRPB submission is just another delaying tactic? If the Government are serious about the matter, as they should be, they should initiate their own commission of inquiry, as the Australians have done.

Mr. Lamont: The Government are serious about the matter. I hope that the NRPB survey findings will be available in the autumn. I take the matters that have been raised extremely seriously, but in order to assess the possibility of illness and death resulting from the tests we must have a proper survey of those who were involved in them.

Mr. Holt: My hon. Friend may take note of whether our ex-service men have nuclear disease, but is he aware that the council in Middlesbrough will not employ people who were long-serving personnel in our armed forces?

Mr. Lamont: I have listened to what my hon. Friend has said, and that seems most extraordinary.

Mr. Alton: In view of what the Minister has said about a proper survey, why does he not extend the NRPB survey to examine the genetic effects on the children of service men who were involved in the tests?

Mr. Lamont: The NRPB survey could be extended in many ways, but, as it is presently defined, it will enable us to establish whether people were adversely affected by the tests. We can then decide on the appropriate action.

Mr. Harrison: Will the survey, when sending a questionnaire to the families of the 20,000 personnel, both military and civilian, take into account the fact that many of them are dead? I have been looking into the matter, and I am not satisfied. Is the Minister satisfied with the survey as it has been carried out?

Mr. Lamont: A questionnaire is not being sent to the 20,000 people. Obviously information is available about the health records of those people, and that is what the survey will be based on. The right hon. Gentleman has tabled questions about that before, and I have taken them seriously. I am satisfied that the survey will give us the information that is necessary to reach a proper and considered conclusion. We do care about the matter.

Strategic Defence Initiative

2. **Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what military spin-off he expects from the strategic defence initiative research; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): I have nothing to add to the statement that my predecessor made to the House on 9 December.

Mr. Thomas: Does the new Secretary of State for Defence, whom I am sure we all welcome to the Dispatch Box, agree with the view of the United States Secretary of Defence that deterrence is a mutual suicide pact? Does he agree with him also that the world needs to be released from the shadow of nuclear destruction? If so, does he believe that the pursuit of research into verifiable measures of nuclear disarmament is preferable, cheaper, and likely to be more effective than the pursuit of the technological fixed dream of SDI?

Mr. Younger: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his good wishes. The point is that the research will continue in any case, and the fact that we in Britain have an opportunity to take part in it can only be to our advantage. It remains the main part of our policy to pursue the reduction of armaments in every way we can.

Sir Antony Buck: I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his first appearance at the Dispatch Box as Secretary of State for Defence and wish him a long and happy tenure of office in that job. Does he agree that the spin-offs from projects such as this are incalculable, and that the spin-offs are always much more considerable than the accepted wisdom?

Mr. Younger: I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend for his welcome, which I greatly appreciate. It is important for us all to realise that the spin-off effects are not merely in the area to which they are addressed—that is to say, research into systems in space—but that they have important connotations for conventional defence and civilian use.

Mr. James Lamond: When the research eventually comes to an end, will we be given the complete results? Will we be treated by President Reagan with the same generosity as he has promised to treat the Soviet Union?

Mr. Younger: It will be a long time before the reasearch upon which we are embarking in conjunction with the United States comes to any sort of an end. At that time, it will be for all the Governments concerned to consider what should be published.

Mr. Dickens: Is there any chance, however remote, that SDI research will lead to helicopters being obsolescent?

Mr. Younger: I do not think that the research is addressing itself to that question.

Mr. Denzil Davies: I welcome the right hon. Gentleman to his office of Secretary of State for Defence. He will know, as the House knows, that he is the fourth incumbent of that office in a period of about five and a half years, and, with such an attrition rate, I hope that he has cleared all his answers with the Cabinet Office.

Dare I ask him whether the view that he is expressing on SDI is a collective view, or an ad hoc view, by the Government? Does he agree with what President Reagan said in his famous star wars speech, that nuclear weapons were immoral, or do the Government agree with the critics, including the Foreign Secretary, who see star wars as an escalation of the arms race, destabilising, and having turned NATO's nuclear strategy completely upside down?

Mr. Younger: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his kind words, which I greatly appreciate. He said that I am the fourth incumbent of this office, but in my last office I was the only incumbent for six and a half years, so perhaps there is a balance there.

All the answers that I give will be Government policy generally. I agree with what President Reagan has always made clear, that this is a matter of pursuing research that will be pursued anyway, and it is most important that we should have a part in it.

3. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what evaluation his Department has made of the feasibility of the strategic defence initiative as a defence system.

11. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment Her Majesty's Government make of the attainability of the objectives originally set by President Reagan for the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Younger: The United States SDI is a long-term research programme intended to investigate the technical feasibility of defences against ballistic missiles. It would be premature at this stage to form judgments about the outcome of the research.

Mr. Meadowcroft: I associate the Liberal Bench with the welcome to the Secretary of State and express the wish that he is as helpful inside the Cabinet as his predecessor now is outside the Cabinet. Given that the bedrock of the deterrence theory, according to its adherents, is the ability of both sides to inflict devastating damage, and that the aim of SDI is to make one side invulnerable to that devastating damage, does not SDI undermine the theory of deterrence?

Mr. Younger: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues for their good wishes, which I greatly appreciate.

As for his other point, as my right hon. Friend has made very clear on numerous occasions, one of the principal objectives of the SDI research programme is to enhance, not to reduce, deterrence. I hope very much that it will do that.

Mr. Beith: Did not the President of the United States make it quite clear that his basis for accepting SDI was that it could render nuclear weapons obsolete by creating an impenetrable shield against all offensive weapons? If that cannot be attained—and nobody in the United States now seems to believe that it can—does not SDI become an expensive, unnecessary and provocative addition to our deterrent?

Mr. Younger: That is the whole purpose of embarking upon research in the first place. Until that research has been brought to fruition, which will take a long time, we shall not know whether it is capable of achieving its main objective, which is to devise a system that will make nuclear weapons obsolescent. I should have thought that all of us would approve of that objective.

Mr. Wilkinson: I, too, congratulate my right hon. Friend upon his appointment. Does he agree that the more awesome the weapons of mass destruction that are ranged against us by the Soviet Union, the more important it is for scientists on this side of the Atlantic, as in the United States, to carry out research into potential defences against them?

Mr. Younger: I strongly agree with my hon. Friend that it is important from those points of view. When one adds to that the fact that this research will take place somewhere anyway, surely all of us who have any interest in this country's high technology industry should be glad that we are to have some part in it.

Mr. Maclean: Is it not a fact that for many years the Soviet Union has had a massive SDI programme of its own, killer satellites being merely one example? Is it not misleading for Opposition politicians and others to give the impression that the West and NATO are breaking new ground by taking the SDI initiative? Surely we should be doing this in order to keep up with what the Soviet Union has been doing for years.

Mr. Younger: I agree with my hon. Friend. The Soviet Union has indeed been carrying out investigations in this area for a very long time. I am quite baffled by the theory that seems to be put forward by the Opposition that, despite that, we ought to have nothing to do with it. That seems to me to be a suicidal course.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: Is the Secretary of State aware of United States studies which suggest that laser technology, which can be used as an anti-ballistic missile system, can also be used as an offensive system to create fires within Soviet cities? Does the Secretary of State accept that if that is the case, those weapons, far from enhancing deep deterrence, are very dangerous, because they will escalate the production of offensive armaments?

Mr. Younger: I have seen newspaper reports to that effect, but at this stage there is no hard evidence that research has established any such fact. If it did, it would be a new matter that would have to be considered afresh.

Mr. Chris Smith: Has the new Secretary of State for Defence yet had a chance to read the letter—not marked confidential—that was sent to the Prime Minister in October 1985 by 60 leading advanced information technology scientists at Imperial college, saying that any conceivable star wars technology was not feasible? If the Secretary of State has read that letter, what is his response to it?

Mr. Younger: I have heard about that letter, but I have not yet had a chance to read it. I shall certainly study it with care.

European Fighter Aircraft

4. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current position on the European fighter programme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: As I explained to my hon. Friend on 22 October last, excellent progress has been made since agreement was reached in the summer between the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Spain to proceed with the further definition and refinement of the European fighter aircraft programme. Work on the project definition phase is now well under way and a report is expected from industry next summer.

Mr. Atkins: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply. In the interests of my constituents and many others who are working on this programme, will my hon. Friend take this opportunity to confirm that other events in the aerospace industry will not make any impact upon this programme, which is so important to jobs and to European co-operation in industry and defence?

Mr. Lamont: I can confirm that. The Government remain firmly committed to carrying on with the EFA project definition. We believe that collaboration in this area is extremely important.

Dr. Hampson: Does not this programme offer the greatest across-the-board possibilities and opportunities for British industry that we have seen for generations? Does not the logic of a hands-off approach to our defence contractors mean that British Aerospace should support an American licence to build an American fighter?

Mr. Lamont: The Government do not adopt a hands-off approach to defence procurement. The Government wish to be assured that their requirements can be met from the private sector. As my hon. Friend knows, the Government were closely involved in this matter.

As my hon. Friend said, the project offers tremendous opportunities for British industry, particularly in subsystems and components.

Mr. McNamara: With regard to the other European venture that has collapsed, or appears to be collapsing, with the help of the Government, is it not in the subsectors —avionics and other matters—that British industry will be hurt? Is not one of the consequences of the Government's present attitude that British firms working on those systems will be badly bitten, as Sikorsky supplies them? Why should the European national armaments directors believe the Government any more? After all, we have only a memorandum of understanding; we do not even have a firm contract.

Mr. Lamont: I am strongly tempted to answer the hon. Gentleman, but that matter does not arise out of the question on the Order Paper.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: At what stage does my hon. Friend expect that contracts for work on the European fighter will be awarded to suppliers in different countries?

Mr. Lamont: The evaluation of the project definition phase will not be available until next summer. Contracts will follow thereafter. Of course, some work is being done at the moment.

Strategic Defence Initiative

5. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's discussions with members of the department of artificial intelligence and other scientists at the University of Edinburgh on research under the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Younger: Ministry of Defence officials met Dr. Thompson from the department of artificial intelligence, Edinburgh university, on 20 December to discuss various aspects of the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Dalyell: The Secretary of State will know from his previous incarnation that the department of artificial intelligence in Edinburgh is one of the most distinguished in the world. How, then, does he answer the point put by Dr. Henry Thompson and his colleagues who say, as do scientists at Imperial college, that the scheme can never come to fruition? In the absence of a spare planet, which the Ministry of Defence presumably does not have, how is the testing to be done? Unless there is a spare planet, there is no way that the scheme can be tested.

Mr. Younger: The discussions with Dr. Thompson have been fulfilled, as my predecessor undertook that they would be. Dr. Thompson and his colleagues are entitled to their view, but that does not alter the fact that the research will go on in any case, and if this country is involved there will be considerable spin-off effects, both civilian and military. We should be foolish to turn our backs on it.

Mr. Ashdown: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I gather that the same scientists have suggested that the computer system to run the SDI would have to be hundreds of times more powerful than the current NORAD early warning system? Is he aware that that system crashes every 30 seconds on average and has never worked for longer than half an hour? Why is the Secretary of State diverting a precious part of our human resources in computer research to this ridiculous red herring?

Mr. Younger: The point of the research is to find out whether the scheme is feasible and, if so, how. We should bear in mind that views are strongly held by individuals all over the place and they do not necessarily affect the views of a university or a department as a whole.

Submarines (Orders)

6. **Mr. Douglas** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the placing of orders for conventional and nuclear submarines in British shipyards.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. John Lee): Orders were placed on 3 January 1986 for three Upholder class submarines and one Trafalgar class SSN. A tender has been received for the first of the Trident boats and is being evaluated. The precise order date has yet to be determined.

Mr. Douglas: I am disappointed that the Secretary of State is not answering this question. When he was Secretary of State for Scotland he gave a clear indication during Scottish Question Time, just before the recess, that a Scottish yard would receive a submarine order. We in Scotland are extremely disappointed that the Ministry has left itself open to a monopolistic supplier, which is conducive to the privatisation of that yard. Will the Minister give us an undertaking about what value we can put on the Trafalgar House bid for some of the Trident steel work?

Mr. Lee: The hon. Gentleman is very wrong in his first suggestion, and totally wrong in his second suggestion. The placing of the order had nothing to do with the privatisation programme.

The competition was a great success. There was a saving of about £20 million — about half because of batch ordering and about half because of the competition. We hope and believe that at least one other yard will be able to compete for future SSK orders.

Mrs. McCurley: I acknowledge that the acceptance of the lowest tender for any contract is a good principle, but, in the case of Cammell Laird, will my hon. Friend carefully scrutinise the rather over-optimistic prices that have been offered for the award of the submarine contract? Will he carefully study that contract over the next few years?

Mr. Lee: I understand my hon. Friend's deep anxiety over the Scott Lithgow yard, but all tenders are and will be carefully scrutinised. Cammell Laird won the competition on a true and open basis.

Dr. Godman: Is the Minister aware that on 26 November 1985 his hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement told the House that it was the Government's intention that there should be a number of submarine yards and that Vickers had a monopoly not of conventional but of nuclear submarines? Does he agree, in the light of the placing of the order with Vickers, and hence the conferment of monopoly powers on that company, that that decision sharply contradicts what the Minister of State said on 26 November?

Mr. Lee: With respect, while I understand the hon. Gentleman's anxiety, that does not contradict what my hon. Friend the Minister of State said. I repeat that; there has been competition for the SSK orders. We believe that there will also be satisfactory competition in the future, so there is no question of a monopoly.

Mr. Forth: Will my hon. Friend assure the House that in the placing of such orders, and, indeed, orders for all military equipment, overriding importance will be attached to quality and price and that there will be no artificial constraints placed on orders, geographically or in any other way?

Mr. Lee: I can assure my hon. Friend that competition is very much the order of the day. Nevertheless, there are times when we have to take into account wider and relevant factors.

Mr. O'Neill: The Minister must appreciate the widespread disappointment felt in Scotland, which the Secretary of State echoed, when the announcement was made. Deepening suspicion and cynicism are felt because everyone knows that this is merely a matter of fattening up Vickers before privatisation. There is the added cynicism that the price that the people at Cammell Laird were able to quote was possible because they were able to obtain information from Vickers at Barrow about the target figure that they would have to meet. There is little chance of competitive tendering if there is only one supplier, because the other one will be on its last legs if orders are not provided.

Mr. Lee: Most of the hon. Gentleman's suggestions are, with the greatest respect, unworthy of him. There is no question of placing the orders with Cammell Laird and Vickers because of the privatisation programme.

Mr. Wilson: In view of the insignificant share of defence orders that Scotland received in the last announcement, has the Minister's right hon. Friend issued instructions that steps should be taken within the Ministry of Defence to find more work for Scotland because of our substantial unemployment problem?

Mr. Lee: My right hon. Friend plainly understands the needs of Scotland, because of his former position, but he will be completely open and fair-minded in the placing of future orders.

Nimrod Programmes

7. **Mr. Soames** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the Nimrod programmes will be completed.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Nimrod maritime reconnaissance mark 2 programme will be completed this year. The completion date for the Nimrod airborne early warning mark 3 programme will depend on the outcome of the current negotiations with GEC Avionics Ltd. and on consequent decisions as to the best way to take the project forward.

Mr. Soames: In view of its disgraceful history and the length of time that this programme has taken to complete, what sanctions does my hon. Friend have in mind if the contractors fail to meet the due date this time?

Mr. Lamont: It would not be right for me to disclose what we might do, because we are negotiating with GEC on this matter. We wish to obtain a fixed price contract for the completion of the project to an acceptable operating standard and also within a short time.

We entirely agree with my hon. Friend that the progress of this project has been profoundly unsatisfactory.

Mr. Robert C. Brown: Does the Minister honestly believe in his original answer that the programme will be finished this year?

Mr. Lamont: I think that the hon. Gentleman misheard my answer.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my hon. Friend agree that instead of concentrating on spoiling some other project at Westlands, GEC would be better advised to concentrate on giving the shareholders and the country better value for the hundreds of millions of pounds that the Nimrod contract has so far cost, without the aeroplane flying successfully? Has not the time come for the company to concentrate on giving taxpayers value for what they have paid for?

Mr. Lamont: As is well known, this project is nearly five years late. The original cost at 1986 prices was some £856 million. Already, £874 million has been spent on this project and it does not work to a satisfactory standard. We take this matter seriously, but it is one that we shall have to sort out in negotiation with the company. It is in no doubt about the seriousness with which the Secretary of State and myself regard this project.

Helensburgh (Incident)

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Defence in what circumstances a Ministry of Defence decontamination squad attended the scene of the accident involving a military convoy at Helensburgh on 20 June.

Mr. Stanley: In relation to the circumstances of the accident to which the hon. and learned Gentleman refers, I cannot add to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) on 15 July last year.

Mr. Janner: Accepting, as presumably the Minister does, that this transport was carrying nuclear weapons, that there was an accident and that the decontamination squad was available, what reassurance, if any, is the Minister prepared to give to the public that if there is an accident involving nuclear weapons en route, satisfactory provision will be made to deal with a potentially dangerous situation?

Mr. Stanley: As the hon. and learned Member and the House know, it is the policy of this Government, like that of all our predecessors, neither to confirm nor to deny the presence of nuclear weapons. On the generality, I can assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that under successive Governments there have been detailed arrangements on a contingency basis for responding to any nuclear accident that might occur.

Type 23 Vessels

10. **Mr. Merchant** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on future orders for type 23 ships.

Mr. Lee: Tenders have been received for the next three type 23 frigates and these are being evaluated, but the precise size and timing of any orders have yet to be determined.

Mr. Merchant: In view of the excellent record of the defence industries on the Tyne, will my hon. Friend give urgent attention to providing orders for Swan Hunter and other yards on the Tyne? Will he also take the opportunity to look closely at the Vickers Valkyr APC, which is manufactured by Vickers on the Tyne, and which could provide excellent service for the Army?

Mr. Lee: I shall certainly look into the latter point. On my hon. Friend's first point, I have to say that the Ministry of Defence is not in the business of providing orders for any particular yard. I emphasise that these days we place orders on the basis of competition, and in our warship yards, fortunately, we have substantial competition.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Are any aspects of the original decision to reject the S90 short, fat ship in favour of the type 23 officially secret—apart from the weapons system and information on the weapons system?

Mr. Lee: The hon. Member asks about the S90. All the options were exhaustively examined in 1983, and I have nothing to add to the statement that I made to the House on 1 November 1983. The way for the Ministry of Defence to make sure that it gets value for money is to proceed with the design that it has, and we shall accordingly be starting to order follow-on type 23 ships this year. I cannot comment on Admiral Hill-Norton's report until it is received and I have had an opportunity to study it. My Department has offered assistance to the committee.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend confirm that, following receipt of the Hill-Norton report and his study of it, he will carry out a review of the procedures under which decisions on ship design are made?

Mr. Lee: I take my hon. Friend's request.

Mr. O'Neill: Will the Minister confirm that the Government are still committed to a 50-warship navy? The present rate of ordering means that we will be far short of that number by the end of the decade unless something happens quickly.

Mr. Lee: I can assure the hon. Gentleman and the House that there has been no change in the Government's intention to maintain a force of about 50 escort vessels.

Mr. Wallace: Does not the apparent delay in placing the orders for type 23 frigates and the delays in buying essential new equipment for other services, which is leading to a drop in morale in the services, indicate that there is a need for an overall defence review? Will his right hon. Friend, who is a new broom in the Ministry of Defence, set about instituting such a review?

Mr. Lee: With great respect, I do not know how the hon. Gentleman can say that. Ten days or a fortnight ago we placed about £1 billion worth of naval orders.

Mr. McQuarrie: Although I accept what my hon. Friend has said about competition for the type 23, may I ask whether he agrees that the efficient and skilled work force at Scott Lithgow in Gourock on the lower Clyde must be considered in the context of maintaining it if we are to develop Ministry of Defence requirements in the years to come?

Mr. Lee: I understand that, but we have substantial existing capacity in our warship yards. That is the reality under consideration.

Nuclear Weapons (Policy)

12. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government's policy on the deployment of nuclear weapons is still based on the concept of mutually assured destruction.

Mr. Stanley: Her Majesty's Government's policy on the deployment of nuclear weapons is based on the strategy of deterrence, which has preserved peace with freedom in western Europe for more than 40 years.

Mrs. Clwyd: Is the Minister aware that as recently as October Mr. Caspar Weinberger stated that mutually assured destruction had not kept the peace for 40 years and would not do so in the future? If the United States no longer believes in that policy, is it not surprising that this Government do?

Mr. Stanley: I assure the hon. Lady that the United States believes as firmly in the policy of deterrence as do this Government. I have some difficulty in noting that the hon. Lady cannot accept the policy of deterrence, given the fact that Labour Governments engaged in an expensive secret programme to enhance the United Kingdom's use of the nuclear deterrent.

Mr. Stokes: Will my right hon. Friend totally ignore the views of the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd), which are utterly rejected by the vast majority of the British people and will ensure the defeat of the Labour party in the next election?

Mr. Stanley: I assure my hon. Friend that I regard his comments as much more representative of the views of the British people than the comments of the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd).

Mr. Strang: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the deployment of highly accurate counter-force weapons, such as Trident, is destabilising because it creates the fear on the other side that such weapons might be used in a first strike and thus increases the chance of nuclear weapons being used sooner rather than later in a crisis?

Mr. Stanley: I see nothing destabilising in preserving the credibility of the deterrent. That policy was accepted by the Labour Government as well.

Experimental Fighter Aircraft Programme

14. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is satisfied with the progress of the experimental fighter aircraft programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The experimental aircraft programme is a technology demonstrator programme which will give us practical experience in the integration of the wide range of new technologies required for new, sophisticated combat aircraft.

Mr. Stern: In view of my hon. Friend's welcome reply earlier to the effect that contracts for part of this programme are likely to come up next summer, will he confirm that all the resources of his Department will be made available where necessary to those British companies which have already been involved in the groundwork, to ensure that they are not negotiated out of a substantial programme?

Mr. Lamont: I can certainly give my hon. Friend that assurance. We have meetings constantly with British industry and invite industry to tell us how we can help further in this programme.

Mr. McNamara: May I refer to the question that I put before? How can our European partners who will be engaged with us in developing the European fighter, which is based on our experience in EAP, depend upon the Government, following their shameful treatment on the helicopter issue?

Mr. Lamont: Our partners can depend absolutely upon the Government. I have already given the commitment that we are thoroughly in favour of continuing with EFA.

Regular Army Reserve

15. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what training he intends for the Regular Army Reserve in 1986.

Mr. Stanley: We are planning for up to 500 Regular Reservists to participate in the major BAOR field training exercise later this year. In addition, the new scheme whereby Regular Reservists in their third year of liability are invited to participate in one week refresher training courses at various locations throughout the United Kindgom will be continued during 1986. We shall continue to examine ways of providing further cost-effective training opportunities for those with a Regular Reserve commitment.

Mr. Marlow: What deductions has my right hon. Friend made from the experiences of using the Regular Army Reserve on exercises Lionheart and Brave Defender in the past couple of years? Does he agree that this is an under-utilised resource that is highly cost-effective? Will he look to expand its use?

Mr. Stanley: I can assure my hon. Friend that we have concluded very favourably from the training opportunities that we have provided for the Regular Reservists. We are very glad that my hon. Friend participated in both exercises, Lionheart and Brave Defender. We shall continue to try to find ways to produce cost-effective opportunities for Regular Reservists to engage in more training.

Mr. Conway: Since the Regular Reservists report to Territorial Army sponsoring battalions, is my right hon. Friend happy that the expansion programme for the Territorial Army is on target and is ready to receive those Reservists?

Mr. Stanley: I am glad to be able to tell my hon. Friend that the expansion of the Territorial Army to our target of 86,000 by 1990 is at the moment well on track and that the Territorial Army's strength currently stands at 74,000, compared with only 59,000 when we came to office.

Land Disposal

16. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on disposal of Ministry of Defence land.

Mr. Lee: It is the policy of the Ministry of Defence to dispose of land and buildings which are no longer required for defence purposes. Since 1979 the estate has been reduced by almost 28,000 acres.

Mr. MacKay: While I congratulate my hon. Friend on that reply, may I ask whether he is aware that many of us who represent constituencies in the south-east of England will welcome a further disposal of surplus defence land, which will reduce the pressure for housing development land in open countryside in our areas?

Mr. Lee: While I understand my hon. Friend's point, the fact is that, because of our expansion of the Territorial Army and of the cadet forces, together with the development of longer-range weaponry, we are looking to add to the training land for the Army. Obviously, however, when suitable opportunities arise — *[Interruption.]*—we shall continue to dispose of land.

Mr. Speaker: Order. These are important questions.

RAF Brampton (Fire)

17. **Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what were the costs, probable causes and consequences of the fire at Royal Air Force Brampton on Wednesday 23 October.

Mr. Lee: The fire at Royal Air Force Brampton destroyed the main part of the headquarters building of Royal Air Force support command. This will be replaced at an estimated cost of £1·2 million for temporary accommodation, followed by approximately £4 million more for permanent accommodation. The inquiry into the cause of the fire is not yet complete, but there is no evidence that it was other than accidental. Operational capabilities are unaffected, although some minor administrative difficulties may be experienced until the headquarters organisation can be fully reconstituted in the new accommodation.

Mr. Hanley: Would my hon. Friend not agree that, after two serious fires in the past three years, costing millions of pounds, the security system ought to be more appropriate to the modern age?

Mr. Lee: We are always endeavouring to improve our security.

School Visits

18. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel are currently involved in information visits to schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Some 155 service personnel are employed either in presentation teams, which can be made available to visit educational establishments, or as school or college liaison officers. In addition, members of the careers information field force staff of all three services make visits to schools from time to time as part of their more general responsibilities.

Mr. Greenway: Bearing in mind the fact that there are 30,000 schools in this country, not to mention a large number of colleges and universities, does my hon. Friend not think that that is an inadequate number to go round schools and other institutions to inform pupils what careers are available to them in the services and the role that our service personnel can play in the defence of our country?

Mr. Lee: Our service personnel do an excellent job. While one would like to have more people allocated to the task, there are manpower pressures.

Mr. Skinner: In view of the fact that the Secretary of State for Defence and his colleagues are up to their necks in business of one kind or another, if the Government find that they cannot allocate sufficient people to carry out a tour of all these areas, may I ask whether the Minister has approached the ex-Secretary of State for Defence, who, seemingly, will have more time on his hands in future, to do the job for them?

Mr. Lee: We are always grateful for contributions from the hon. Gentleman.

Military Schools of Music

19. **Mr. Jessel** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, pending the report of the Public Accounts Committee, he will make a statement on the new figures for the costing of military schools of music given in his evidence to the Committee on 4 December by the permanent secretary, Sir Clive Whitmore.

Mr. Lee: The group set up to implement the decision to establish the defence school of music at Deal reported in March 1985 that the estimated construction cost had risen from £5·8 million to £10·6 million. We are now examining the requirement for instruction and buildings in order to bring the cost down to the earlier estimate.

Mr. Jessel: As there is not now much difference between the cost of continuing with the present system and that of setting up a joint services' music school on the coast, will the Government examine carefully the report of the Public Accounts Committee when it is published, and reconsider the view of the previous Secretary of State for Defence, as the high standards of British Army bands, which are the envy of the world—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]—are linked inextricably with the first-class training they receive at Kneller hall, Twickenham?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend has obviously struck a welcome note. He has waged a tireless campaign for Kneller hall, and all credit to him. However, there is no change in our fundamental decision to go on a tri-service basis to Deal.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Pike** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Pike: Will the Prime Minister say why she remained silent about the letter from British Aerospace while the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry misled the House yesterday afternoon?

The Prime Minister: I do not accept that my right hon. and learned Friend misled the House. Indeed, he gave a clear explanation. As the hon. Gentleman is aware from answers that have been given many times by me, it is my practice not to publish exchanges with third parties, nor to reveal them, if they are marked "Private and strictly confidential." I hope that if anyone writes a letter to right

hon. and hon. Gentlemen which is marked "Private and strictly confidential", it will not be our practice to flaunt either its existence or contents on the Floor of the House.

Q2. **Mr. Squire** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Squire: I thank my right hon. Friend for the support that the Government gave to me in reducing secrecy in local government. Will she now review the Official Secrets Act 1911 at national level, especially section 2, in the 75th year of its existence with a view to replacing it with a freedom of information Act?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate my hon. Friend on the passage of his Bill, which is due to come into effect shortly. As he knows, we had one attempt in 1979 at changing the Official Secrets Act because many people found it not to their liking, but that change did not obtain the consent of the House.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister now publish the Westland documents of 4 and 18 October? Since Sir Austin Pearce has now given his permission, will she also publish the letter that she received from British Aerospace yesterday?

The Prime Minister: My Office has been in touch with Sir Austin Pearce. It is my intention to consult him later today. I recognise the importance that the letter has assumed, and I shall consult him about publication.

Q3. **Mr. Forth** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Forth: Bearing in mind the Government's responsibility for police planning in operational matters, has my right hon. Friend in her quieter moments had time to study the Metropolitan police report on the Tottenham riots? Is she as horrified as I am by the facts in it, and even more horrified at the reaction of mad Bernie Grant and the Haringey council, who accused the police of lying? Will she give the House an assurance that she and her Government will continue to support the police in their work throughout the country in protecting the innocent against the wicked?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I gladly give that assurance. The overwhelming majority of our citizens suppport the police in their difficult task and the very difficult judgments that they have sometimes to make.

Mr. Steel: May I revert to the question asked by the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire)? Does the Prime Minister remember several highly publicised prosecutions in the past few years of public servants for alleged breaches of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911? As, in the past few days, there have been massive breaches of section 2 by members of the Government, will they be prosecuted, or will she declare the section dead?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is aware that prosecutions are not for me. He is also aware that we tried to amend the Official Secrets Act during 1979-80. It went through considerable debate. Many people wanted change, but we have not yet got agreement on what the changes should be.

Q5. **Mr. Dover** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Dover: On the question of the Channel link, will my right hon. Friend assure the House that the Government will make a decision for one of the schemes as put forward, without changing it or the composition of any promoting group?

The Prime Minister: Negotiations about the Channel fixed link are continuing. I can only tell my hon. Friend that it is likely that we shall have to consider how far it would benefit users and be able to attract the finance necessary for the link.

Q6. **Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. McKay: In reply to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister said that she would make public the letter to which he referred. Will she also give an assurance that she will make available to us the letters of 4 and 18 October?

The Prime Minister: I cannot necessarily agree to the latter part of what the hon. Gentleman said. I made it clear that my Office is in touch with Sir Austin Pearce. I intend to consult him later today about the possibility of the publication of those letters, because I recognise that they have become a major issue and that the House is likely to wish to see their publication in time for the debate tomorrow.

Mr. Moynihan: Is my right hon. Friend aware of NALGO's blacking of my constituency correspondence with Lewisham council's housing department whereby an unrepresentative minority trade union clique is abusing its extraordinary power over Lewisham council, completely without regard for the damage to the interests of my constituents? Does my right hon. Friend agree that what is at stake here is a matter of principle, which should be of the utmost concern to hon. Members on both sides of the House?

The Prime Minister: I fully agree with my hon. Friend and understand that genuine concern has been expressed in all parts of the House when the matter has been raised before. It is quite wrong for correspondence to be hindered in this way, and fundamentally against democracy. We all wish my hon. Friend well in ending this offence.

Q7. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Flannery: If the Prime Minister has now been given permission to publish the contents of the letter from Sir Austin Pearce and British Aerospace, why does she need to have any further conversations with him? Is she worrying about something? Is there something that she has to hide? Why does she not publish the letter, having been given permission? There is no need for further discussion when the whole House—even those crowing behind her—want to know what is in the letter.

The Prime Minister: With respect, I think that I have probably answered this question several times, but let me repeat the reply. The letter was marked "Private and strictly confidential". It is my invariable practice not to reveal publicly such correspondence without the permission of its author. It will continue to be my practice, because I think that that is the right procedure. I hope that it will be the practice of other right hon. and hon. Members. I therefore indicated—I have not yet replied to the letter, my Office has been in touch with Sir Austin—that it is my intention to consult Sir Austin later today about the possibility of publication. I know that the House will wish to have it published by tomorrow. It is my intention to be in touch about that.

Mr. Whitfield: Does my right hon. Friend agree that perhaps the most encouraging aspect in the otherwise sorry state of the Westland helicopter company is the fact that she and her right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry regard letters that are marked as private and confidential as being private and confidential? Will she also agree with me that, if the right hon. prima donna Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) —*[Interruption.]*—had understood the meaning of the words private and confidential, his political career would not be in the ruins which it is today?

The Prime Minister: With regard to what my hon. Friend said about the letter, I have made clear my past practice, and I have made clear what I consider will be my future practice, because it is, I believe, the correct one.

Mr. D. E. Thomas: Will the Prime Minister take this opportunity unreservedly to condemn the excessive use of force by a member of a private security firm apparently to be funded by the Home Office, against the non-violent person, Sue Pitman, at Carmarthen last Saturday?

The Prime Minister: In general, of course, one always will condemn the use of unwarranted force. The only exception is self-defence. I do not know about the particular case and I am not able therefore to comment in detail on it. Perhaps the hon. Member will be in touch.

Q8. **Mr. George Robertson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Robertson: Is the Prime Minister aware that nine men have spent the last 10 days marching from Gartcosh steel mill in Scotland? Why will the Prime Minister not have the decency to meet them now that they are in London?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, I met the representatives of the Scottish TUC when I was in Glasgow last autumn, and also the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke). In addition, both the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister for Trade have offered to meet the people from Gartcosh. I do not see any further purpose in meeting them again.

Sir Kenneth Lewis: Will my right hon. Friend be replying to the letter that she has received from British Aerospace, and can she promise that, short of a simple acknowledgement, she will reply in public and not have it marked private and confidential?

The Prime Minister: That is one of the reasons why I am consulting before the reply goes.

Q10. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Wareing: In view of the fact that the letter from Sir Austin Pearce was marked "Private and confidential", will the Prime Minister tell the House why she made the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry aware of the letter before he arrived at the House? Will she say at what time yesterday she received the letter and at what time the Secretary of State was made aware of its contents?

The Prime Minister: I saw the letter shortly before I came to the House——

Mr. Skinner: Time.

The Prime Minister: Well, shortly before. I had been presiding over an official lunch, of which the hon. Gentleman may well know, and it was not until that had finished and I had said farewell to the guests that I was made aware of the letter and so came to the House very quickly.

Q11. **Mr. Amess** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Amess: Is the Prime Minister aware that out of the 12 local authorities whose rates have been capped, five have not appealed against that decision? Does she agree that by not appealing against its rates being capped Basildon district council is admitting that it is extravagant in its expenditure?

The Prime Minister: I believe that is so. I also believe that many ratepayers will be very grateful for the rate-capping legislation that has passed through this House, which has curbed the level of rates that ratepayers would otherwise have had to pay.

Q14. **Mr. Neil Thorne** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Thorne: Will my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to consider the possibility of making an official visit to the Kingdom of Nepal within the next 12 months?

The Prime Minister: I should very much like to do so.

Lesotho (Supply Routes)

3.31 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed) *(by private notice)* asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response he has given to the urgent appeal made to Her Majesty's Government by the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho asking for help in dealing with the obstruction of supply routes by the South African Government.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): We view this matter very seriously indeed. We do not believe that the problems between South Africa and Lesotho can be resolved by coercion. We are making known to the South African Government our concern that the restrictions on border traffic should be lifted and that both sides should embark on a dialogue to resolve their differences without delay.

Mr. Beith: I welcome the Minister of State on her promotion to her present office and hope that she will exercise a good influence on Government policy. Does she recognise that as Lesotho—our Commonwealth partner —is entirely surrounded by South Africa and has to import virtually all its food, fuel and essential goods from South Africa, it cannot survive an economic blockade? Does she also realise that the delaying tactics being used by the South African Government are preventing virtually all the supplies from getting through? What pressure is she prepared to use to follow up the protest that has been made, in order to secure an end to the blockade? If pressure does not work, are the Government prepared to give practical help to ensure that in an extreme situation —the situation is becoming more extreme all the time— emergency supplies can be got into Lesotho? Does she agree that it is essential that this blockade should not be allowed to take away the independence of Lesotho?

Mrs. Chalker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his initial remarks. We are very well aware of how dependent Lesotho is upon South Africa. We are also aware that blockading that country will have to cease. We shall look at ways of assisting them, and we shall shortly be replying to the letter that the Prime Minister of Lesotho, Chief Jonathan, addressed to the Prime Minister yesterday. We shall continue to urge the South African Government to respect fully the independence and territorial integrity of its neighbours, and we shall continue to urge on all countries in the region the need for dialogue and the suspension of violence, as called for in the Commonwealth accord.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): I welcome my hon. Friend to her new responsibilities. May I ask her what justification is offered by South Africa for the blockade? Since Lesotho is a partner in the Commonwealth, what contact have Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had with other Commonwealth Governments about a resolution of the matter?

Mrs. Chalker: I thank my hon. Friend for his kind remarks. We know of no justification for the action. Of course, we have been in contact with our Commonwealth neighbours. The Commonwealth accord was agreed and we have kept in touch with those countries since. We shall continue with our partners in the Commonwealth to urge the South African Government to seek a solution through dialogue with neighbouring countries.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Is the Minister aware that the hon. Members who visited Botswana after the infamous raid on Gaborone regard the intimidation by the South African Government against neighbouring Commonwealth countries as entirely repugnant? Can we give an assurance to those Commonwealth countries that we find South Africa's invasion and intimidation unacceptable? Even if we cannot bring ourselves to impose sanctions, will we assure world opinion about our firm opinion?

Mrs. Chalker: Indeed. The hon. Member knows that we find the action repugnant. We deeply regret the land mine incidents and accompanying loss of life. We shall continue to condemn all acts of violence from whatever quarter they may come. We shall do all we can to ensure that the unacceptable position is brought to a swift and lasting conclusion.

Mr. Anderson (Swansea, East): The Opposition warmly welcome the hon. Lady to her new post. A friendly, landlocked Commonwealth country has been blockaded since 1 January by a bullying neighbour. Have the Government been in close touch with the United States, since the appeal from the Prime Minister of Lesotho about the possible provision of commodities was also addressed to President Reagan? Is it the reading of the Government that this is part of a wider attempt to destabilise Lesotho politically and to force it to agree to a security pact? Are the Government aware that other front-line states adjoining South Africa are anxious about possible military intervention either by the South African defence forces or by agents of South Africa, as happened when nine opponents of apartheid were killed in Lesotho just before Christmas? What representations have been made by our ambassador in Pretoria to South Africa urging restraint in any further military adventures over its borders?

Mrs. Chalker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for what he said. We are in close touch with the Government of the United States. Tomorrow I shall be seeing Dr. Crocker on his return from South Africa and I shall raise the matter with him. The action is seen as an attempt to destabilise Lesotho. We understand the anxiety of other front-line states at what may be anticipated from the purveyors of violence, wherever they may come from. Representations will be made by Her Majesty's ambassador. I have no doubt that we shall be speaking about that shortly.

Roskill Report

3.38 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement about the report of the Fraud Trials Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Roskill which was published on 10 January. The House will recall that the committee was set up in 1983, well in advance of recent events, to consider ways of improving the conduct of criminal proceedings arising from fraud.

The Government are most grateful to Lord Roskill and his colleagues for producing with such speed a readable, thorough and radical report. It deals with a serious and urgent problem. We fully share the committee's concern that the perpetrators of serious fraud should be brought effectively to book. The report shows that the legal and administrative machinery for this purpose has been creaking badly. We are determined to bring about the changes in law, practice and attitudes which are necessary.

There are two reasons for this. First, the reputation of our financial institutions, and of the City of London in particular, needs the support of effective action against fraud. Secondly, there must be no escape for offenders simply because their offences are highly complicated or because they can employ large resources to cover them up —the enforcement of the law must be even-handed. Accordingly, the Government welcome the report as providing a basis for early legislation to achieve substantial reforms of the law in this field, and also for new administrative measures in areas where legislation is not required.

Responsibility for the investigation and prosecution of fraud is now shared by the police, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Department of Trade and Industry and other agencies. Co-operation has been greatly improved in recent years, and permanent fraud investigation group arrangements have been in place since last January. The Roskill committee recommended an urgent examination of the need for a new, unified organisation. We accept the recommendation for such an examination, and it will be immediately put in hand by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary.

The committee has called for resources devoted to the pursuit of fraud to be expanded as a matter of priority. The Government are already taking steps to that end through the strengthening of the Department of Trade and Industry by nearly 200 new staff over the next few years, and the addition to the Director of Public Prosecution's Department of nine extra lawyers with support staff. We shall seek to draw in more people with the necessary skill and experience from the private sector on short-service appointments. In addition, the agency and the self-regulatory organisations to be set up under the Financial Services Bill will have their own resources for the investigation of fraud.

As regards the substantive law, my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor and I will be in touch with the Law Commission about its work on conspiracy to defraud. I shall seek the advice of the Criminal Law Revision Committee on early legislation to deal with the urgent problem of the limitations on the use of a charge of conspiracy to defraud to which the Roskill committee drew attention.

The committee made a number of recommendations on juries, including provision for certain complex fraud cases to be tried by a tribunal comprising a judge and two lay members, and for the abolition of peremptory challenges. We shall be consulting urgently about these important matters, and we shall listen with interest to the views which will be expressed in the House and the other place and in general public comment.

The committee's general approach on preparations for trial, the law of evidence and other matters would lead to significant improvements in the trial of fraud cases. The feasibility of certain aspects of these proposals will require further study and we shall need to give more thought to the details. Some of the recommendations may well be applicable in other sectors of the criminal law besides fraud.

To sum up, we have in this report an excellent basis for substantial and worthwhile legislation and administrative action. The report will be immensely helpful in shaping the Government's continuing fight against the insidious menace of fraud. For this, we are most grateful to Lord Roskill and his colleagues. It is now for us and for Parliament as a whole to do our part in carrying forward the work they have begun. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will be able to arrange for an early debate on the report.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): The Home Secretary does not take this matter very far, but no doubt there will be a clearer sign of the Government's views in the forthcoming debate. He mentioned the proposed increase in staff at the Department of Trade and Industry and it is important to strengthen the defences of that Department against fraud.

We should like to hear more about increasing manpower in police fraud squads, about whose adequacy or otherwise there is great concern. Roskill's recommendations for a unified investigating force must be seriously considered. Investigation spread among 47 different organisations is a disorganised shambles. Similarly, court procedures are far too cumbersome and inadequate to deal with modern technology.

Whatever is wrong, I cannot agree with one proposed change. On behalf of the Labour party, I make it clear that we reject outright the Roskill recommendation that in complex cases the right to a jury trial could be removed. It is impossible to define complexity. Juries have been found adequate to deal with profoundly important and detailed espionage cases involving the nation's security and they are a valuable safeguard against the possibility of a prejudiced judge. The right to a jury trial has existed for many centuries and should not lightly be cast aside now.

Fraudsters are getting away with more than £3 billion a year. Much of that is from small savers who face the devastating loss of their life savings. Until now, the Government have shown a lack of determination in pursuing those fraudsters. Under this Government 20 times more people have been sent to gaol for social security benefit fraud than for Inland Revenue fraud. It is no wonder that on Saturday *The Times* said that there is a suspicion that the rich and well-connected can get away with it.

In his report Lord Roskill declares:

"In the United Kingdom fraud is a growth industry."

He also says:

"Fraud is posing a threat to London as a financial centre."

[Mr. Gerald Kaufman]

In the past, the City of London has been admired as the financial capital of the world, but unless the Government show more determination and less complacency there is a danger that it will acquire the deadly reputation of being the fraud capital of the world.

Mr. Hurd: I must say that I am a little disappointed at the grudging way in which the right hon. Gentleman has received the remarkable report and my commendation of it. Bearing in mind what he said towards the end of his statement I would have thought that he would have wholeheartedly welcomed the report and joined us in saying that it is right that it should give impetus to further action in tightening the net against fraud. We intend to put legislation into a Criminal Justice Bill that we are planning for the next session. I look to the right hon. Gentleman for more wholehearted support when we come to that than we have seen today.

The right hon. Gentleman asked about the police joint fraud squad. The Metropolitan and City company fraud department is the largest fraud squad in the United Kingdom with 190 officers engaged in company fraud work. As the right hon. Gentleman knows, I am now carrying out an urgent review to assess specific needs for further increases in the establishment of the Metropolitan police, and the size of the joint fraud squad will come into that.

I note the right hon. Gentleman's comments about juries in cases of complex fraud. In his report, Lord Roskill made a powerful case for a change but, as I said, I think that it is sensible for the Government to wait for the views of the House and opinion outside on that important change. The views of the right hon. Gentleman will not stand alone.

Sir Edward Gardner (Fylde): Whatever may be the strength of the case for the abolition of trial by jury in complex fraud cases, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the fact that any attempt to extend that radical principle to other crimes which can at present be tried by jury would be intolerable and unacceptable?

Mr. Hurd: I note what my hon. and learned Friend has said. The Roskill report made a powerful case for ring fencing that area. I do not believe that any action that follows from that aspect of the report should be regarded as capable of further extension.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): I welcome many parts of the Roskill report, but does the Home Secretary not agree that juries have shown themselves peculiarly effective in trying cases of fraud? They have shown themselves willing to convict in 86·8 per cent. of the fraud cases brought before a Crown court. That is a higher percentage than convictions in other classes of case brought before the Crown courts.

Mr. Hurd: I note the hon. and learned Gentleman's views.

Before we concentrate on that recommendation, however, it is important to understand that it is flanked by a series of radical suggestions. For example, the report recommends changes in the law of evidence, which I know that Lord Roskill considers to be of prime importance. It also recommends changes in the disclosure of the case by both prosecution and defence and the institution of preparatory hearings on a more systematic basis. In the committee's view, those are all crucial changes that need to be considered alongside the matter of the fraud trial tribunal.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): Has Roskill any recommendations to make about the position of accountants to a firm, when they think that fraud might have been committed? In future, should they owe their primary loyalty to their clients, as they have always done in the past, or should a duty be imposed upon them to reveal to the authorities where they suspect fraud is being committed?

Mr. Hurd: My recollection is that the answer to my hon. Friend's question is no, because that point did not lie within the committee's terms of reference.

Mr. Nicholas Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): The Home Secretary glossed over the resources issue and said nothing about expertise, which was touched on in the Roskill report. What is the Government's attitude towards training in accountancy and new technology for judges and barristers and in particular for those whose job it is to investigate major frauds?

Mr. Hurd: The report has about 112 recommendations; there are many that I did not touch on, but they were summarised in part of my statement. I entirely agree about the importance of that part of the report. It applies to the police, who are my particular concern, as well as to the professions that the hon. Gentleman mentioned.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): As the answers given yesterday by the Attorney-General about specific cases raised with him seemed to show, is there not a danger that, however much we may tighten legislation on fraud domestically, within the United Kingdom, some of the worst offenders will continue to escape because of the great inadequacy and slowness of the extradition procedures? In that context, will the Home Secretary ask our right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary whether an international initiative could be taken to improve the extradition procedures not only for fraud, but for terrorism and other crimes which are on the increase, which are facilitated by modern transportation?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is exactly right. I have already discussed the matter with my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary. Fraud offences are extraditable, but, like my hon. Friend, I am concerned at the obstacles placed in the way of extradition of offenders from the United Kingdom. He will have noticed what Lord Roskill and his committee said about evidence being taken abroad. That is a very important point. In addition, in the Criminal Justice Bill next Session, I hope to put before the House important proposals for the reform of our extradition law because I am convinced from everything I have learnt in my present job that, until we are prepared to change the basis of our extradition law, it will be difficult to improve our treaty arrangements with other states. It will be difficult to get back into our own jurisdiction the fraudsters with whom we are concerned unless we have made changes at home.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is the Home Secretary aware that the difficulty is not so much convicting people who have committed fraud, as the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) said, as making sure that there are enough people around to look

for them, similar to those who have been employed to look for people who have been fraudulently active on the Department of Health and Social Security front? There should be as many officers in the fraud squad as there are investigating people who are supposed to be claiming too much supplementary benefit. If we had that many people, we might be able to get hold of some of the fraudsters who are difficult to get hold of. Is it not ironic, at a time when the Government are talking about considering the possibility of getting rid of trial by jury because of the complexity of fraud cases, that Sipra, who was given eight months' start by the Chancellor of the Exchequer before he sent the fraud squad in after him, is now out there in another continent, writing novels and laughing at everybody in Britain, having got away with about £70 million from Johnson Matthey Bankers? Peter Cameron-Webb is out there in New York, having salted away £13 million, with his mate Peter Dixon in some other country. Yet the Attorney-General said yesterday at the Dispatch Box that we would have difficulty in getting those people back, and as a sort of cover-up, the Home Secretary says that we shall have to change trial by jury because we cannot get hold of them. What nonsense. The Government are not trying to catch them.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman clearly has not listened either to what my right hon. and learned Friend told him yesterday or to anything that I have said today. I have not endorsed the particular proposal to which he has just referred. I have announced, or re-announced, a substantial expansion of Department of Trade and Industry staff to deal with fraud. I have answered a question about the Metropolitan and City company fraud department. I have moved a long way in the direction of showing that we are strengthening Government resources in precisely the direction that the hon. Gentleman wants, but there is no satisfying him. He sits there making his little perorations without listening to the answers that are given to him.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that I agree entirely in broad principle with my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) about the maintenance of trial by jury? However, the reason that juries tend to convict in minor fraud cases, particularly in social security fraud cases, is because they understand them quite easily, whereas in major fraud cases, where large sums of money are involved, the standard tactic of the defence is to make those cases as complicated as possible. There is, therefore, a case for the Roskill recommendations, which I believe would prove to be a substantial deterrent to the major villains.

Mr. Hurd: There certainly is a case, and the House and the country will want to weigh that case. In addition, as I have already said, the Roskill report makes a number of other recommendations, a few of which I have mentioned. Visual aids are another recommendation. It is particularly cutting at the expense of the prolixity of lawyers, which was mentioned by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Douglas Hogg (Grantham): Will my right hon. Friend accept that perhaps the most important recommendation in the report for making fraud trials more effective is the requirement that both the prosecution and the defence should state their case in writing? Will he please consider early legislation designed to achieve that end?

Mr. Hurd: Here again, there should be room for discussion. This is a radical recommendation, but my view is that it is almost certainly justified. We shall certainly find room in next Session's legislation for the radical changes in the Roskill report which, after a short period of deliberation, including debate in this House, are judged to be necessary.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Does not the Home Secretary agree that, whereas all of us welcome the pursuit of the fraudster and the ultimate conviction of those who have committed fraud, we must also take into account the balance that has to be struck between the rights of the prosecution and the rights of the defence? In any steps that are taken in pursuit of Roskill, one must always remember that the paramount basis of all justice is even-handedness between the parties. Does not the Home Secretary agree that methods with regard to disclosure of case, the removal of committal proceedings in fraud cases and the jury system tend to go to the heart of justice?

Mr. Hurd: Certainly there should be time, which we propose to give, to consider what I certainly admit are sweeping changes. We shall look carefully at the views expressed on the Opposition Benches. They have pressed us on fraud for a long time. We shall watch carefully how the Opposition respond to our reform proposals.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is considerable public concern about the current jury system? Does he accept that, in due course, there must be several reforms of the jury system if public confidence is to be retained, as retained it must be?

Mr. Hurd: I think that the system of trial by jury for serious offences lies at the heart of our criminal justice system. The question is what changes are needed to clarify and purify it of any accretions or distortions. As my hon. Friend said, that goes wider than fraud. He knows that we have already set in hand an analytical exercise relating to peremptory challenge, and he will have noticed the caustic remarks that Roskill makes on that principle.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): The Home Secretary will be aware of the alarming explosion in salary structures in the City over the past year. What realistic expectations does the right hon. Gentleman have of attracting people of quality from the private sector for short-term appointments?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Member puts his finger on a difficult point. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will show his characteristic generosity in considering that problem.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Does my right hon. Friend agree with Lord Roskill that the system of peremptory challenge of jurors

"may . . . enable defendants to ensure that a sufficiently large part of a jury is rigged in their favour"?

Does the right hon. Gentleman agree with Lord Roskill that peremptory challenges should "be abolished" as a matter of urgency?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend was the first in the field on that, and I acknowledge that fact. He knows the

[Mr. Hurd]

Government's response on the general question, which was given to him before Lord Roskill reported. I do not want today to add to that.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Does the Home Secretary recognise that the Opposition's fears are the same as those mentioned by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner)? The abolition of juries in cases such as the Home Secretary has described could lead to the abolition of juries in certain other cases, on the basis of the same argument. That could happen, bearing in mind the Government's deplorable record on civil liberties — which is as bad as their record in dealing with serious commercial crime.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Member is trying to have it both ways. If we are to be serious in pursuing fraudsters, as we are serious in the pursuit of drug traffickers, we must strike the right balance. The exact nature of that balance needs to be considered. The hon. Gentleman should not try to catch us in that trap. There is no reason why a system of tribunals for complex fraud cases should lead to an extension of the principle elsewhere. The Government would only do that if the House agreed and there is a perfectly good argument in the Roskill report for ring fencing that area of complex prosecution.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): In case it is thought that the diminution of the right of trial by jury is too high a price to pay for improving the system of prosecution of fraudsters, may I commend to my right hon. Friend the possibility of using the civil jurisdiction? That does not carry the difficulty surrounding juries. It makes available weapons that are not available to criminal jurisdiction. There would be a deterrent value in civil jurisdiction equal to that under criminal jurisdiction. Will that possibility be considered, as Roskill apparently did not consider it?

Mr. Hurd: Therefore, nor have I. I note my hon. Friend's point, but I doubt whether the one system could be a substitute for the other. If my hon. Friend would like to develop that point at greater length, I should be delighted to study it.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): Does not the Home Secretary accept that the prospects of the abandonment of the right to trial by jury is bound to be the most controversial aspect of the Roskill report? By using such expressions as "powerful case" and "excellent basis for substantial legislation", the Home Secretary is likely to give the impression that the Government support that proposal in the Roskill report. Will he make it clear to the House the Government's current view about jury trial?

Mr. Hurd: We shall be having urgent consultations and will listen with interest to the views expressed in the House and in another place, and to general public comment. I made that point in my original statement on the Roskill recommendations on juries, which involve not only proposals about complex fraud cases, but a case for the abolition of peremptory challenge.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): Will not my right hon. Friend agree that the right to trial by jury has been a fundamental right for a long time and that, whatever arguments there may be for changing the procedure for fraud trials, it would be a dangerous precedent to deny to those charged with one particular crime the rights enjoyed by those charged with other serious crimes?

Mr. Hurd: The longer this exchange continues, the wiser we are shown to have been in saying that there should be a little air around this set of proposals. There should be an opportunity for people to consider and discuss proposals before final decisions are made and the Government start drafting the Criminal Justice Bill for next Session.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): Is there anything in the Roskill recommendations that would require Barclays bank to take immediate action to stop the apparently fraudulent misuse of its bankers' drafts, which has been going on since April 1985?

Mr. Hurd: No, Sir, and I have no intention of being drawn into particular cases which are not my responsibility.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will call those hon. Members who have been rising, but I would ask for brief questions, please.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Will my right hon. Friend not be disheartened by the apparent difference between the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who thinks that the Home Secretary is not serious in his wish to catch fraudsters, and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), the Opposition spokesman on the matter, who thinks that my right hon. Friend is going too far? If we build an iron fence around the City within which fraudsters know that they are likely to be caught, prosecuted and convicted, that will be the best way to stop fraud. I thought that the Opposition were most keen to do that, as we are.

Mr. Hurd: I thought that, too. I am not in the least disheartened, because what I see, not only in Lord Roskill's report but in the business that follows today, is a clear opportunity for the Government to show, without any fear of contradiction, that they are determined further to tighten the work against fraud. I repeat my disappointment that we do not appear to have the Opposition's support in that.

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Will my right hon. Friend accept that, for many years, it has been considered a basic constitutional right that those who are prosecuted in Crown courts for criminal offences are found guilty only when the jury is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt of the offender's guilt? The proposition that that right should be removed—the right to jury trial —whether it is made in the House or in a report will be viewed with grave concern in the House and elsewhere.

Mr. Hurd: I take my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that there are two aspects to the report? The first is the prosecution and defence in a trial of those accused of fraud. The other is investigation. Perhaps my right hon. Friend will consider that an essential act in that regard would be to place on company auditors an obligation to report irregularities either to the police or to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Hurd: Yes, I will consider that, although I believe that that goes wide of the report. A point not picked up in

the exchanges is the commission that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has given to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury urgently to study the first of Lord Roskill's recommendations, which is for a unified system of investigation in bringing prosecutions. My hon. Friend's point goes a little wider than that, but I want to emphasise the importance of that decision.

Mr. David Ashby (Leicester, North-West): Will my right hon. Friend accept that not only fraud cases but other ordinary crime cases are very complicated? Rather than throwing away the right to jury trial, which most of the House believes in, there is a case for having special juries in complicated cases. Jurors in such juries might be graduates from universities. Does he accept that, very often, peremptory challenges are used by lawyers to improve rather than to worsen the quality of the jury?

Mr. Hurd: The trouble is that people's ideas of quality sometimes vary in a strange way. My hon. Friend is correct to draw the attention of the House to the idea of special juries. That is an old idea which was recently revived in the columns of *The Times* and is now proposed by my hon. Friend. It did not find favour with Roskill, for the reasons set out in the report, but no doubt that will form part of the debate.

Mr. Richard Ottaway (Nottingham, North): On an earlier occasion it was intimated that the courts' lack of jurisdiction to try conspirators to a crime where the conspiracy had taken place wholly in this country but the crime had taken place overseas—a common occurrence in frauds described in appendix F in the Roskill report —was to be dealt with by the Roskill committee. That has not happened. What plans does my right hon. Friend have to block that loophole?

Mr. Hurd: Perhaps my hon. Friend will allow me to look into that matter, as I would rather not answer him off the cuff.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): Will my right hon. Friend agree that the jury's purpose is to determine the facts according to the evidence? Very often, that is exceedingly difficult in cases of serious fraud for jurors without experience of accountancy or of how computers operate. In such cases, it is difficult for jurors fairly and justly to determine the facts, and that can lead to injustice. Injustice against one is injustice against us all.

Mr. Hurd: That is a good summary of the main thrust of Lord Roskill's critique. We have to take a little time before setting our decisions in concrete.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I welcome my right hon. Friend's wise caution over the abolition of jury trials and peremptory challenge. Will he consider an area over which there will be much less disagreement, which is the enormous expense involved for the state in prosecuting fraud trials, which often go on at great length and are the subject of legal aid? Will he consider extending the inquiry initiated by a former Solicitor-General into requiring defendants in long cases to have to prove their need for legal aid? If they were subjected to long and thorough inquiries, perhaps few would want legal aid. The cost to the state would be much reduced and the length of trials would be reduced accordingly.

Mr. Hurd: I will draw the attention of my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor to the point made by my hon. and learned Friend. The thrust of Lord Roskill's report is that trials are often too slow in coming on and in wending their way to a conclusion. Many of his recommendations are designed to shorten both processes, and thus to reduce the cost.

My hon. and learned Friend said that I was right to be cautious and that is probably true, but I hope that the House will not be in any doubt about our determination to pursue this analysis and to put into legislation in the next Session some changes that may be controversial, but which will be immensely important. I hope that no one thinks that, because we are being cautious and are not leaping to immediate conclusions, we shall not take the earliest possible opportunity to tighten the noose around fraud.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Are deficiences in the present legal system preventing police from bringing prosecutions from fraud?

Mr. Hurd: I am not quite sure what point the hon. Gentleman is on. Roskill shows that the legal and administrative machinery in this area is creaking—I have acknowledged that frankly—and he puts forward proposals for making the machinery in both areas run more smoothly.

Mr. Kaufman: The Secretary of State cannot be allowed to get away with giving the impression that the Government have become crusaders against fraud. Apart from the reaction on both sides of the House to the proposal for the abolition of the right to jury trial in complex cases, the right hon. Gentleman's statement wraps in rhetoric a failure to respond positively to a single one of the specific proposals by Roskill, whereas the Opposition have already called on the Government to adopt several of the specific proposals that we support.

This belated Government action would never have come about without the strong pressure from the Opposition — from both the Front Bench and Back Benches — over a prolonged period. When the Government show the determination against fraud that the Labour party has shown, we shall begin to take them seriously.

Mr. Hurd: I think that the chronology on the record contradicts what the right hon. Gentleman has said. Certainly, we are crusaders against fraud. I had hoped to carry the right hon. Gentleman with me, but after his first intervention I doubted whether that would be possible, because he seemed to be lukewarm about the matter and anxious to make small points. I hope that his second, more angry, intervention suggests that he is also a crusader.

Statutory Instruments, &c

Question put,

That the draft Local Loans (Increase of Limit) Order 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c. —*[Mr. Maude.]*

Mr. Walter Harrison (Wakefield): No.

Mr. Speaker: Does the right hon. Gentleman have the support of 20 hon. Members?

Mr. Harrison: I have not checked.

Mr. Speaker: The Question is, as on the Order Paper.

Question agreed to.

Leasehold Reform

4.14 pm

Mr. Gareth Wardell (Gower): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 to prevent the establishment of further leasehold agreements in residential properties; to establish formulae for the calculation fo the price for the purchase by tenants of their existing tenancies held under leasehold agreements; to extend the provision of legal aid to tenants exercising their rights under the 1967 Act and under this Act; and to establish freedom of choice for holders of leasehold tenancies to obtain insurance from the company of their choice.

In his famous Limehouse speech, David Lloyd George said that the residential leasehold system

"is not business . . . it is blackmail".

Despite considerable improvements effected by the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 and some additional amendments under the Housing Act 1980, the estimated 1·5 million leaseholders in England and Wales would maintain that Lloyd George's observation is as true today as it was in 1909.

The leasehold system is archaic, iniquitous and inequitable. Leasehold tenure is essentially a landlord versus tenant relationship. Therefore, it will always be incompatible with the rights of home ownership, which we associate with being free from intimidation and having security of tenure, freedom of choice relating to our home and, eventually, full rights of home ownership.

A ground landlord buys a freehold for perhaps £300. On site is a house for which the owner paid, say, £30,000. The home owner pays the landlord ground rent of perhaps £30 a year, but the power of the landlord is disproportionate to the interest that he has purchased in that property. In return for allowing a home to be on his land, the landlord can insist on an amazing number of restrictions and obligations from the tenant.

Rules governing internal and external decoration and care of gardens, for example, are common, and many home improvements require permission and approval. Home extensions may involve an extra layer of fees, payable to the landlord for him to examine the plans and determine what work may or may not be carried out.

The home owner is not free to choose the policy or the company which will provide insurance cover. The insurers are nominated by the landlord, who in most cases receives what amounts to a considerable profit bonus from the commission payments.

Last year, one of my constituents forgot to sign the cheque for the ground rent payment. Within the three weeks that it took for the landlord to return the cheque, for my constituent to sign it and for the landlord to record payment, my constituent had received a notice from the landlord informing him that certified bailiffs had been instructed to distrain goods for the £25 ground rent plus £7·50 costs.

Leaseholders are not protected by section 147 of the Rent Act 1977 and ground landlords do not have to get a court order to distrain goods. That sort of harassment, the fear of infringing conditions in a lease and the lack of control and choice over matters affecting a home, which has been bought, are central to the need to abolish the leasehold system.

If a leasehold home owner infringes any of the conditions of a lease, the landlord can cancel that lease. On cancellation or normal expiry of the lease, all the buildings and property on the plot revert to the landlord. As the report of the Building Societies Association on leaseholding states:

"An Englishman's home, if held on Leasehold, is his landlord's castle."

I am sure that the same is true of the Welshman's home.

My Bill would prevent any new leaseholds being created and prevent any trading in leaseholds except between existing ground landlords and their tenants. The Bill would also establish a fixed formula, on a sliding scale, for assessing the purchase price of freeholds. Firm proposals for such a formula already exist, drafted by the Labour party in 1979, for reform of the 1967 Act. A fixed formula will stop the present common practice of landlords plucking a purchase price from the air.

Under the Bill, flat leaseholders would be offered full ownership by adopting a system similar to the strata title system, pioneered in New South Wales, which is working well. Such a system would not be too difficult to incorporate into British law. It would have advantages for individual flat owners, and it is consistent with the new movement by housing associations and housing trusts towards co-ownership of blocks of flats, which will enable improvements to be made to the national housing stock.

The relationship between the leasehold valuation tribunals and the Lands Tribunal would be changed. The South Wales Leaseholders Association has discovered that if a landlord loses the decision of the leasehold valuation tribunal, the landlord asks for a complete re-hearing of the case on appeal to the Lands Tribunal. Although a tenant can probably afford a hearing at the leasehold valuation tribunal, he cannot afford the costs of the Lands Tribunal, which are all too often out of proportion to the amount of money involved. My Bill would make appeal to the Lands Tribunal relate to points of law only, which is normal in other tribunal systems. Such a change would be fair to both sides.

My Bill will allow leaseholders of houses to purchase their own insurance cover. It will give to ground landlords the right of annual inspection of the policy and a certificate of paid premium. Such a system would undoubtedly work better to protect both parties' interests without undermining anyone's rights and consumer choice.

The provisions are an amalgam of the many attempts to introduce legislation and the recommendations calling for action to deal with the most serious problem of leaseholders. In another place, the noble Lord Evans of Claughton introduced the Leasehold Reform Bill which would have simplified the enormously complicated 1967 Act. The Leasehold Flats Reform Bill, introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser), was followed by the Co-ownership of Flats Bill, introduced by the hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams). Almost a year ago to the day, my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) presented the Leaseholders (Choice of Insurers) Bill. During the past two years the Building Societies Association, the Law Society, the National Consumer Council, the Welsh Consumer Council, the South Wales Leaseholders Association and the Office of Fair Trading have called for reform of one, or several, aspects of the leasehold system. The Nugee committee report is expected shortly and it will also have recommendations on the topic. It would appear that well researched and reasoned reform is possible and timely.

During the past two years hon. Members representing South Wales have, without exception, received representations from constituents who are leaseholders about harassment and pressure from unscrupulous ground landlords, perhaps no more so than my hon. Friend the Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies). We agree that constituents are being harassed and made to feel insecure. We assume that is because the landlords wish to pressure the leaseholders to purchase their leases on the landlords' terms. We have been helpless to stop those practices because the landlords are not acting illegally. When Parliament cannot protect people from the law, it is time to change the law.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gareth Wardell, Mr. Ron Davies, Mr. Alan Williams, Dr. Roger Thomas and Mr. Tom Clarke.

LEASEHOLD REFORM

Mr. Gareth Wardell accordingly presented a Bill to amend the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 to prevent the establishment of further leasehold agreements in residential properties; to establish formulae for the calculation of the price for the purchase by tenants of their existing tenancies held under leasehold agreements; to extend the provision of legal aid to tenants exercising their rights under the 1967 Act and under this Act; and to establish freedom of choice for holders of leasehold tenancies to obtain insurance from the company of their choice: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 14 February and to be printed [Bill 57.]

Orders of the day

Financial Services Bill

Order for Second Reading read

Mr. Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

4.25 pm

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Leon Brittan): I beg to move, that the Bill be now read a Second time.

The City of London and the financial services sector as a whole comprise one of Britain's most successful industries. It provides jobs for a million people. In 1984, it generated overseas earnings of over £6 billion. It provides the finance for new investment and new ventures on which our prosperity depends.

Last year, for example, new issues of stocks and shares listed on the stock exchange raised £6·2 billion – money which was invested in industry and commerce, leading directly to the creation of new jobs. Those resources are available because the City of London is the repository of the savings and investments of millions of ordinary people. It is our responsibility to ensure that those people can have confidence in the good practice and honesty of those who do business in the City. That confidence is all the more important with the increasing competition between the financial centres of the world.

If the City of London is to remain a leading centre, then there must be no doubt about the integrity of its institutions, because once that doubt takes root it is only too easy for the customers of the City to take their business elsewhere.

This is all the more important at a time when the City is experiencing major changes. I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) whose agreement in 1983 with the chairman of the stock exchange opened the way for those changes to take place.

For those reasons the Government have been determined to take comprehensive and firm action to deal with financial fraud and, at the same time, establish an effective and flexible regulatory framework in which the City can operate.

The Financial Services Bill is one of the most important measures to achieve these objectives, but it is, of course, only one of a range of such measures. They include the Companies Acts of 1980 and 1981, which strengthened the powers of investigators and increased the powers of the courts to disqualify directors for misconduct, the Insolvency Act 1985 which built upon the Companies Acts by making disqualification of directors for wrongful trading easier, the Green Paper on extradition which contained proposals designed to make it more difficult for offenders to escape the consequences of their actions by going abroad, and the banking White Paper which will increase the requirements for disclosure of information, thus helping to detect fraud at an earlier stage.

I especially welcome the recent report of the fraud trials committee chaired by Lord Roskill, on which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has made a statement this afternoon. As he has made clear, the report contains many important recommendations on ways in which the conduct

[Mr. Leon Brittan]

of the investigation and prosecution of fraud, and the subsequent conduct of criminal proceedings, can be significantly improved.

In addition, the Government have already announced significant increases in the resources available to deal with the investigation and detection of fraud and other malpractices, including the provision of a further 195 people in the parts of the DTI dealing with this. So let there be no doubt of the Government's determination to take the most vigorous action against fraud wherever it occurs.

Having said that, I should like to make it clear that I do not believe that the City of London is riddled with fraud. The overwhelming majority of the people who work there are honourable and hard-working men and women who are extremely anxious that the wrongdoers should be brought to book. Anyone who suggests otherwise risks doing enormous damage to the reputation of the City, which would be wholly unjustified and damaging to the country as a whole. While I believe that the Financial Services Bill is a valuable contribution towards the elimination of fraud, its primary purpose is much wider than that.

It is right for me to pay tribute to the work of my predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and of my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher). It was their White Paper on financial services in the United Kingdom, published in January last year, which laid the foundation for this Bill. I am only sorry that my right hon. Friend cannot be here to see the work he started come to fruition, and I am sure all the House will wish to join me in sending him best wishes for a speedy recovery.

The primary purpose of the Bill is to establish a framework of regulation which will provide effective protection for investors while at the same time promoting an efficient and competitive financial services industry in the United Kingdom. At present, the rules governing conduct in the City are based on legislation passed over 40 years ago. Inevitably, they are inadequate to meet today's needs, but the effect of the Bill will be not just to bring the law up to date and extend its coverage to include a wider range of investments; it will also establish a new and flexible system of regulation capable of responding to changing circumstances and dealing with new problems as and when they arise.

Of course, no system of regulation can or should remove all risk to the investor. If he makes a foolish decision, on the basis of adequate disclosure, then he cannot look to any regulator to make good the losses from his own misjudgment. It is for him to bear the consequences. But it is legitimate for an investor to expect that those who do business with or for him are fit and proper persons to do so, and that they are subject to rules which protect his interests as an investor. It is to meet that expectation that the Bill is designed.

Under the terms of the Bill, anyone who carries on investment business in the United Kingdom will require authorisation to do so, or, in very limited and special circumstances, specific exemption. That power of authorisation and regulation will lie with the Secretary of State. To do business without authorisation will be a criminal offence, carrying penalties of fines and imprisonment. Contracts made by the business will be unenforceable.

The Secretary of State will also have powers to apply to the court for an injunction to ban a person from carrying on investment business without authorisation or to seek a restitution order requiring investors to be recompensed for any loss that they have suffered as a result of the improper conduct of that business. That last power is a new and powerful weapon, the existence of which will be a major deterrent against misconduct and the exercise of which can provide effective redress for a wronged investor.

For the first time, the Bill provides a comprehensive definition of investment and investment businesses and it is estimated that there may be as many as 15,000 businesses which will require authorisation as a result.

As well as those already covered—

Mr. Alan Howarth (Stratford-on-Avon): On the definition of an investment, to which my right hon. and learned Friend has just referred, he is, I am sure, aware that some anxiety is felt about the definition in schedule 1 of "Long term insurance contracts". Will he undertake that, in Committee, the Government will be willing to reconsider that point to see whether the schedule, as drafted, may not treat as investments some pure protection policies on which potentially no profit or loss could arise, such as, for example, renewable accident and health insurance policies?

Mr. Brittan: Of course, we shall look at that and any other points. Towards the end of my remarks I shall be saying a word about the Government's spirit and general approach towards the Bill in Committee.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Does the Secretary of State accept that a person who invests in a syndicate at Lloyd's is an investor and that what he places is an investment? On that basis, in the light of all the scandals that there have been over past years, why should Lloyd's not be included? Is it not true that if the Bill is passed as it stands, it in no way affects Lloyd's?

Mr. Brittan: I shall be coming to the subject of Lloyd's later.

It is the belief of the Government that the task of regulation of businesses of the kind I have been asking about can most effectively be conducted by those who have direct experience of the financial services industry and who are in close touch with developments in the market.

The Bill therefore enables the Secretary of State to transfer the majority of his powers to one or more designated agencies, made up of providers and users of financial services who will have the knowledge and expertise to ensure that investors' interests are being properly looked after.

The chairman and members of the agency will be appointed jointly by the Governor of the Bank of England and the Secretary of State.

However, powers will be transferred to the agency only if the Secretary of State is satisfied that the agency's rules will adequately protect investors and are in compliance with the principles contained within the Bill and that the agency is prepared to enforce them.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): My right hon. and learned Friend has referred to the appointment of the chairman of the designated authority. He said that that appointment will be made jointly under the schedule by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Governor

of the Bank of England. Does he think it right that the Governor of the Bank of England should have an effective veto over the appointment and discharge of the chairman of the designated authority over an investment rather than a banking industry?

Mr. Brittan: In view of the broader role of the Governor of the Bank of England in relation to the City, it is a reasonable requirement that he should be enabled to do that jointly with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. I was going to say that the transfer of functions will itself be subject to parliamentary approval

If the Secretary of State is not satisfied that the agency to which powers have been transferred is continuing to meet the criteria set out in the Bill, then he will, once again subject to parliamentary approval, be able to resume those powers either in part or in total. We believe that those arrangements will ensure the proper level of accountability of the designated agency.

Some have suggested that it would have been better to establish a statutory commission; but in doing so they have singularly failed to identify any benefits which our proposals do not already provide. Those who argue for such a system should specify precisely which powers they say are present in a fully statutory system, but are absent from ours and would make our system more effective. I challenge them to do so in the debate. We should proceed from glib labelling to precise proposals. A statutory commission of the kind suggested would lack the advantages of the practitioner-based system that we propose. Its remoteness from the market place and lack of first-hand expertise would make it cumbersome and bureaucratic and unable to react swiftly to changing market needs. Our system enables rules to be made quickly and flexibly by a body which can count on the personal commitment of those it regulates to high standards of conduct, because such a body has been proposed and will be financed by them.

None the less, it is important not to exaggerate the difference between what is proposed and the creation of a statutory commission, for the designated agency will itself be operating within and be controlled by the clear statutory framework set out in the Bill.

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): Clause 104 provides that the Secretary of State must consult the Director General of Fair Trading about any rule changes. Does my right hon. and learned Friend consider that that obligation is sufficiently wide, or should the Secretary of State have a much wider obligation to consult other than merely with the Director General of Fair Trading?

Mr. Brittan: In the context of that provision, it is a reasonable requirement because it relates to the relationship between the areas of policy covered by the Director General and the rest of the Bill's structure. I believe that the requirement is reasonable, but I have no doubt that it is a matter that will be considered in Committee.

There will be two further measures to ensure public accountability. First, the Bill will establish a financial services tribunal to which a business or individual will have the right of appeal against the agency's decisions. The tribunal will be chaired by a lawyer appointed by my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor and will have two other members appointed by the Secretary of State, one of whom will be appointed for his or her relevant practical experience. The tribunal will investigate and report on the cases referred to it and the agency will be bound by its findings.

The second further measure of accountability will be a requirement that the agency submit an annual report which will be laid before Parliament, and will, of course, be open to the House to debate. Although the Bill provides for the possibility of more than one designated agency, the House will be aware that the Securities and Investments Board and the Marketing of Investments Board Organising Committee have announced that they intend to merge to form a single body. It had always been the intention of the Government that this opportunity should be open to them, and I welcome their announcement.

Once designated, the agency will itself be able to authorise a fit and proper person, individual or corporate, to carry on investment business. It will also have the power to withdraw or suspend authorisation in the event of breaches of the rules occurring. The regulatory powers at the disposal of the agency are designed to enable firm and speedy action to be taken to protect investors' interests. They are also hard-hitting and extensive.

Let me outline just some of the powers available to the agency for the protection of investors. It will be able to investigate any authorised business; and it will be able to impose restrictions on the kind of investment business done by any person it has authorised. It may require assets to be kept in the United Kingdom; and it may appoint a trustee to control the assets of an authorised business. It may issue a public reprimand as to a person's misconduct; it may seek injunctions to restrain businesses from breaching or continuing to breach a rule; and it may seek restitution orders for the repayment of losses suffered by investors through a breach of the rules.

Taken together, the range of these powers is just as extensive for the protection of investors as those of the Securities and Exchange Commission of the United States of America. What is more, they will be backed by the criminal law and the full range of criminal sanctions, including fines and imprisonment. It will be a criminal offence to try to induce someone to enter into an investment agreement by making a false or misleading statement, or to engage in any course of conduct which deliberately creates a false or misleading impression of the price or value of an investment.

It will be an offence, except in limited circumstances, for any person who is not authorised to do so to issue an advertisement inviting people to enter into an investment agreement. It will, of course, also be a criminal offence to continue to practise investment business once authorisation has been withdrawn.

As I have said, the Bill provides that the Secretary of State may transfer functions to the agency only if he is satisfied that the rules the agency proposes will afford investors an adequate level of protection and comply with the principles set out in the Bill. These principles draw substantially from the requirements of the common law of agency. Some deal specifically with the new potential conflicts of interest which will arise when dual capacity trading on the stock exchange is permitted from 27 October this year. More generally, the principles include requirements that the rules governing all investment business must promote high standards of integrity and fair dealing.

The rules must also impose a duty that businesses must act with due skill, care and diligence in the provision of

[Mr. Brittan]

investment services. They must make proper provision for the disclosure of interests in, and facts material to, transactions or advice, as well as requiring an authorised business to subordinate its interests to those of its clients, and to act fairly between clients. They must require proper records to be kept and be open to inspection, and they must ensure that there is due regard for the circumstances of clients and that provision is made for the protection of clients' money and property. They must also make the best possible provision for compensation in the event of default by an authorised business.

If the rules are broken, an investor who suffers loss as a result will be able to make a claim against the business; but, to help him avoid having to go to the courts, the agency will have the power to set up an ombudsman or arbitration scheme to resolve disputes. This statutory framework, under which practitioner-based regulation will operate, is designed to promote the highest standards of investment business and deter fraud. It is in the interests of everybody who does business in the City that it should succeed.

Many, if not most, investment businesses may obtain authorisation by joining one of the practitioner-based self-regulating organisations which may be recognised by the agency under the terms of the Bill. Self-regulation has been shown to work, and work well. The stock exchange is living proof of that fact. Self-regulation does not mean relying on people's consciences; it means judgment by one's peers. The scheme proposed in the Bill is in no way a soft option. It will work because it is in the interests of those who will be charged with carrying out that it is seen to do so.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Will my right hon. and learned Friend clarify to what extent the agency will have the power to ask an auditor to divulge information that he might otherwise consider to be confidential to his clients?

Mr. Brittan: As my hon. Friend perhaps knows, a consultative document was recently issued, and it is designed to explore and consider the way in which the relationship between auditors and the regulators can develop to meet precisely the problem that he has rightly identified.

To qualify for recognition, a self-regulating organisation will have to satisfy the agency that its rules and procedure for enforcement provide investors with a level of protection at least equivalent to that provided by the agency. If a recognised self-regulating organisation fails to continue to meet the criteria for recognition, the agency will have the power to apply for a court order directing the self-regulating organisation to take the steps necessary to ensure compliance. Alternatively, the agency will be able to restrict the types of investment business regulated by the self-regulating organisation concerned, or, indeed, remove its recognition altogether.

This deployment of self-regulating organisations is not some revolutionary and untested idea. Indeed, both the American Securities and Exchange Commission and Commodity Futures Trading Commission make increasing use of self-regulating organisations to regulate investment businesses. Some investment businesses with a wide range of investment activities may have to join several self-regulating organisations or even choose to be directly authorised with the agency for some of their activities. Some may also provide banking services, be registered as a building society or be separately authorised as an insurance company under the Insurance Companies Act 1982. Both the Financial Services Bill and the proposed new banking Bill will lay down the boundaries of the two regulatory systems and provide powers to enable those boundaries to be swiftly adjusted to meet the needs arising from the creation of new financial activities.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman confirm that in this Bill there will have to be a certain amount of tightening-up with respect to, insurance commissions paid to professional persons such as solicitors, accountants and estate agents? Very often the consumer—the purchaser of a house or the person who takes out a policy—is unaware of the exact amount of commission paid to professional persons.

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman will be aware of the provisions relating to investment on behalf of the professions and the requirements for the regulation of that activity. Those represent an adequate and important new protection.

The Building Societies Bill and the Financial Services Bill contain powers to enable information to be disclosed to other regulators. The Government intend to enlarge the scope of the powers in the Financial Services Bill to enable information obtained under the Banking, Companies and Insurance Companies Acts to be disclosed to other specified regulators in appropriate circumstances.

I now turn to the position of Lloyd's.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): While everyone recognises the importance of the licensing of insurance companies, can the Secretary of State say whether or not a rumour that is going around, that the proposal is also to license individual insurance salesmen, is correct? There is some worry that it may give them some sort of spurious respectability. It would also lead to a great deal of administrative cost, which might not necessarily be of advantage to the consumer.

Mr. Brittan: We are awaiting proposals on that very point from the MIBOC. No decision has been taken. Of course, the administrative considerations to which the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) has referred must be weighed against any advantage that may be seen from the extra protection from the registration or licensing system. I certainly have not reached a conclusion as to where the balance of advantage lies.

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): Under the Bill, a self-regulating organisation will be approved by the Securities and Investments Board, which will be able to look at the organisation's rules before approving it. However, it may emerge that some rules need to be changed because they are not working, but the SRO is not willing to change them because it does not suit it to do so. Is it right that the SIB has no power to enforce the change of rule but only a power to disband the whole organisation? This is rather like a nuclear weapon. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman clarify that point, to which we shall probably return in Committee?

Mr. Brittan: I am happy to do so. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) is not

entirely right. The agency will be able to apply to the court for a compliance order. By that mechanism the SIB can deal with a situation in which the rules are felt to be inadequate.

As this is an important point, I should like to explain why we have reached that conclusion. The SROs will only work in the way we want if they attract people of calibre, integrity, experience and knowledge. They will attract such people only if they are allowed to operate in an independent way. None the less, the SROs must not be immune from investigation if something goes wrong. If the SIB, or its successor, is allowed to intervene directly and change the rules, that would undermine the balance between the SIB and the SROs to the detriment of the system as a whole. If a third party in the form of a court is interposed to consider whether there has been adequate compliance with the requirements, that balance would be maintained. There is no question of the SROs being able to disobey the requirements and face only the prospect of disbandment or disavowal. Equally, the SIB is equipped with the real power to intervene if it thinks it is appropriate to do so.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Surely the right hon. and learned Gentleman's argument can be reversed—the SIB will attract people of quality and calibre only if it has the power to do things that are important. Would it not be better to give the SIB that reserve power to order the changes and also to protect the rights of the SROs so that they can appeal through the courts if they feel that the law has been overturned? In other words, one would have the presumption of action on the part of the SIB rather than the SROs.

Mr. Brittan: As the hon. Gentleman has fairly put it, it comes down not to a fundamental difference of principle——

Mr. Ashdown: Yes, it is.

Mr. Brittan: No, not of principle. It is a question of where the balance and onus shall be in terms of invoking the courts. It is right to say that if it were done the other way, it would be the SROs that would go to the courts. I think—and I believe that those who have heard my recital on the SIB's powers would agree—that the powers given to the SIB are so substantial that there is little risk that anyone would think that the SIB was an insubstantial body. I think that the balance in the Bill is right.

Hon. Members will know that on Friday I announced that I had decided to set up an inquiry into the regulatory arrangements set up at Lloyd's under the Lloyd's Act 1982. It might be useful to give a little of the background. Hon. Members will recall that in 1980 Lloyd's sponsored a private Bill to reform the constitution of the society. The Lloyd's Act, as it became, created the council of the society and provided for extensive new byelaw-making powers. The council since then has been setting up an extensive and far-reaching new system of regulation. This is a continuing process that is not yet complete, but Lloyd's has already made over 40 new byelaws.

It was shortly after the Act was passed that the facts relating to events in certain Lloyd's syndicates began to emerge — events, of course, occurring before its enactment. Lloyd's has investigated, or is investigating, these and other events under its new machinery, and some of these matters are, of course, currently being examined by the Director of Public Prosecutions. It is, none the less, natural to ask whether, in the light of events, even allowing for the fact that they occurred before the passage, let alone the implementation, of the Lloyd's Act, any further regulatory action with regard to Lloyd's is necessary.

The Lloyd's Act 1982 does two things. First, and of paramount importance, it protects the interests of Lloyd's policyholders. It is buttressed in this by the Insurance Companies Act 1981. Secondly, it regulates the interests of members of Lloyd's the people who provide the capital for insurance business and stand behind the insurance policies.

Distinguishing between those two aims is a tricky problem. The problem is awkward enough for life companies, which are covered by the Bill. Hon. Members will have noted the complex provisions of schedule 8, reconciling investor and policyholder protection. But it is a relatively easy matter there — investors and policyholders are the same people, while in Lloyd's they are different. That is why I have grave doubts as to whether this Bill is an appropriate instrument to cover Lloyd's, even if it were decided that further protection was necessary and that protection had to be of a statutory character.

Because of the genuine concern that has been expressed about Lloyd's I am setting up an independent, full and rigorous inquiry. This will assist me in reaching a final judgment about whether further action is necessary. As the Prime Minister and I have already clearly stated, we will not hesitate to take whatever action we conclude is necessary. This inquiry should in no sense be interpreted as an indication that the Government have concluded that the arrangements currently in place at Lloyd's are defective.

I am pleased to be able to announce that Sir Patrick Neill, currently vice-chancellor of Oxford university and chairman of the Council for the Securities Industry from 1978 to 1985, has agreed to chair the inquiry. I shall announce the other members very shortly. I shall ask the inquiry to consider whether the regulatory arrangements set up at Lloyd's under the 1982 Act provide protection for the interests of members of Lloyd's comparable to that proposed for investors under the Financial Services Bill. The report will be published, and I aim to have it by the summer.

I turn to some other specific points in the Bill. Members of certain professions—accountants, solicitors, and so on—carry on some investment business incidental to their profession. They are already subject to the discipline of their professional bodies, and the Bill will allow those bodies to obtain recognition, subject to meeting the same standards of investor protection as are required by the main regime.

The Secretary of State will be able to prevent a financial firm from any foreign country from doing business in Britain if United Kingdom firms are not given access to that firm's home market, equivalent to that provided by the United Kingdom. The Bill's provisions on reciprocity of access will extend to banking and insurance as well as to the investment sectors. The Bill recognises the importance of investment exchanges and clearing houses in facilitating investment transactions and providing investor protection and contains provisions for their recognition.

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): Has my right hon. and learned Friend seen a report prepared by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors on the unitisation of property, which advocates a single property unit? In effect, this enables multiple ownership in a single property by the small investor. Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that, if implemented, that would have the effect of diverting valuable resources to inner city renewal and urban decay? Does he also agree that, if the unitisation of property were a feasible proposition, it might involve amendment of the Law of Property Act 1925 and the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958? Will my right hon. and learned Friend undertake in Committee to look at these recommendations to ascertain whether they can be implemented?

Mr. Brittan: I have seen the report to which my hon. Friend refers. It is not free from difficulty, but I am sure that we will want to look at it further.

The Bill also provides a special regime for the application of competition policy to the financial services sector. It reforms the regulation of unit trusts and other kinds of collective investment schemes. It brings together under one statutory roof scattered provisions on public offers.

It replaces the Stock Exchange (Listing) Regulations 1984 and provides a more satisfactory framework for the implementation of the three European Community directives on listing. In particular, there will be a general duty on those responsible for an issue to disclose all information reasonably required by a potential investor. If they fail to do so or supply false information, they will be liable for damages to any investor suffering loss as a result.

The Bill gives the Secretary of State a new power to appoint inspectors to investigate possible insider dealing. The inspectors will be able to question people on oath and require papers and documents to be produced. The Bill also extends the offence of insider dealing by Crown servants to other public servants.

There are three further specific provisions which the Government intend adding to the Bill in due course.

First, in the light of comments on our consultative paper about auditors, we shall propose amendments to enable auditors of investment businesses to have a dialogue with the supervisors of those businesses. In particular, auditors will be expected to report to supervisors when there is a public-interest in disclosure—for example, because of suspicion of fraud.

Secondly, it is intended to facilitate the formation in the United Kingdom of open-ended investment companies.

Thirdly, we shall propose amendments to the Bill to restrict the Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act 1977 to non-investment insurance business, so as to leave room for the emergence of a new institutional structure to regulate life insurance intermediaries.

This Bill is complex and highly technical, but it is also important.

Sir John Page (Harrow, West): I am extremely grateful that my right hon. and learned Friend has referred to the Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act, which is known, nationally and internationally, as the Page Act. There is a rather serious point here for the smaller registered insurance brokers who already have to pay fees as registered brokers under the Act and who, if they went in for life insurance and so on, would have to pay additional fees under this new Bill. Could my right hon. and learned Friend in his kindness think of some way in which this doubly harsh wind might be tempered to the shorn lamb?

Mr. Brittan: I would certainly like to look into the point. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising it. I am only sorry that parliamentary convention prevented me from giving the legislation the title that it justly deserves.

It would be absurd to put forward this Bill, which, as I have said, is a complex and highly technical but also important one, on a "take it or leave it" basis, and I shall not do so. We will listen carefully to the views of hon. Members and to points put to us by practitioners and investors. In general, I believe that the balance in the Bill is sound, but we shall respond constructively to what is said during its passage. The Bill will, I believe, provide our financial services industry with a regulatory framework as comprehensive as it is modern. By this legislation we can ensure that both the reputation and the competitiveness of the City are preserved and, indeed, enhanced.

I commend the Bill to the House.

5.3 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which fails to provide, through the means of an independent, self-standing commission, a clear and direct statutory framework for City regulation, which fails to bring within its provisions some City institutions, particularly Lloyd's, which are most urgently in need of effective supervision and regulation, and which fails to provide to the supervisory authorities the powers which are needed to prevent, detect and punish City fraud."

The need for legislation to deal with fraud in the City and associated institutions is uncontested in the House. We have seen over recent months and years fraud on a scale and to a depth which has caused great and justified concern not only throughout the financial institutions but throughout the whole country. Legislation of this kind, therefore, is long overdue. I do not propose at this stage, however, to go in detail through the complex provisions of many parts of the Bill. That is a task which can be undertaken in a much more effective way in Committee.

Nevertheless, it is important at this stage, before the House decides whether or not to give approval to the shape of this legislation, that we face up to some important and controversial issues which arise from the form in which the Bill is couched and from some of the decisions that the Government have taken. We have covered this area to some extent in a number of earlier debates on the White Paper, and points were made on these occasions about the scope of the Bill. I do not think that the Government have deviated very much from the proposals that were contained therein.

A great deal of the Bill is unexceptionable because it results from the recommendations of Professor Gower, many of which were sensible; these have been incorporated in the Bill. I do not object to the concept of authorisation which lies at the heart of the Bill, but, as our recent amendment makes clear, we believe that there are three important qualifications to be made, three important faults in the way in which the Government are approaching this matter.

The first is the decision on what to include and what to exclude; the second is the technique of enforcement, the

whole question of whether there should be an independent commission or whether it should be left to the so-called self-regulating organisations; the third is the question of bringing to book people who are found to have transgressed the laws which Parliament has passed.

On the first point, I find it frankly incredible that at this stage, after what has happened, Lloyd's is to be specially excluded from the provisions of the Bill. We have seen more fraud in Lloyd's in the past two or three years than I hope took place in the whole of its previous history. We saw, for example, £39 million disappear with Alexander Howden, £38 million disappearing in the Minet Holdings affair——

Mr. Brittan: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. and learned Gentleman so early in his speech but I wonder if he could identify which charges he is making in relation to the past two or three years, which is what he said.

Mr. Smith: They have come to light in the past two or three years. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] We are exhibiting already, it seems to me—or rather the Secretary of State is exhibiting—very great care, before we even get into the question of Lloyd's, to make sure that we are absolutely accurate in what we say. Of course that is fine. I ought to take exactly the same care. He knows, however, perfectly well what I am referring to. He knows about the major scandals that took place in Lloyd's and if he wants me to go into more detail I will be glad to do so, of, for example, the Peter Cameron-Webb syndicate, where something like £130 million has disappeared.

The Minister knows perfectly well that there are people who practise at Lloyd's — some of them have responsibility for this so-called self-regulation — who have had to be brought to book for the way in which they carry out their affairs. Anyone who can speak so blandly about the merits of self-regulation, after having seen what some of these self-regulators have done in their own interests, is someone who is not taking a grip of the realities of the situation.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West) *rose*——

Mr. John Smith: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman. I am quite happy to give way to all the apologists of Lloyd's, of whom the hon. Gentleman is, no doubt, another.

Sir Anthony Grant: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that it was precisely because many of these major scandals were known and because Lloyd's had not the power to deal with them that the 1982 legislation was enacted — and strongly supported by Opposition Members?

Mr. John Smith: It is a touching tale, is it not? All the time that they were really panting to deal with the problem, they did not have the powers in place. Now that they have the powers in place, of course, we can all relax. But that is not the general feeling in this community, and there is still justified concern about the affairs of Lloyd's.

This is a concern which has not diminished with the departure of the chief executive of Lloyd's, whose appointment to that position, I think, lessened the fear that many people have had; the circumstances of his departure are such as to raise once again these very questions about whether Lloyd's can be trusted to look after its own affairs.

There is also the question of the Inland Revenue investigation into Lloyd's, one of the largest ever undertaken by the Inland Revenue. While these two matters, both of which have occurred in very recent times, are fresh in the memory, I do not think that the community will be as easily satisfied as the Secretary of State and his colleagues are.

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North): On the answer that he gave to my right hon. Friend who was, with me, a sponsor of the 1982 Lloyd's Bill — since then, I myself have become a member of Lloyd's — what the right hon. and learned Gentleman should be seeking to show is that any of the scandals that he is talking about have arisen in respect of events post-1982, that the council of Lloyd's today does not have the power under the Act to deal with such scandals as have appeared or that there is any negligence or complacency on the part of the council of Lloyd's in dealing with those matters. I submit that there is no such thing and that it is up to the right hon. and learned Gentleman to establish that that is the case.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would you ask hon. Members who are members of Lloyd's and who intend to speak or intervene in the debate to disclose that interest, notwithstanding whether or not any declaration is made in the Register of Members' Interests? I am sure that it is within your memory that, when the Register was established, clear advice was given that when hon. Members who held an interest spoke or intervened in a debate they should disclose that interest at the time, and not rely on the Register of Members' Interests to declare that interest.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): The practice of the House is clear. Hon. Members who take part in a debate and have a direct pecuniary interest in the matter under debate should declare that interest. As the hon. Gentleman has rightly reminded us, every hon. Member is obliged to declare his interest in accordance with the rules of the Register of Members' Interests.

Mr. Smith: I was asked whether I was satisfied that all was well at Lloyd's, and whether I was prepared to accept its assurances. *[Interruption.]* It is some time since the question was asked, and it was not clearly phrased. Its general import was that I should be content with assurances which appeared to be emanating from Lloyd's. I have already made it clear that I felt considerably disturbed at the departure of the chief executive, and no new chief executive appears to have been appointed.

Mr. Keith Best (Ynys Môn) *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I wish to make progress. I am willing to be fair and to listen to all members of Lloyd's and all Tory Members with pecuniary interests, but it will hold us up if I do not reach the heart of the debate because of their obsession with Lloyd's.

Mr. Best: I am happy to declare an interest as a member of Lloyd's. The right hon. and learned Gentleman will accept that, if anything, members of Lloyd's have an interest in Lloyd's being included in, not excluded from, the Bill. Does he accept that the successor to Mr. Ian Hay Davison will serve on precisely the same terms? That has been made absolutely clear. Does he further accept that the information contained in early-day motions tabled assiduously by his hon. Friend the Member for Hackney,

[Mr. Best]

South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) is known only as a result of the investigations carried out by the council of Lloyd's, as at the end of those investigations matters are made public?

Mr. Smith: Following the departure of Mr. Davison, Lloyd's had to give certain assurances that his successor would have the same powers, but I do not know whether the chairman of Lloyd's offered them willingly. There seemed to be some dissension about the matter. The fact that some controversy existed over the role of Mr. Davison's successor did not make people feel easy about the whole position.

Mr. Foulkes *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I shall give way to my hon. Friend because, whatever else he is, he is not a member of Lloyd's.

Mr. Foulkes: Can I urge my right hon. and learned Friend not to give way to every member of Lloyd's on the Tory Benches? It will delay the debate, because there are 52 Tory Members who are members of Lloyd's. That may explain why Lloyd's is not included in the Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Irrespective of the number of members of Lloyd's in the House, I hope that interventions will be limited and brief because many hon. Members wish to take part in the debate.

Mr. Smith: I hope that some members of Lloyd's will feel that they have made a sufficient contribution already by the interventions which I have permitted them to make.

The reason for a so-called inquiry into Lloyd's which was announced on 10 January was because the Second Reading of the Financial Services Bill was today. The Secretary of State was so anxious to announce an inquiry that he had not even organised the chairman by the time he announced the inquiry. It was imperative that he had something in place when he came to speak on Second Reading. It is nothing more than a transparent device to pretend that the Government are truly worried about Lloyd's.

The press notice which the Secretary of State issued at the time is a giveaway. He explained that the inquiry would consider whether the regulatory arrangements at Lloyd's provided protection comparable to that provided in the Bill, and immediately said that the inquiry

"should in no sense be seen as indicating any conclusion by the Government that the arrangements at Lloyds were defective."

No sooner had he announced the inquiry than he rushed to assure Lloyd's that it did not imply that Lloyd's arrangements were defective. That hardly shows the anxiety which a Secretary of State who is determined to eradicate scandals would exhibit. Therefore, our function in Committee will be to table amendments to remove the exclusion of Lloyd's from the Bill.

It may be that the inclusion of Lloyd's would require special measures, in which case all those involved should provide them. Lloyd's should be included within the scope of a Bill which seeks to regulate financial institutions. If the Government do not give way on the matter in Committee — they show little sign of doing so — the seriousness of their resolve to introduce this new legislation will remain in doubt.

The Secretary of State said that there was merit in self-regulation, but he did not seem to want to go far down that road because he said that some powers would be similar to those which exist in countries with independent statutory bodies. We argue for an independent statutory body primarily because it is independent. The trouble with too much self-regulation is that it can be turned too easily to self-protection. Regulation should be based on an independent commission, as it is in most countries in the western world which have supervisory systems. The Labour party has advanced that view for more than 10 years, and I have noticed recent converts to that proposition.

The problem with the Government's proposal is that recent happenings have caused a loss of faith in the capacity of some organisations to regulate themselves. We are told that, while there may be merits in an independent commission, it would inevitably be legalistic and bureaucratic; the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States is referred to. We do not necessarily need to follow the United States' experience, even if there is any truth in the allegations, and I am not sure whether there is.

First, there is no question but that in the United States people are much more interested in litigation for its own sake than we are. Secondly, life in the United States is complicated by the existence of federal and state legislation working together. That inevitably means that any supervisory body must be more complex than it would need to be here. I do not believe that any conclusion adverse to an independent commission in the United Kingdom can be drawn from the United States' experience.

It would be much simpler and clearer to move towards an independent commission. It may not be popular with those who are to be regulated, which seems to be the main reason why the Government have moved against it, and it may not be popular in the City, but, with respect to the Government, that is not important. The question in the public interest is: which will provide the more effective system of regulation?

The Labour party is not alone in advancing that view, although it has advanced it for longer than any other body that has commented on the whole question. On 18 October 1984 a *Financial Times* leader about financial services' legislation stated that the proposals put forward in the White Paper were

"only in skeleton form: the flesh and the muscle have yet to be filled in. The preliminary verdict, though, is that the Government would have done better to take a deep breath and go for an independent statutory agency."

I have also recently noticed that Sir John Nott, who was Secretary of State for Trade in one of the recent Conservative Governments and who is now a figure in the City — actively involved in another matter which concerns the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister —believes that the time has come when it is necessary to have an independent commission. There is a growing body of opinion within the City itself that the most effective way in which to approach this matter is through an independent self-standing commission. The failure to take that step forward is one of the crucial omissions of the legislation.

Mr. Brittan: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell me in what way the body which he has in mind will be more independent, more free-standing than

the Securities and Investment Board, jointly appointed by the Governor of the Bank of England and the Secretary of State?

Mr. Smith: It would be independent and would not be dependent for finance on the organisations which are to be regulated. The point about a self-regulating organisation is that it springs from the bodies which are to be regulated; they finance the organisation and are bound to have a heavy influence on how it goes about its affairs. It would be possible for the cost of the operation to be——

Mr. William Cash (Stafford) *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I hope the hon. Gentleman will sit down. I have given way extensively. I must be allowed to develop my argument, particularly in response to the Secretary of State's intervention.

The financing of these bodies is important. I am not suggesting that the cost should be borne by the taxpayers. There are other ways in which those concerned could provide the money. The fact that it is done in its present way is bound to raise some suspicions. *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members can titter and grimace but they must remember that, to people outside, they look like people defending special vested interest. The interest of this side of the House is to take account of the proper public interest.

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Smith: I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman. I do wish that we had decided to televise the House of Commons. If this debate were on television the public would be able to see the vested interests ranged against me. Almost all the Conservative Members who have intervened have a special interest in the context of this legislation.

Another major omission from the structure of this Bill is that it does little in the process of enforcing the law. We may have a detailed and comprehensive system of law but unless it is enforced properly, there is little point in having the laws on the statute book. We have been told that extra bodies will be provided for the Department of Trade and Industry investigation branch. More people will be provided at the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The more there are the better. Certainly there is a need for more people to be engaged actively in the detection of fraud which exists in the City.

We know perfectly well that the Conservative party has been content for years to live with the system wherein the detection and the prosecution of fraud in the City was done in an especially lax manner. It is staggering to contemplate the fact that not one criminal prosecution has arisen from the Lloyd's scandal. If the Government gave this the sort of priority which they give to other matters then something would have been done years ago. I remind the Secretary of State of the enthusiasm that has been shown by members of the Government for the detection and prosecution of fraud in the social security system. We have had campaigns by Ministers; one Minister who is no longer with us, his services dispensed with by the electorate at the last election, made a name for himself with his constant obsession with social security abuse. The right hon. and learned Gentleman's Parliamentary Private Secretary has a close knowledge of these matters, and indeed might be called an accidental beneficiary of the electorate's wisdom on that occasion.

The report of the Public Accounts Committee of 7 November 1983 states that there are 5,500 staff engaged in anti-fraud activities. These 5,500 people find out frauds, which are estimated to cost the Department of Health and Social Security £190 million a year. All the social security fraud which is detected and prosecuted is equal to the sum in the major Lloyd's scandal. There are only a handful of people dealing with the whole of the City but thousands are committed to the social security system. The Government constantly tell us about the problems of law and order in our society. The Government tell us of the virtues of the short sharp shock treatment for offenders. I wish that the Government would think of a short sharp shock for some of the offenders in the City; they would benefit greatly from that approach to their misdemeanours.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): A long sharp shock.

Mr. Smith: I stand corrected by the percipient hon. Gentleman. A long sharp shock is what is required for some of the offenders to stop them practising their trade to the detriment of fellow citizens.

If the Government are at last coming round to do something, belatedly and unenthusiastically, about prosecution of fraud in the City and the financial institutions, they are doing so because of mounting public concern and pressure and because they know that they cannot hold the line any longer. Like the Establishment in dealing with all radicalists, they will retreat in the face of the popular demand for something to be done. There is nothing like the enthusiasm which there should have been from any Government who are possessed with a real concern to bring fraud in the City to book. This legislation avoids some of the controversial matters which should have been tackled by the Government. The time for the Government to be bold has never been more ripe because of the changes to which the Secretary of State referred and which will occur on 27 October this year, the so-called "big bang".

The Secretary of State presented the arrangements that were made between his right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) and the stock exchange as some carefully planned imaginative change for the future. It is nothing of the kind. It was a hastily cobbled deal to exclude the stock exchange from the restrictive trade practices court. It will bring about a series of changes that will alter the face of the City and which the authors of the agreement had not the slightest conception would occur when they entered into it. The character of the City will change fundamentally. Formal institutions will own stock exchange members; the previous divisions of the functions of the stock exchange will be obliterated. Inevitably there will be large international financial conglomerates. There will be organisations offering a complete range of financial services.

It is bound to be a period of change, a period of depersonalisation as institutions become conglomerates. The old boy system, in which people adhered to a code, cannot be maintained when these old boys are taken over by foreign financial interests. There will be new people, new systems. In these circumstances, the time was never more ripe for an independent commission which could tackle these mighty institutions and not have to depend upon some consensus among the petitioners. The

[Mr. Smith]

commission should be able impartially to enforce the law passed by Parliament and have the capacity and weight to take on the mightiest of the financial institutions.

Mr. Alan Howarth (Stratford-on-Avon): The right hon. and learned Gentleman earlier mentioned that for ten years the Labour party has taken the view that there should be some statutory self-standing independent commission. Many I ask him why, when the Labour party was in government, it did not introduce such a system?

Mr. Smith: As the hon. Gentleman will probably remember, the last Labour Government of 1974 to 1979 did not have a working majority. That apart, the approach taken by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) when he was Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection and I was Secretary of State for Trade was that the stock exchange should be referred to the restrictive trades practices court. It was a perfectly sensible and intelligent policy.

The incoming Conservative Government after 1979, and Sir John Nott as Secretary of State for Trade, adhered to that decision. The Stock Exchange was knocking at the Secretary of State's door shortly after that election asking for that reference not to be made. He took the view that the Government should adhere to the Labour Government's policy. I and my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook were constantly asked by the Stock Exchange not to refer it. Now that the reference has been removed and we live in completely different circumstances as a result of the deal struck with the Stock Exchange, that argument which always had merit, is essential.

There has also been change with new technology, the speed with which money can be transferred, the internationalisation of decisions and a 24-hour market in every corner of the world. Trying in those circumstances to approach the formidable task of ensuring that the law is observed and administered when it involves some of the most powerful institutions in the world and there is only a ramshackle self-regulating orgainsation to do it is not satisfactory. We need a powerful and independent body. It should be the task of such a body to bring offenders to book. At the moment, all that happens is that reports are made by the police or other organisations and sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

It seems that a fairly relaxed view is taken about whether prosecutions should be made. Many factors are taken into account, such as the complexity of pursuing the offender and the length of trials. Rich people can influence the decision whether to prosecute by threatening that, if they are prosecuted, the authorities will have a long and complex task on their hands. The same is not true for social security claimants, who are got into court very smartly. The powerful and the rich, because they can complicate the process, can almost buy themselves immunity from the process of prosecution while having all the rights that the law confers on them.

I am all for simplifying the procedure, if possible, to ensure that we get specialist officers. It will not do any longer for a sergeant in the Metropolitan police to be given the task of bringing to book some of the most devious minds in society. In today's Britain, however, they are given a pretty free hand to make as much money as they can. All these things can be done, and I hope will be done, but they would be strongly reinforced by an independent body with some clout.

With modernised markets and as a result of the "big bang", the case for an independent commission is overwhelming. One reason why the Government do not share that view is that they do not want such an effective institution as those who are to be regulated are, by and large, the Government's supporters. Such people are doing well at the moment. Industry has declined and unemployment has soared but the new rich have been created — people who manipulate money rather than produce goods. They have benefited from tax changes introduced by the Government and the near-elimination of capital taxation in successive Budgets. They have benefited from the special treatment afforded to high earners in Budget after Budget. They have benefited, too, from a society which admires prowess in making money. Such a culture is being fostered by the Government.

We have seen, however, that people who get rich quickly are not moderate about pursuing further riches. On the whole, the reaction to getting money easily is to try to get even more money even more easily. There is no doubt that the standards in some financial institutions have been affected by the climate that I have described, which has a great deal to do with the Government's economic and social approach.

The Bill provided a chance to do something effective. That chance has been missed. We shall do our best to improve the Bill, but I am sorry to say that an inauspicious start has been made.

5.34 pm

Mr. Patrick Jenkin (Wanstead and Woodford): My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State referred to our right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit). I echo what he said when wishing him well. I rang up this morning to find out how he had come through his operation. I am told that he has come through well and is making good progress.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) talked rather more rubbish than we are accustomed to hearing from him. It is right to remember that Professor Gower was asked to make his report in 1981 and that Lord Roskill and his committee were established in 1983—before many people outside had heard of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). The suggestion that the Government have taken an interest in the problems of fraud only in response to public disquiet in the past few months scarcely bears examination. The right hon. and learned Member rather demeaned the character of the debate with his peroration in that regard.

I know that many others wish to speak so I shall confine my comments to the Bill, Lord Roskill and Lloyd's. I warmly welcome the main thrust of the Bill. My right hon. and learned Friend described it as practitioner-based regulation within a statutory framework. I listened to the Opposition spokesman carefully and I am still at a loss to understand what he hopes to achieve by setting everything in a framework which he describes as a statutory commission—a rigid statutory commission.

I suppose that it would be full state regulation run by people appointed by Ministers and under the detailed and continuing scrutiny of the House. That would be wrong.

The reasons are well stated in a recent speech by the chairman of the Stock Exchange who summed it up admirably thus:

"The statutory process is too slow to recognise abuse, too exact in its interpretation of permitted behaviour, and too slow in dealing with offences—if it gets round to doing it at all. If you do not believe me, look at what has happened to insider trading since it became a statutory offence or at the poor record of regulation of dealers in securities directly licensed by the DTI. Changes in the law, furthermore, take too long to be enacted."

In my discussions with people in the United States who are accustomed to operating in markets there, it was made abundantly clear to me that, if they were starting afresh, they would go for a system precisely such as is in this Bill. They would not wish to repeat their mistakes and go for a full statutory system.

London has remarkable financial markets in which practitioners have shown great skill and a talent for innovation and flexibility that has served the country well. Markets need to be able to respond quickly to new needs, new technologies and a new climate. The regulatory system must be able to respond quickly as well.

I spent last weekend in a Group 2000 conference—an Anglo-Japanese group that was set up a couple of years ago by the Prime Ministers of the two countries. One of the subjects that we discussed concerned the differences in access to the financial markets in London and Tokyo. It was said that more than 40 Japanese banks have set up to do in London what they are not allowed to do in Tokyo because it is over-regulated. We urged upon them reciprocity, so that British financial institutions could go and take advantage of the business that is to be done in Tokyo; but the lesson was not lost on our Japanese friends that an over-regulated market is one which actually drives business overseas. If regulation is too rigid and heavy-handed, it fails to allow new businesses to develop and new products to be marketed and these will go to our competitors and not to ourselves.

Therefore, I support the main structure proposed by the Government—if I might so summarise it, supervised self-regulation. As the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East said, there is a mass of detail which will require careful scrutiny by both Houses. I think that this will be helped greatly by the document published before Christmas by the SIB entitled "Regulation of Investment Business—The New Framework". I make it very clear that I would support one board rather than two, together with the idea of combining the self-regulating organisations so that there are as few of them as possible to minimise what are obviously the complex problems of conglomerate businesses engaging in a series of separate markets. However, I hope that the extent of the direct regulation by the intermediary body, the SIB, will be as limited as possible and that every effort will be made to devolve the maximum authority to the self-regulating organisations to carry out the day-to-day running.

It is because the SIB has itself to provide for the possibility of it being the direct regulating authority that I think many of the details in that booklet have to be spelt out in great particularity. There is a danger that the intermediary body may itself be too prescriptive and seek to set too standardised a pattern when the very reason for the existence of the SROs is that they are dealing in widely differing markets serving widely differing patterns of investment and therefore needing different regulatory systems. I ask my hon. and learned Friend to say in reply whether even now it might not be possible to have a clearer distinction between the role of the SIB as the supervisory and authorising body and its role when it has to authorise traders direct—that is to say, its function as a regulator.

I wish to say a brief word about Roskill. I listened to the Home Secretary's statement this afternoon. I welcome very much the readiness with which the Government have taken swiftly on board the recommendations of what was by any standards a very powerful committee, which has made a formidable body of recommendations. Much has been done. The fraud investigation group is under way. We heard on Monday from my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General that there are to be increased resources for the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Roskill report shows that a great deal more needs to be done. I simply say to the legal professions and perhaps to some of my right hon. and hon. Friends who are themselves lawyers, that I hope that the legal profession will show the same readiness to recognise the need for change in the legal system in the same way that the institutions in the City of London have recognised the need for change. I agree with the statement made in the leading article of *The Times* on 11 January:

"The public will not forgive the legal system if it obstructs the bulk of the reforms."

I should perhaps say at this point that I am, although non-practising, a qualified lawyer and I have no City interest to declare.

In particular I support the proposal that complex fraud trials should be conducted by a judge in a special tribunal with assessors. I support the proposals for limiting the prescriptive right of challenge of jurors. The argument is a simple one. A clever financial fraudster—and some of these men are very clever—is not being tried by his peers if they consist of people who know nothing of finance or who lack the ability to grasp complex transactions. It may well be that the mass of repeated small frauds are successfully prosecuted, but the big ones are not and that is not satisfactory. It is right that we should look to our procedures in the courts to make sure that we are successful in prosecuting and convicting fraudsters.

The enthusiasm of the Opposition to see more successful prosecutions for large complex frauds may be measured by their readiness to accept the recommendations of the Roskill committee.

I come to my third point, with which the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East also dealt—my concerns about clause 40 and the exclusion of Lloyd's. I am bound to tell my right hon. and learned Friend that this exclusion has caused me some unhappiness. I might add that it did not require the disreputable self-publicising activities of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch under the cloak of the privilege of this House to make us aware of the insurance scandals which have without doubt stained the record of an important and valuable institution.

Indeed, in so far as the hon. Gentleman has indiscriminately mixed well-established facts open to anyone who reads the records of the Lloyd's investigatory tribunals with a welter of personal smears and innuendoes, he may actually—as he has been warned by the City fraud squad—be making the activities of the fraud squad more difficult and the prosecutions which he claims to wish to see less easy to attain. The hon. Gentleman is no different from the sleazier end of the popular newspapers in recycling lurid court proceedings for the titillation of their audience. The only difference is that

[Mr. Patrick Jenkin]

those newspapers are subject to the laws of libel and slander to which the hon. Gentleman, who well understands these matters, has been very careful not to subject himself. It is, if I may say so, a measure of the changed character of the Labour party that some 40 or 50 of the hon. Gentleman's hon. Friends have joined him in his squalid political vendettas.

My anxieties stem from the other end of the scale, and a wish to restore and enhance the reputation of Lloyd's. It is a hugely important part of our invisible earnings—a huge earner of foreign currency. Moreover, at a time when world capacity for general insurance seems to be shrinking, Lloyd's stands out as able and willing to accept growing volumes of business. Indeed, the chairman of Lloyd's told me only a few days ago that it looks as if the amount of business that will be able to be done in 1986 will be no less than 20 per cent. up on that which could be done last year.

I start from the proposition: when all the rest of the financial services are to be subject to a new regulatory regime of supervised self-regulation, why should Lloyd's be an exception? To this a number of answers are given. First, it is said that Lloyd's runs an insurance business and the new regulatory system concerns investment business; any investment management is clearly incidental — indeed, an intrinsic part of the business of insurance. Technically, of course, that is right, but if one talks to any members of any of the syndicates that have suffered in many cases grievous loss as the result of mismanagment of their affairs by the underwriting agents, I think that they would find that argument difficult to accept. I find it interesting that it is an argument on which not many of those active in Lloyd's place much weight. When people enter a syndicate as names, they are making an investment because they see it as a profitable way to invest their assets and they are prepared to accept the risks. They are as entitled to equivalence of protection as any other investors. I think that is the argument. I do not attach much weight to it.

Another argument advanced by my right hon. Friend, which has much more substance, is that Lloyd's already has its own tailor-made regulating system under the Lloyd's Act 1982. That is quite right, and it is also right to put it on record that all the well-publicised scandals happened before that Act was implemented. It is also right — I hope that people outside the House will note this — to give credit to Lloyd's for what has been done since that Act was passed. A great deal has been done, such as divestment by brokers of ownership of managing agents; a new system of investigation and discipline, which has already dealt with many past offenders; new rules for publishing annual financial reports by underwriting agents; and as important as anything else, new rules and a code of practice covering conflicts of interest, thereby ending the damaging practice of so-called baby syndicates.

All that is already in place, and so it will be with other self-regulating organisations. Therefore, I do not necessarily take that as a conclusive answer.

It is also said that, in effect, Lloyd's is already supervised. There are eight external members of council elected by names, and three members nominated by the Governor of the Bank. In addition, there is the independent chief executive who is also a member of council and deputy chairman. All that is quite true and is a great improvement on what went before.

But will not many other self-regulating organisations have external members and distinguished outsiders? Lloyd's might argue that the three nominated members — Sir Kenneth Berrill, Mr. Walker Arnott and Mr. Brandon Gough — might come to see their function as entirely otiose and worthless if Lloyd's was subject to the general supervision of the SIB. I cannot speak for those gentlemen and have not consulted them, but I doubt whether that is so. As I have said, we want to see the maximum devolution of the regulatory function to the self-regulating organisations, and all SROs will want to ensure that they are fully qualified and capable of earning the respect and trust of those whose affairs they will regulate. Therefore, that is not a argument to which I attach much importance.

None of those arguments necessarily rules out extending the system to cover Lloyd's, but I agree that they are not conclusive. It was against that background that we had the announcemept, with six months' notice, of the resignation of Ian Hay Davison, a man of unimpeachable integrity and ability, whom I have known well for more than a quarter of a century. I think I can accurately summarise his reasons for tendering his resignation. He felt that his independence—essential for the proper conduct of his functions — was being compromised by the relationship that appeared to be developing with the chairman and council of Lloyd's, and that he could not continue to perform his crucial task as an independent chief executive as effectively as had been intended when the then Governor of the Bank persuaded the previous chairman of Lloyd's to appoint him. Much has been said and written about this event, and I have the advantage of having had long and separate discussions both with Mr. Davison and with Mr. Peter Miller, the present chairman.

My conclusion—I put this forward simply as my own view — is that the episode is symptomatic of a continuing division of view within the underwriting community at Lloyd's about just how far they are prepared to let the rules be drawn up and administered with the benefit of continuing expert and independent outside guidance. People in Lloyd's obviously want to see Lloyd's above reproach, while retaining the advantage of a market unique in its skills, enterprise and flexibility. That is a wholly laudable ambition which requires the support of this House, and is similar to the way in which all men of integrity in oher markets are ready to be supported by the device of external supervision.

I would go further: I know for a fact that some in Lloyd's would welcome external supervision as demonstrating their determination to be seen to be concerned to put their house in order. Ultimately that is what this is all about, and that brings me back to the Government's role because there is a political dimension.

Ministers have rightly said a great deal—and it has been welcome — to demonstrate their commitment to securing the highest standards of integrity in our business life. We cannot have it said, however unfairly, that those who cheat the welfare state or the Inland Revenue must be pursued with full rigour but that those who cheat in business may be subject to a less rigorous regime. It would reinforce the Government's determination to rebut this

criticism if they were to accept in principle that the system of supervised practitioner regulation should be extended to Lloyd's.

My right hon. Friend has announced an inquiry under a distinguished chairman, whom I have also known for many years, and that will no doubt help to clarify the issues. But in the last resort that cannot alter the political need for the Government to be seen to be doing everything they can to restore confidence in the integrity of our financial markets. I accept that this Bill may not be the right vehicle to amend the Lloyd's Act, but I am quite clear that the extension of external supervision to Lloyd's will have to be done sooner or later. I wish to leave Ministers in no doubt that that is my view.

5.57 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I listened with care to the speech of the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin) and agree with a number of the points that he made. In particular, the right hon. Gentleman made a compelling and powerful case in relation to Lloyd's.

The City—Britain's financial services industry—is a major source of foreign currency earnings, the supplier of finance for our industry—a fact that is all too frequently overlooked—and the place to which individual investors entrust their savings. However, it has recently had its reputation damaged with talk of an infestation of corruption and shady dealings.

Unlike some hon. Members, I do not say that everyone in the City and the City itself is bent, nor will the alliance, like the Labour party, succumb to the temptation of blanket condemnation of the whole of the City as a wicked capitalist institution—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) may object, but I suspect that the whole of the Labour party is not together on this matter, and many members of the Labour party use that rhetoric.

What cannot be doubted is that there is now so much serious concern about crooked dealing in the financial institutions of the City of London that the City's own greatest invisible asset—its reputation and probity—is being undermined. Proper protection for investors, particularly after deregulation—the so-called "big bang"—will enhance rather than diminish the City's primacy and reputation. It will also make it possible for those who will seek to use the City after the big bang to do so with confidence.

But as the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford said, a balance must be struck. On the one hand, the investor must be protected, but on the other, those within the industry must also have a framework within which they can operate efficiently. If regulations are too onerous for potential investors, users of the City of London will simply go elsewhere, and Britain will have lost one of its primary industrial assets and a great source of wealth.

We therefore believe that it is right to combine statutory regulation with self-regulation, as generally outlined in the Bill. Frankly, it would be wrong simply to set up a parallel to the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. Such an institution, which appears from the amendment to be what the Labour party wants, would provide a field day for lawyers in that there would always be a squabble about the letter of the law instead of the spirit of the law being enacted. We are in favour of regulation that permits partnership in a framework of statutory power and policing by experienced practitioners. The statutory framework proposed by the Government is too weak and in some areas seriously deficient.

Lloyd's has been referred to by several hon. Members, in particular the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford, with many of whose comments I agree substantially. As a first reaction our view is that Lloyd's should be brought within the scope of the legislation. These are complex matters and we do not have a closed mind on them. *[Interruption.]* Labour Members might like to listen. We are concerned to ensure that something is done about Lloyd's but not to ensure that the purely political rhetoric of the Labour party has primacy. The Under-Secretary of State may enlighten us when he is replying to the debate. There appear to be powers in clause 2 to encompass Lloyd's if that is required. An alternative may be to amend the Lloyd's Act 1982 or to choose another mechanism for cleaning up Lloyd's of London.

We cannot accept complacency over the matter. We do not accept that all is well now as a result of the Insurance Companies Act 1982. The PCW scandal and others occurred before that Act was in place but there is evidence that the PCW scandal was merely the tip of the iceberg and that there are still areas of Lloyd's that cause concern. We do not have to indulge in some of the hyperbole that has been obvious to recognise that. The fact and the manner of the recent removal of the chief executive of Lloyd's, Mr. Hay Davison, give special cause for worry and do not enhance Lloyd's tarnished reputation.

We are prepared to listen to the Government's arguments on what to do about Lloyd's. As some have said, there might be a problem in the Bill over hybridity if Lloyd's were brought within its scope. The Securities and Investments Board, as envisaged, would not have enough power to cope with Lloyd's. Our initial belief is that Lloyd's should be drawn within the scope of the Bill, but we are prepared to judge that issue on its merits and as a result of the forthcoming inquiry, provided that inquiry is not used by the Government, as so often in the past, simply to shelve the matter.

However, we are not prepared to sit idly by and do nothing while the reputation of Lloyd's continues to suffer from rumours of scandal and malpractice. *[Interruption.]* We hear wonderful comments from Labour Members who clearly are driven more by ideology than by good sense. They seem to believe that they are elected to the House of Commons simply to take the dogma out of the last party manifesto instead of using their brains to come to a sensible conclusion about what might be done.

Mr. John Smith: The amusement on the Labour Benches has been caused by the recollection that the leader of the Liberal party only a few weeks ago called for an independent statutory commission such as I have been advocating. Was that his first reaction or is it the policy of the Liberal party?

Mr. Ashdown: I should like to know exactly what the right hon. and learned Gentleman means by the phrase which he keeps using, independent statutory commission. What we are proposing, as is clear from our amendment, is a commission which would indeed by publicly funded; that would make it independent in all senses of the word. We are talking about a commission which should be independent in precisely those terms but would

[Mr. Ashdown]

nevertheless be able to combine statutory and self-regulatory powers. What is wrong about that? When the Labour party spokesman sums up, perhaps he will enlighten us. What does the right hon. and learned Gentleman mean by the all-embracing and simplistic phrase, an independent statutory commission? What does that mean in detail?

Mr. Nicholas Baker: Perhaps I could help the hon. Gentleman. I declare an interest in that I am a lawyer. It seems that the spokesman for the Labour party wants a Securities and Exchange Commission on the American lines because he wants to promote work for lawyers. That is one of his aims. The other, more serious and worse aspect of the motivation of the Labour party, is to knock, as it does frequently, an institution whose overseas earnings in 1984 were £564 million. That is what the Labour party is up to. The hon. Gentleman might take that on board.

Mr. Ashdown: I take that point on board but in the interests of time I shall move on to other points.

In respect of auditors, we wish to see a specific duty laid down within the Bill for auditors to report frauds which they discover in the course of audit. We accept that that would change the nature of auditors' responsibility. However, it needs to be accepted that auditors could and should be a key line of defence against corruption and that they simply cannot in the modern world continue to place themselves in an ivory tower where their only responsibility is to the firm which employs them.

The SIB should have a duty to draw up criteria for membership of, approve and amend rules for, and arbitrate in demarcation disputes between, self-regulating organisations. The SIB should have a reserve power to order an SRO to carry out its instructions. It is interesting and contrary to the arguments put forward by the Secretary of State that Sir Kenneth Berrill, the head of the SIB, seems to take the same view—in other words, the onus should be on the SIB to act independently and others should seek redress if the law has been overturned.

The statutes of each SRO should set out a clear line of responsibility for imposing rules of conduct. There will be a real problem within SROs with cross-membership and lines of demarcation. We need to know who is responsible for what, and where the responsibility lies. In passing, as was also mentioned by the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford, there could be a significant danger in allowing too many SROs to exist. A careful eye will have to be kept on that.

We wish to see assurances that there will be a strong lay element in the managing bodies of the regulatory authority and the SROs. The appointment and removal of all SIB board members, who should be full-time, and appointments to the chairs of SROs, should be made by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

Those are realistic and significant proposals for strengthening the statutory framework within which the City of London can put its house in order. We are prepared to see the statutory framework tightened further if the City is unable to ensure that the self-regulatory element is properly enforced and effective.

As to enforcement and prosecution, the resources allocated by the Bill to investigating and prosecuting fraud are wholly inadequate and will remain inadequate even with the additional resources announced by the Secretary of State on 10 January. Hitherto the failure of enforcement has been notorious in quantity, quality and attitude. The quantity of enforcement is a function of the resources which the Government must commit. That has been touched on by other right hon. and hon. Members. In regard to attitude, no system of regulation will work unless the City wants it to and makes it work. That is why we support a degree of self-regulation.

Achieving the necessary quality of enforcement will not be easy. That is why wiser heads in the City see clearly that unless the brightest and best professionals are working in enforcement, it will not succeed. Indeed, second-rate enforcement paradoxically encourages the wide boys. Therefore, we urge the Government strongly to accept that the enforcement arrangements should satisfy some key criteria. First, enforcement and prosecution functions should be separate although they should liaise closely. Secondly, we are opposed to an enforcement agency which is part of the Department of Trade and Industry because we are unimpressed with the Department's record in policing the City. That should be the exclusive responsibility of a separate enforcement arm of the SIB. The enforcement function should be conducted by experienced practitioners in the City. Service of that nature should be seen as an enhancement to a general City career.

Thirdly, prosecution should be handled by a special unit of the independent service with exclusive responsibility in the same area. Finally, in so far as the police are necessarily involved in some matters because of their special statutory powers, the City fraud squad should be retained but should be considerably enhanced. As with all other aspects of the Bill, there will be boundary problems, but bestowing exclusive powers in respect of the City on this triumvirate of special units offers the only chance of that success in enforcement without which the rest of the Bill is so much hot air.

These regulations should be seen at best as putting the City on probation. If they prove inadequate for the protection of individual investors following deregulation, they will have to be reviewed and strengthened. The Bill proposes a system primarily balanced towards practitioner regulation. It may be that, in the light of developments, we move further and further towards transaction regulation. Review and subsequent adaptation are vital. I note that there is a provision for review in clause 99. In our view, the reports rendered under this clause should be subject to annual parliamentary debate.

It is possible to welcome the fact that the Government have brought before us a Bill to reform the City of London, but it is not possible to welcome the Bill as the instrument of that intention. It is inadequate to the great task that it purports to set itself. The City is a vital institution. We have no wish to see it destroyed or so emasculated that it cannot continue to perform its vital function for Britain. We have no wish to see the City hogtied with the sort of regulations that seem to be proposed by the Labour party's amendment. Nor do we accept the apparent complacency contained in the Government's proposals. We shall vote against the Bill tonight to show our view of the inadequacy of the Bill as presented. However, if, as I imagine, the Bill goes through, we shall have to fight to see that the reforms that I have advocated tonight are incorporated into the Bill in its final form.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I call any more hon. Members to speak, I point out that I have a long list of hon. Members who wish to take part in the debate. I have no authority to limit speeches to 10 minutes, but I hope that hon. Members will bear in mind that such a limit on speeches would be helpful to their colleagues.

6.12 pm

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): I listened carefully to the speech made by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), which I think showed the impact of the new alliance politics in Britain, because if I understood correctly, the hon. Gentleman seemed half to accept the Bill. No doubt, in an hour or so's time, his colleague in the SDP will half reject the Bill and then we shall have some idea of what conclusions to draw from their joint speeches.

I congratulate Ministers in the Department of Trade and Industry on the way in which they have presented the Bill to the House. As the House knows, my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) worked hard on the White Paper during his stay in hospital. Unfortunately, he is again in hospital as we debate the Second Reading. I know that he will appreciate the wishes of the House, and the remarks of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State in opening the debate.

I am completely unbiased — I think that this is a splendid Bill. I shall make two comments about its content. One issue that has come up in every speech, not least in that of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) is why there is not an SEC. Another issue, which has also been mentioned by all speakers so far, is the importance of the enforcement powers in the Bill.

The critics of the Government's proposals opt for some kind of independent statutory commission, SEC or whatever, and this is seen in the Opposition's amendment. However, this has more to do with familiarity with a Government-type commission in these circumstances than with a rejection of the statute-backed self-regulation proposed by the Bill.

Many of us are familiar with the SEC in the United States and similar organisations in Canada, Australia and elsewhere. We are also aware that most EEC countries have heavy governmental control in investment business and insurance. Therefore, it seems to me that the reflex reaction in a debate such as this is to opt for something of the same sort — a Government-controlled commission. However, our needs are different. The United States, Canada and Australia all have federal structures. Therefore, in the case of the United States, Washington needs an agency to apply federal rules and regulations throughout the country. We have no such problem so on that count alone we are different and need to examine the situation differently.

Government regulation in Europe has stifled the development of financial services, not just internally but in the development of financial services throughout the Community. We do not wish to go down that road. Our need is for a system of regulation that builds upon the best that we have at present, and the stock exchange is an excellent example of self-regulation. We have to make the best comprehensive so that it covers all investment business.

It is important, the Bill proposes, that the United Kingdom is subject to a high standard of regulation or, as I would use the term, investor protection. The Bill demonstrates how this can be done without a Government-type statutory body. In explaining the particular system that the Bill proposes, our biggest difficulty is in the use of the words "self-regulation" as if compliance with the new laws and the rules that will stem from them were voluntary.

The Bill makes it abundantly clear that this is not a "take it or leave it" voluntary system. On the contrary, all investment business will have to be authorised by a recognised regulatory body. Therefore, regulation or investor protection in the United Kingdom will be just as compulsory and comprehensive as elsewhere. Perhaps the major benefit of the Bill is that it proposes a system that will be more flexible and therefore more responsive to the needs of fast-changing domestic and international markets —much more flexible and responsive than any type of statutory commission. Therefore, the new regulatory system proposed in the Bill will form a new first line of defence against fraud and malpractice.

I say this because, for the first time, we shall have legislation that requires all investment businesses to be authorised by licence, and because I expect the Securities and Investment Board to introduce stiff audit requirements as part of the fraud prevention process. As a result, the detection of fraud should be enhanced and remedial action should be more immediate. Similarly, complaints from investors should be dealt with more effectively than at present.

It is important to remember that these steps will be entirely additional to the powers that the Government already have at their disposal to deal with fraud or suspected fraud — for example, the powers under the Companies Acts available to the Department of Trade and Industry to appoint inspectors to wind up companies. What matters here—by a happy coincidence, this has already been touched on today by the statement on the Roskill committee — is that the resources available to the Department should also be enhanced to match the powers available in the new regulatory system.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin) pointed out, the Government have already taken a number of steps in this direction, such as the Roskill committee, looking at the receivers in court cases, the rules of evidence in jury trials and so on, which is all part of the process of dragging the legal profession into the latter half of the 20th century.

My right hon. Friend also spoke of Lloyd's. The Government have put a sensible proposition to the House. It is correct to say that the Bill is not suitable for amending the Lloyd's Act. I have been critical of Lloyd's over the past few years, but we need to give it more time—the Government say Lloyd's should have until the end of this year — to satisfy the Government as well as public opinion that it is putting its house in order. To back that up the Government have announced the setting up of an inquiry. That is the correct preliminary step for any legislation that might be necessary in the next Session of Parliament.

Mr. Cash: I hope that my hon. Friend will also accept that clause 43 empowers the Secretary of State to remove Lloyd's exemption, so that if, after the inquiry he has now

[Mr. Cash]

announced, he was not satisfied, he would be able to take the exemption away from Lloyd's anyway. That answers all the points that have been made.

Mr. Fletcher: Another process in the steps that the Government have taken is the passing of the new insolvency legislation that puts greater duties and responsibility on directors. That includes the directors of financial services companies.

In the matter of staff resources the Government need more properly trained and experienced in-house staff to make the enforcement powers work for example, in the Solicitor-General's Office, the Department of Trade and Industry, the company investigation branch and the insolvency services. I welcome the Roskill recommendations and the Home Secretary's statement this afternoon. It is not enough to agree to additional staff numbers. The Treasury must permit the salaries offered to the staff to reflect the market value of the qualified and experienced people that are needed if the Government's attack on serious financial fraud is to succeed.

The Home Secretary referred to the Roskill recommendations for a unified command of fraud investigation. He said that it was being pursued by the Chief Secretary. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will know that the last time that that was pursued within Government the Departments failed to agree which of them should be in command of a unified fraud organisation. I hope that in view of the firm recommendations of Lord Roskill the Prime Minister will determine which Minister, and therefore which Department, should take command of a unified structure. Clearly, Roskill has confirmed that, although the fraud investigation group is only a year old, the present split command is inadequate and requires urgent reconsideration at the highest level.

I support the suggestion to engage experienced professional people on short service engagements. They could be lawyers and accountants in their fifties who are approaching retirement or who can retire early who have had experience of audit work. I am not speaking for myself. My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) is looking at me quizzically. I am not retiring yet. Certainly, there are people with that type of experience who could do an invaluable job in helping to investigate fraud. I think that it is a good idea to offer those short service engagements to those who might need them in the future.

It is important to remember that the Bill is not an emergency measure that has been brought before the House because of stories about alleged fraud at Lloyd's or Johnson Matthey Bankers or elsewhere. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, the origins of the Bill go back to July 1981 when the then Secretary of State asked Professor Gower to undertake a review of investment protection. That excellent report was published in January 1984 and led to the January 1985 White Paper which was a follow-up to the July 1983 decision to remove the barriers to competition in the financial sector. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), who opened the debate for the Opposition, referred to the chummy agreement made between my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) and the stock exchange. That was a view that some people held then. For all I know, the stock exchange held that view. I know that now the stock exchange, among others, realises that there has been a strong blast of competition through all of the City institutions. The Bill has not been prepared in a rush to meet a crisis. It is a more positive measure than recent comments might suggest. It is aimed at giving investors, at home and abroad, even greater confidence in the United Kingdom as a place in which to do investment business. It is aimed at encouraging wider share ownership and bringing share ownership opportunities to every high street in the country. It is aimed at imposing share shops and generally removing much of the mysticism surrounding personal investment. In other words, it is aimed at enhancing and expanding the financial services sector of our economy. I believe that in the Bill the Government are demonstrating their commitment to a proper and comprehensive system of investor protection. The financial sector in the City and elsewhere in the country must make an equally firm commitment if top quality people and financial resources are to be available to ensure the success of the new system. It is only a partnership of Government and industry that can ensure the success of the legislation.

I am glad that Ministers have made it clear — the Secretary of State said so again today — that, while sticking to the principles surrounding the Bill, they will take a constructive view of the opinions of others. With the best will in the world a Bill is inevitably a different animal from a White Paper and many ideas will flow from the City and elsewhere to members of the Committee. I am glad that the Government will be constructive in listening to any proposals that may be made. There are many important details to be discussed in the Bill and all that I can do is wish it every success in Committee.

6.26 pm

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): I will begin by ignoring the inelegant personal abuse of the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin). The answer to that lies in the 800 or so letters and the 50 Christmas cards that I received backing me in the campaign to clear up fraud. The card that I liked most was sent to me by Mr. Peter Middleton who is the permanent secretary of the Treasury. It is a picture of Siena in Tuscany. I believe that Peter Middleton must have known that when I went on my Florentine holiday in the summer of 1985 I was going to spend some time in Siena looking at the banking practices of the Medici in order to compare them with those of the current Bank of England.

The only point that I want to concentrate on is the exclusion of Lloyd's from the Bill. I wish to argue that Lloyd's should be brought within the ambit of the Bill. There are two reasons for that. I believe that the evidence that Lloyd's is prepared to cover up for top people cannot be disputed, and I believe that there are too many people at Lloyd's who do not accept the rule of law. I know that some Conservative Members prefer a general philosophical debate to hard fact, but they will have to listen to a few hard facts. The matter of covering up for top people is important in any society or organisation.

I put down some early-day motions criticising Sir Peter Green, the former chairman of Lloyd's. He responded, as he is entitled to, on Thursday 9 January. His response has caused consternation at Lloyd's because it is unusual for a defendant to point a pistol at his own head, pull the

trigger and blow his brains out. I do not believe that special treatment should be given to Sir Peter Green, and I am therefore calling on Lloyd's to help the House to decide whether it should be brought within the Bill to answer the charges that arise out of his defence. He says that I have been unfair in my criticism of the way in which the Imperial reinsurance scheme works. Members of the House will know that Imperial reinsurance is a non-risk reinsurance policy and that it is a banking policy designed to evade exchange control and avoid taxation.

In the light of that I was astonished to read this sentence from Sir Peter Green, as were many people at Lloyd's to whom I have spoken subsequently.

"We were advised by the brokers that such terms were at least as good and in some cases better than any other similar cover available in the Market. In the circumstances, Imperial was entitled to the interest it retained."

I invite any right hon. or hon. Member to intervene if he wishes. The purport of that statement is that it was open to the directors of Imperial, including the past chairman of Lloyd's to steal the interest on the money in Imperial. That was the basis of one of the charges against Ian Posgate, and of one of the charges in the Brooks and Dooley case, and it is the basis of one of the charges being examined in the Bellew Parry Raven case. It is extraordinary that the chairman now admits to what is effectively theft, and, by my calculations, that theft involves over £3 million.

Lloyd's should make a statement tomorrow on why it has been several years before charges have been brought. Lloyd's should say that it is about to charge Sir Peter Green with theft in relation to the Imperial policy and the interest, with a breach of fiduciary duty and with a conflict of interests. If Lloyd's does not do that, it should give us a public explanation. Is it because there has been an agreement to protect the top person at Lloyd's? That would be scandalous, and every Conservative Member would agree if that were so.

Secondly, Sir Peter Green makes the extraordinary statement: "I have paid the tax, or at least the tax which I have not paid, I am about to pay." However, in the statement he does not say why the chairman of Lloyd's had discussions with two Governors of the Bank of England —Lord Richardson and Robin Leigh-Pemberton — and why eventually he was told that he should step down at the first available opportunity. He has not told the people what the settlement was that he eventually reached with the Inland Revenue about the non-payment of tax and whether it involved hundreds of thousands of pounds or—I use my words advisedly—millions of pounds.

The way in which Sir Peter Green covered for Peter Cameron-Webb over the Unimar scandal and the way in which Lloyd's has carried out no proper investigation into that scandal—I know about the Tuckey inquiry—bodes ill for self-regulation at Lloyd's

There is only one basic question that should have been asked about Unimar. Did Sir Peter Green try to find out who the beneficial owner of Unimar was? If he did, he was dishonest in not revealing it to the names. If he did not try to find out, he was grotesquely negligent in his inquiry and never intended to reach a successful conclusion.

I am told that in that inquiry by Sir Peter Green, he had access to all the papers and asked all the right questions. If he had access to all the papers, he had access to the papers that I have in my possession—for example, the letter from Mr. Banyard to Mr. D'Ambrumenil, dated 5 December 1978. Whether Sir Peter Green read it is another matter. The letter said:

"I have prepared all the documentation in respect of the P. Cameron-Webb Whole A C Q S Treaty for the 1st half of 1978 . . . I disagree that they should be issued and will not add my name to them as I am not satisfied that there is not some element of non-disclosure or misrepresentation in the placing of the Treaty.

Furthermore, by giving the 10 per cent. overrider to Unimar the members of the Syndicate will lose this income which amounts to approximately £200,000. It also appears unrealistic to expect £200,000 net profit to the Syndicate under such an arrangement as, taking an average profit on Treaty business at 5 per cent., this would call for a Gross Premium Income to the Syndicate of £4,000,000.

I have no intention of resigning either from Seascope or the Syndicate as I feel fully justified in my refusal to administer this account until such time as it is put right and handled in a proper professional manner.

Mr. Tucker and Mr. Cole join me in those views and so I believe do Mr. Tobin and Mr. Proctor. Mr. Cole and I could not authorise any of the staff in our Department to process this Treaty in the way suggested by Unimar."

If Sir Peter Green had the access to all the papers that he said he had, he had access to the letter from Mr. Tucker on the day he resigned from Seascope, the company that administered the scheme, dated 30 August 1979. He wrote:

"If it is perfectly legal, why does not Cameron-Webb himself pay the commission (it will probably be in excess of £400,000 by early next year to this Monte Carlo Company). If it is perfectly legal why does Mr. D'Ambrumenil refuse to obtain Bank of England permission and that of the Committee of Lloyd's as I have repeatedly requested?"

If Sir Peter Green had access to all the papers, he had access to this letter from Mr. Tucker to Mr. D'Ambrumenil dated 17 September 1979:

"As you know I have been very concerned about the payments made on your instructions to Unimar in Monte Carlo . . . I was told that the Company's lawyers, Morton, Rose, Botterell and Roche, had advised on the matter and that I could see the advice but, in fact, this has been subsequently refused."

If Sir Peter Green had the access to all the papers that he said he had, he had access to this memorandum from Mr. Tucker, a director of Unimar, in which he said:

"The Treaty was placed on the terms of the Treaty as set out in the papers, notably a 10 per cent. overrider and 2·5 per cent. brokerage. Later I was informed that out brokerage was to be halved and given to a broker called Unimar in Monte Carlo. This was unusual firstly because I had never heard of the company —subsequently I found out that Unimar did not exist prior to the Treaty placement. Secondly, the request came from Cameron-Webb, bearing in mind Lloyd's Underwriters are expressly forbidden to deal with anyone except a Lloyd's broker. Thirdly, no check was made on Unimar and no information given, which was abnormal.

At the next Executive meeting I maintained that the Unimar payments were illegal and required Bank of England approval, and even if this was forthcoming, I doubted that the Lloyd's Committee would agree. Privately this latter point had been confirmed to me . . . I refused therefore to handle the Cameron-Webb Treaty and informed the Board that I was advising the staff in my division to have nothing to do with it."

Perhaps Sir Peter Green was influenced by the letter, dated 24 June 1982, from Peter Cameron-Webb and Peter Dixon, who are spending the proceeds of their ill-gotten gains in foreign countries. It admits that the contract and the treaty never expressed the intention of the parties. It claims that they tried to rectify the terms of the contract and the treaty in 1979 but somehow everyone forgot and it was rectified only in May 1982. The letter goes on to assure Sir Peter Green that the contract and the treaty were always honestly administered.

[Mr. Brian Sedgemore]

Could anyone conduct an inquiry with such background and with such documents, and simply present an oral, not written, report to the Lloyd's committee: "I am satisfied that everything was all right"? At least there must be a prima facie doubt in the person's mind. It is outrageous that Lloyd's has carried out no inquiry into that.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): In the past, has the hon. Gentleman submitted all the documents that he has just read to the House to the Director of Public Prosecutions? If not, the speech that he is now making will make it extremely difficult to bring anybody to trial.

Mr. Sedgemore: I am sure that those documents are and have been made available to Lloyd's.

Sir Peter Tapsell: I asked about the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr. Sedgemore: The point about the Director of Public Prosecutions is that he will want the papers from the Lloyd's inquiry, which has not been held, to process the matter. Whether he will process it quickly, I do not know. The answer is that, as far as I know, he does not have those documents, but I cannot be certain about that.

In an early-day motion, I also asked that the relationship between Janson Green and Cresvale Securities be examined. In Sir Peter Green's defence, there is a document which he supplied, from Mr. Valentine, who is connected with Cresvale Securities. He says that there has been an inquiry into Cresvale Securities and Janson Green. It was undertaken by Lloyd's, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Bank of England. This information was given last Thursday. That is astonishing.

I telephoned Lloyd's and I have also spoken to those who are advising me on these issues. I did not find a single person at Lloyd's who had heard about any of these inquiries. If Lloyd's has conducted an inquiry, what were its terms of reference, when did the inquiry take place, who carried it out, what were the results of the inquiry and where is the report? Similar questions must be asked of the Bank of England. I am sure that the Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will be able to tell us whether the Department of Trade and Industry has carried out an inquiry.

However, my point is this: is it possible in this day and age for three major institutions to carry out an inquiry, but for nobody—I do not know whether any Conservative Members know anything about these inquiries—to know about its existence? Is Mr. Valentine's information false? I believe I am entitled to say to the House that there has not been a proper investigation of the ex-chairman of Lloyd's. Is that the climate which still exists at Lloyd's? Mr. Peter Miller went to the City forum, which I addressed recently, and said that nobody would get an amnesty and that there would be no cover-up. That suggests that there should be outside regulation.

My last point relates to Lloyd's not liking the rule of law. This is a very important point. A number of people said that they believed that they were defrauded by managing agents at Lloyd's. Whether or not they were defrauded is another matter, upon which they can go to law. However, they said that they believed that they were defrauded and they decided to take legal action. When they decided to take legal action, they also decided to change their syndicate. However, when they tried to change their syndicate they could not get into another one. The only reason given for the refusal was that they were taking legal action against their previous syndicate. That is an abuse of the rule of law. Every citizen of this country has the right to go to the courts to try to establish legitimate, legal redress.

When I told people about this they said, "Well, Mr. Sedgemore, you are not telling us anything new. That is widespread at Lloyd's." I am horrified to find that Mr. David Coleridge, who only recently relinquished the post of deputy vice-chairman at Lloyd's, wrote a letter dated 2 June 1983 to a person who has decided to exercise his legal rights according to the laws of England, in which he said:

"However, my dislike of taking any transfer name, who is contemplating litigation with his former Underwriting Agent still remains. I think I ought to tell you also that Three Quays Underwriting Management Limited, (the Underwriting Agency for Non-Marine Syndicate 190—Dick Hazell) has informed us that they would not accept you on their Syndicate through our Agency if you do decide to transfer."

I am told that there are countless—no, not countless, that is an exaggeration, but many—examples of that happening at Lloyd's. If Lloyd's is not prepared to accept the rule of law and to act without fear or favour in relation to top people, that is surely the most powerful argument one can provide for bringing Lloyd's within the ambit of the Bill.

6.44 pm

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Despite your plea, Mr. Speaker, we have listened to a 17 or 18-minute speech from the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) which had very little to do with the Second Reading of the Financial Services Bill. He used those 17 or 18 minutes to continue his sordid, scurrilous attack upon people in the City, although he is absolutely scared stiff to make those allegations outside the House. He is abusing parliamentary privilege. The only comfort that we can draw from this is that even hon. Members of his own party do not agree with him. [HON. MEMBERS: "Name them."]

I welcome the Bill. It proves that the Government have taken the initiative. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher) who did much of the work on the Bill. However, we should be careful not to provide too much regulation. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has already said, the City is an extremely important part of our economy. It represents about £6 billion of invisible earnings. The City also provides jobs for 2 million people. We must treasure this.

However, the Government were absolutely right to introduce the Bill. It provides my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with many powers which he can delegate to the boards. The Securities and Investments Board and the self-regulatory organisations will contain outside members. We must make certain that the SROs and the SIB are absolutely independent and that they do not consist only of members of a particular industry. Any future action that is taken must be swift. In the past there was delay in initiating action on fraud. However, the key factor relating to the SIB is that it should be provided with sufficient teeth to discover whether or not fraud has taken place. It is right to leave it to the professionals to run the SIB provided that

lay persons serve on it, too. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) said that the Labour party has been committed for 10 years to the establishment of a statutory board. Why the Opposition did not establish such a board when they were in office I do not know. If they had felt so strongly that a statutory board was needed, they could have established one.

We must, however, make absolutely certain that no member of the SIB or the SROs can be sued for libel or slander when they carry out investigations of firms or companies. The members of the council of the stock exchange are indemnified from legal action. I understand that the SIB has provided itself with such an indemnity, but the SROs will be doing the work. They will discover whether or not there has been fraud. They must therefore be provided with a similar indemnity; otherwise it will be very difficult to persuade laymen to serve upon them. That applies in particular to the international SRO.

I have to declare two interests. I am a consultant to the Life Insurances Association and to the Commercial Union. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry referred to licensing. I believe that there should be a licensing system for salesmen of life assurance, whether it be straight life assurance or whether it be connected with a pension scheme. However, it should be qualified. That is what happens if one belongs to a profession. Accountants and lawyers are provided with exemption because they have passed examinations. Provided that it is qualified, licensing would solve many of these problems.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Sir William Clark: I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not give way. I am trying to keep within the 10-minute time limit.

Clause 41 seems to deal with commissions; that point should be discussed in Committee. There seems to be a difference in the treatment of agents. Tied agents are exempt persons and I see no reason why they should be treated differently from agents who are not tied. It has been pointed out that, particularly with the conglomerates, it may be necessary for firms or companies to belong to one or more SRO. There may be some administrative difficulty with that, but that is a major point.

In its new form, the SIB needs to be strengthened. One may compare the stock exchange, which has a staff of more than 2,000 people, with the staff of Sir Kenneth Berrill numbering 40 to 50 people. When such a small body takes on such a mammoth task we must ensure that it is properly staffed. The SIB should be able to take swift action. If anything is wrong, immediate action must be taken and the DPP must be alerted. I welcome the fact that the fraud squad is to be expanded.

I also welcome the possibility of recommendations in the Roskill report being accepted, particularly in the case of large frauds. Lay members of a jury in a case that may last a year, a month or two months become lost and baffled by science. Consequently, it might be a good idea to have the tribunal system for large frauds.

We can maintain the confidentiality between client and auditor in relation to the completion of audits. If an auditor qualifies an audit certificate, it should be automatic that he immediately informs the SRO or the SIB. That would not affect confidentiality because, if an auditor should see something out of order in the accounts, he can question the client and explain to him that reference must be made to that matter in the audit certificate.

I am pleased that the regulations will insist on clients' accounts. There is a loophole in the law that allows many companies to take money from the public for investment or from those going on holiday. That money should go into a clients' account until that contract is completed. That would remove the difficulty that exists, particularly in the travel industry, where firms have gone broke or into receivership and the deposits paid by the would-be holidaymakers have been lost. There would be no question of the receiver having a lien on a client's account.

In future there will be a banking supervisory Bill, and the Lloyd's inquiry. The Lloyd's scandals which the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch is so keen to publicise under parliamentary privilege, all occurred before 1982. Since 1982, the Bill has tightened up the position.

I do not think that it is of much moment whether Lloyd's comes under the Bill. That is not a major issue. In view of our reform of social services, the upsurge in the pensions business and the increase in the number of small investors because of our privatisation programme, it is essential that we give maximum protection to ensure that the small investor is safeguarded. I welcome the Bill as a step in that direction.

6.55 pm

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): There is something rather odd in the arguments presented by Conservative Members. The essence of what has been said is that there is something slightly rotten in the state of the City though it is not quite as rotten as my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) implied. Conservative Members say that we do not need to do very much about that. They believe that the Bill, which does not do much, will in the end be satisfactory because we must trust those who created the problem in the first place.

In answer to that, I must state that the Bill is unsatisfactory considering the circumstances and the Government who produced the Bill. The Bill must be considered against an extraordinary background of fiddle and fraud. That might be acceptable to Conservative Members, but ordinary people in the kind of constituency that I represent are aghast and puzzled at what is happening.

The City seems to have shown the ethics of Thatcherism, the spirit of grab and greed and "do it quickly because the country is on a downhill slope" coming home to roost almost like the last days of a decaying empire.

There has been the JMB scandal. On a lending portfolio of £500 million, £248 million was suspect. There is the scandal at Lloyd's—the school for scandals—which has exceeded even its best efforts of the 1970s in the PCW affair with £130 million-worth of losses. Cameron-Webb and his associate made off with an estimated £40 million and no prosecutions resulted. There have been fiddles in the applications for British Telecom shares, with merchant bankers and others making a killing on the applications as well as the killing they were making in fees for their professional services.

Money is being made from the Government's privatisation programme and on top of that there is the frenzy of bids, takeovers and mergers pouring the credit

[Mr. Austin Mitchell]

and money available not into investment to provide for the country's future or into jobs, but into a frenzy of speculation. It is no wonder that there is an aura of sleaze hanging over our financial institutions. That is undesirable.

The Government are trying to legislate, but this Government represent many of the vested interests that caused the problems in the first place. One in seven Tory Back Benchers is a member of Lloyd's. The Conservative party has not been too nice about selling honours in return for contributions to the Conservative party's political funds. That party has not been too nice about selling the country's foreign policy in endorsing star wars in return for the hope of contracts to come — though they are almost certain not to come — from the American Government.

The Government's attitudes and ethics are guiding the legislation and it is no wonder that the legislation is unsuitable. Springing from such a background, the legislation cannot be satisfactory and it is hard to resist the conclusion that the Government do not know what they are doing. They commenced with an instinct to do as little as possible, to give power to the boys, to allow them to regulate themselves and not to disturb them too much. The result is the botched job that is the Bill before us. That botched job attempts to deal with a changing situation which is moving too fast for the Government and which will soon be out of control unless strong action is taken to control it.

The measure is vague and at the same time extremely complicated. It gives power to the Secretary of State on the assumption that he will delegate to a body about which we know very little. That body in turn will delegate powers to SROs, most of which have not been set up and therefore have no experience.

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): The hon. Gentleman has made certain assertions about hon. Members and their connections. At least his hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) had the courage to say who those people are. Will the hon. Gentleman give more details about the assertions that he makes?

Mr. Mitchell: The only assertion I made was that one in seven Tory Back Benchers is a member of Lloyd's. If the the hon. Gentleman is interested he can look that up in the Register of Members' Interests.

Mr. Maples: As one of the one in seven Conservative Members who is a member of Lloyd's, I must say that the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) and his hon. Friends are missing the point. Those of us who are members of Lloyd's are deeply concerned about what has been happening there. The enhanced protection given to members of Lloyd's could surely help us and for that reason we are not standing in the way.

We feel that a designated agency to deal with the securities business in the City of London is not the appropriate statutory vehicle for regulating insurance. The frauds that have taken place in Lloyd's are essentially insurance frauds and if there is an agency to control that problem it should be one to deal with insurance aspects. It should not be confused with the board set up to deal with the business of securities.

Mr. Mitchell: The answer to that is to change the definition of investment and to appoint a special SRO to deal with Lloyd's.

The Government, with their background, are suspect in any decision that they take about Lloyd's. The question that hon. Members who are members of Lloyd's have to answer is whether there should be effective supervision of Lloyd's, given what has been happening there. If they feel that there should be, no doubt they will support our efforts in Committee to get Lloyd's included in the Bill. That would be the most simple, straightforward and direct way to deal with the problem.

Power is delegated to the Secretary of State, who will hand it on to a body of which we know nothing, which will pass it on to SROs, most of which have not been appointed yet, and therefore have no experience, to operate on a principle about which we know nothing and on the basis of powers that they will not have, using regulations about which we know nothing, particularly as regards the important problem of conflict of interest.

In that framework, no one will have power over the SROs and everything will overlap, particularly the jurisdiction of the SROs over the players, many of whom will work under competing jurisdictions.

Finally, the major problem of Lloyd's is excluded from the legislation. It is amazing that Lloyd's has only just required its syndicates to offer a "true and fair" account. Indeed, it was argued that if that requirement were brought in too quickly, 130 of the 530 syndicates would not qualify, because their accounts would not be appropriate.

With all those confusions and gaps, the legislation can only be characterised as typically English, typically complacent and not good enough. The only solution to the problems confronting us is the sort of statutory institution which virtually every other capital market has established. They have institutions regulated by a statutory authority.

Such an institution would fulfil all the requirements in this instance. First, it would be independent and would be seen to be independent. It would be seen to be a custodian of the public interest and of the interests of the small investor and not the custodian of vested interests and those involved in markets. This is not a question of running the prison by allowing the prisoners to take it over; the institution should operate independently and on behalf of the public.

A statutory institution, with a legal base, would have the power to impose its will on the SROs. That is what we need. If the SROs refuse to do what they are asked to do, what will happen? I know that they could be derecognised, but that is the equivalent of dropping an H bomb on them —the ultimate deterrent. That is not an adequate power. We need a statutory authority with the power to impose its will on the SROs if there is a conflict or if they do not move fast enough or cannot cope with the situation.

A statutory institution would have the power to institute prosecutions. The suggested body would not have that power. We need the power of independent investigation and prosecution.

Finally, the statutory authority would need to be strong, because of the uncertainties that lie ahead. We are entering a period of rapid change in technological innovation and in the internationalisation of competition. We do not know what the consequences of the big bang will be.

If we wish to compete, we do not want to have to offer a sleazy, amateur version of Liechtenstein, where we hope to be attractive because regulation is less effective here.

We need regulation to be more effective and we must lead the way in the international harmonisation of regulation which must come. That is why we need a statutory authority.

The consequences of change are unpredictable. We can foresee the domination of the gilt market by two big players, both of them American. What implications does that carry for Government funding? We can foresee the domination of the stock market by big players, with the slaughter of firms and the slaughter of jobs and a takeover by two species of organisation—the international players who are big enough to survive the lean years and the banks, using the profits from their financial business, which has always been operated in a fashion that is harmful to the needs of long-term investment and productive industry.

We need a strong institution with power to take strong stands and to impose its will. If we wish to impose a recognition of the national interest, we must consider who is to be the custodian of that interest in the rush towards liberalisation and a more effective competition.

We must have a strong, effective, independent regulatory organisation with a statutory base. We do not need the confusion, uncertainty and casualness of the legislation.

At one end we are dealing with huge problems of scale and with disciplining and controlling powerful international institutions. At the other end, we need the power to protect the small investor who needs more protection than he is likely to receive from the legislation. It is open to doubt whether the small investor will get enough protection when self-regulation by the ethical wide boys is introduced. We need a strong enforcement agency to provide protection for the small investor.

We also need new rules and it is not clear from the December document on the regulation of investment business that we shall have the firm rules and regulations that the small investor needs. According to that document, even the basic requirements will not be forthcoming or will be introduced only in a half-hearted fashion. It is essential that there should be no cold calling. The document envisages that there could be cold calling, subject to a cooling-off period.

It is also essential that there should be full compensation—or at least 90 per cent. compensation—to investors if an investment business becomes insolvent. In fact, a compensation limit of £30,000 per customer is envisaged.

It is essential that independent intermediaries should have to declare their commission so that anyone who is having policies or investments pushed on him can assess what is in it for the person pushing them and his motives for pushing them. In the December document, that issue is fudged. It seems that no requirement for such a declaration is envisaged.

There is a need for a prominent statement of the cash-in, surrender or maturity values of policies, but it is not clear whether we shall get that requirement. There also needs to be a statement of all charges being imposed; we need a standard statement so that people can evaluate one policy against another. Again, it is not clear from the document whether we shall get that.

An independent investment ombudsman is needed to whom complaints can be referred, so that people can be satisfied that their complaints are being investigated. There has been talk of an ombudsman, but the way that it has been expressed could mean a multiplicity of ombudsmen. Investment businesses must be fully responsible for their salesmen, so that if there are persistent breaches of rules by salesman the company and the salesmen can be disciplined. However, what is envisaged is a simple licensing scheme for salesmen rather than a regulation under which the companies can be disciplined.

The regulations to be made under the Act are unknown and we do not know how they will operate. There is far too much uncertainty. Too little is being done to protect the small investor. There is also uncertainty about how to deal with the big people at the other end of the scale.

The Bill is like so much else that has come from the Government—a limited step. It is a step on the right road that should have been taken years ago, but it comes too late and it does not cover the real problem. The Bill is half-hearted and it is a wasted opportunity. We shall do our best to improve it in Committee.

7.12 pm

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): In a rather woolly speech the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) made one or two good points. His basic premise was wrong, but I share his desire to help the small investor and to ensure that there are strong powers in the Bill. However, when he mentioned honours and star wars, I concluded that he was doing what all of us sometimes must do, which is to respond to the requests of the Whips to keep the debate going from one to one on either side.

I declare all my interests on the register and especially my capacity as adviser to Barclays bank and Bowring insurance brokers. I am not and have never been a member of Lloyd's, which is far too risky for me.

I declare another interest. Many years ago I was a founder member of the wider share ownership movement with the late Maurice Macmillan. In those happier days we had the support of Labour Members, which was very valuable. I am pleased that recently the cause has obtained the support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

I formed the group with Maurice Macmillian because I believe in the spread of wealth and ownership throughout our community. To achieve such a spread, the small investor must be encouraged. However, he will not be so encouraged if he is not adequately protected against those who must bluntly be called crooks. He does not need to be protected against honest risk because that is what investment is all about, but he must be adequately protected against fraud. That must be the fundamental purpose behind the Bill, and it should be the policy of any Government.

I declare another interest. I am a past master of the Guild of Freeman of the City of London. I spent 20 years working professionally in the City of London, of which I am a liveryman. It is immensely sad that the standards that prevailed when I started working in the City have, alas, deteriorated. Far too many flash Harrys attracted to the City are long in aggression and cunning but short in morals. In the City the old saying used to be "My word is my bond." All too often now if a man says that his word is his bond, one would be well advised to insist on taking his bond.

The rewards of fraud are substantial and they make the great train robbery look like minor pick-pocketing. It is one thing to pass a law but it is quite another to enforce

[Sir Anthony Grant]

it. It is vital that the fraud squad and those engaged in enforcing the law should have adequate resources. For far too long they have worked on the man and boy principle. They have worked valiantly and done their best, but the villains have flown too rapidly and easily.

I was pleased to see that in answer to a question on Monday 13 January from my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) the Attorney-General announced increases in resources and in the staff of the fraud squad. I do not know whether they will be adequate. Much more must be done to improve the quantity and quality of those who enforce the law if we are to achieve our objectives. Some fraud is now big business and is on an international scale.

If the Roskill report is implemented, it will be of great value. I believe in trial by jury and consider that it is fundamental to justice. However, there is a good case for considering the report's proposal that complex fraud cases should be heard by a judge and two assessors. The Opposition are justified in saying that many people are prosecuted — quite rightly — for small social security frauds. Those simple cases are easy for a jury to understand, but major fraud cases, where millions of pounds are involved, can be immensely complex and can be made even more complex.

When I practised in the City, the standard defence was to make the case as complicated as possible. Jurors are irritated in the first instance to be made jurors because it interferes with their lives. They are annoyed to discover that it is not a juicy murder or sex case that they can understand. They are angry to find that they have three or four weeks to sit through a monumentally complicated fraud case. If the case is made more complex, the jury will take the easy course and acquit the defendant. The Roskill proposals merit further consideration. I am sorry that they were treated so half-heartedly by the Opposition. When they have had a chance to digest the proposals fully, I hope that they will realise that the Roskill proposals could be a valuable implement to provide a deterrent to the worst fraudsters.

Happily, dishonesty is confined to a small minority, but that small minority does huge damage to the reputation of the City. We must be careful that any legislation is not a steam roller to squash the ants in the strawberry bed. The Government seek to enact the Bill before the big bang in the autumn, which is the revolution whereby brokers, jobbers, and banks will merge and there will be an invasion of foreigners. That is already taking place — notably by Americans with very large purses.

The intention is to enable the City to compete in an increasingly tough international market and to enable us to use the traditional expertise of the City institutions that contribute so much to the British economy. New regulation of new activities is necessary. We cannot have a free-for-all and no one would suggest that we should.

A Securities and Exchange Commission on American lines is sometimes suggested, but I believe that that would be undesirably rigid and would hamstring the City at a time when it needs the flexibility to compete internationally. It is significant that the chairman of the SEC in the United States is not wholly satisfied with his commission. I am not surprised. He is looking with envious eyes at what we are doing. The Government are right to reject that solution.

I do not believe that the Opposition's amendment would do anything to achieve the desired effect. The object is to achieve the right balance, and I believe that the Bill does that. The hon. Member for Great Grimsby should realise that the powers reserved to the Government are considerable should the self-regulation fail.

The big bang or City revolution poses a problem that the Bill does not solve. I wish to put that problem to my hon. and learned Friend who is to reply. It relates to conflicts of interest. I did not catch the remarks made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State about the agency and whether it could lay down principles, but no doubt my hon. and learned Friend will clarify the point when he replies.

As one who took through the Lloyd's Bill in 1982, I find it ironic that the stock exchange, which strongly supported me, as did the House, in separating brokers from underwriting agencies to avoid conflict, has now gone the other way. It has merged brokers and jobbers. That has caused the problem. They are plainly forming the huge conglomerates which will be needed to compete internationally. I am involved with one of them. Banks, jobbers and brokers work together as a conglomerate to compete against big competitors abroad.

There is at law a broker-client relationship of trust. It is one of principal and agent between the broker and the client. However, the jobber at the other end of the corridor might be innocently and honestly making the market itself. There is a possibility that a conflict will arise. We are told that the so-called Chinese walls of the City will prevent any such difficulty. I venture to doubt that, because an aggrieved client may well sue. As I understand it, the Government say that if that happens the courts will resolve the problem and we shall have a body of case law and understand what it is all about.

How can the City wait three years in this competitive business while a possibly vexatious litigant pursues a claim which may well be rejected? We may have to wait even longer if, as someone has suggested, the Law Commission studies the problem of principal and agent. That is a genuine dilemma for those working on the new revolution and trying to make it work well for Britain. I hope that when he replies my hon. and learned Friend will give some reassurance to those people who are anxious about that issue.

A great deal of nonsense has recently been talked about Lloyd's. I repeat that I am not and never have been a member of Lloyd's, but I carried the Lloyd's Bill through the House in 1982. I was then well supported by the Labour Opposition. The Committee, which was most ably chaired by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), scrutinised the Bill with the greatest care and approved it, as did the House, with a substantial majority.

The Bill, which was a private Bill, was scrutinised by the House for a record length of time. Opposition to the Bill came from my hon. Friends who thought that it was too tough and rigorous. The Lloyd's Bill, which was largely an enabling measure, was valuable and necessary to bring Lloyd's up to date—something which had not been done since 1871. Under that measure, Lloyd's publishes new regulations. It has done so almost every week. As far as I can discover, there has been no objection to the new regulations. Lloyd's has also used its new powers to pursue miscreants, all of whose misdeeds occurred before the passing of the 1982 Act.

I believe that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) was right to castigate the scandalous goings on in Johnson Matthey Bankers. However, he has gone hopelessly adrift over Lloyd's. In so far as his allegations are true—and many of them are—they are old hat and have been or are being dealt with. The latest points that he has made would carry more conviction if he uttered them outside the House. While his campaign has done little to help British companies compete abroad, I am sure that we all rejoice that it has helped him in his battle for reselection, about which we are all delighted.

I wish to deal with the suggestion that Lloyd's should be brought within the scope of the Bill. It is probably impractical and certainly premature, but I do not take a rigid view about it. I respect what my right hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin) said. I understood his argument, but he overlooked one rather important point. When the scandals were emerging and my Bill—I call it my Bill—was going through, every attempt was being made by our competitors overseas to knock Lloyd's and to say that it was a scandalous place which was not working and was out of date. When the Bill was passed and we could take action over those scandals, our competitors' criticism was largely muted and Lloyd's business continued happily overseas, to Britain's benefit.

If it is suggested that the 1982 Act and the regulations stemming from it are insufficient, or that Lloyd's was not using its powers adequately, that could have an adverse effect upon our competition overseas and would give the impression that we do not know what we are doing.

Having said all that, no one can suggest that everything is perfect. The right course to be taken, therefore, is the one taken by my right hon. and learned Friend—to set up an inquiry to investigate whether Lloyd's powers are inadequate and are not being handled properly. If that is so, amending action can be taken.

To bring Lloyd's within the Bill would do nothing. It would not give it any more powers or make them more effective than those it already has under the 1982 Act. More powers may be required——

Mr. John Butterfill: Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be illogical to bring Lloyd's into the scope of the Bill without bringing in the remainder of the general insurance market?

Sir Anthony Grant: That is right. That is why I said that it was certainly premature and probably impractical. I agree entirely with what my hon. Friend says.

The Government have adopted the right course. We should judge by uses, not abuses. The overwhelming majority in the City are honourable people contributing to our society and to the British economy. The overwhelming number of people in Lloyd's and the insurance market are honourable and honest, contributing vastly to Britain's invisibles and overseas earnings. Brokerage and insurance contribute well over £1 billion per annum to our invisibles. Lloyd's gives honest and honourable direct and indirect employment to about 83,000 people.

The Bill can be improved in Committee. All Bills can. The Bill is a brave and skilful attempt to steer a course between the rocks of excessive rigidity and the whirlpool of financial anarchy. It should be given a Second Reading as a preliminary to ensuring that London remains the world's financial centre.

7.28 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): We shall have the opportunity to debate much of the Bill's detail in Committee. Those of us who are fortunate enough to be selected by the Committee of Selection look forward to those debates.

I should like to take up one thing that the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) said. He referred to the good old days when one's word was one's bond in the City. The old school tie in Threadneedle street is having to give way under the new arrangements to the stiletto in Shoe lane. Values are changing in the City. There will be a substantial change on 17 October when the big bang takes place and we see a completely new regime effectively taking over many city institutions.

I believe that the contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) to these debates in the past few months has been crucial. On the margin one is bound to be slightly inaccurate—that is the way of the world—but 99 per cent. of the arrows that he has fired since the beginning of his campaign have hit home.

The measure of how successful he has been in his campaign is seen in the antagonism shown by Conservative Members. Ministers, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Back Benchers have repeatedly and systematically set out to attack him and undermine him personally. In the way he has persisted he is serving the public interest and in the end his efforts will be adequately rewarded by way of legislation, whether it is produced by this Government or by the next Labour Government. The demise of this Government will come with the discrediting of free market principles, particularly those being practised in the City.

Mr. Nelson: That is what the Opposition are about.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman says that that is what we are about. It is the business of any hon. Member of this House to draw attention to deficiencies in that area, and if legislative change is required, then that is precisely what we are about. I am glad to see that the hon. Gentleman endorses our position. There is clear evidence that the recent spate of City scandals has done considerable damage to the Government, and unless the Government act to deal with these matters of great public concern, more damage will be done. The Government are caught by a Catch 22. If the restrictions they introduce in the City are too fierce, business will be lost, but if the regime they introduce is too liberal, the Government will lose credibility.

In terms of debate that provides us with the ultimate irony. Modern capitalism, when revealed to the public in its raw, unbridled, unregulated, unrestrained and unattended state, is ugly. It is violent and repulsive to public opinion. That does not necessarily mean that I am in favour of planned economies or extreme economic principles. I believe in a mixed economy, but it has to be a mixed economy based on clear regulation and firm rules which cut out the excesses of those who wish to abuse the legal framework.

In whatever area one looks, the argument today is for intervention. This is non-intervention, and it is pleasing to know that during this debate some hon. Gentlemen from the Government side are courageous enough to stand up and say that they recognise the need for intervention. They

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

understand the need for compromise, and I hope when we go into Committee in a few weeks time we can forge some cross-party alliances with the single intention of strengthening the Bill in the areas of weakness outlined by my hon. Friends and contained in the speeches by hon. Members opposite.

The Bill certainly needs strengthening in its application to Lloyd's. That fact has been recognised by Mr. Stephen Merrett, the chairman of one of our largest underwriting groups. A recent newspaper report said:

"Mr. Stephen Merrett, chairman of one of the largest underwriting groups in the market, has told names on his syndicates that Lloyd's disciplinary rules introduced following the 1982 Lloyd's Act 'have not had quite the effect that we would have liked.'

Mr. Merrett cited the delay in bringing members to account and publicising major investigations as one way in which the new rules are not working fully. He has also talked of 'the extraordinary levity of the sentences in view of the seriousness of the crimes of which people have been accused.'"

He goes on to say:

"Where persons have a responsibility for the unlimited liability of members of the society we believe it to be quite wrong for theft, fraud or misappropriation of one kind or another to be treated as if it were a matter of no great consequence and appropriate only for a temporary suspension."

Those are the words of a senior man in Lloyd's. They are not the words of a Labour Back Bencher, but of a man working daily in the market. He understands how the market works and he is clearly demanding far higher standards. He deserves the support of this House.

It may be that Mr. Merrett was one of those who sat through the proceedings of the Bill in 1982. I remember the night well. I sat in this very place next to my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher). The Benches were packed on the Government side, but what was more remarkable was the crowd in the Gallery. I think it was about 11 o'clock at night and one could not move in the Gallery. A suited army of citizens from the City was there to pay regard to our performance and our proceedings, and they knew what was happening. I believe that many of the people in the Gallery that night knew that the House was being deceived. They knew that the Bill before us would not work and that in the end statutory regulation would be necessary. Perhaps the same gentlemen are here tonight to watch our debate. It may be that there are those among them who recognise the great deficiency that has been thrown up in the last few years.

Sir Anthony Grant: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I will. I know that the hon. Gentleman was here that night.

Sir Anthony Grant: The hon. Gentleman will find that the greatest interest in the Gallery was shown by those who were anxious to see that the powers proposed in the Bill were going to be in the Bill and not defeated by my hon. Friends.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. It is not in order to refer to the Gallery.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am sure I can refer to the Gallery "on that occasion" insofar as I am not referring to it tonight. I do not know who was in the Gallery but I know they were all gentlemen from the City and that they had come to watch our proceedings. They seemed enormously pleased with the work done by my hon. Friend. I remember thinking to myself, "There is something wrong. It cannot be right that my hon. Friend is gaining all this support."

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Why don't you get on with it?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman wishes to intervene.

The Government response to arguments about Lloyd's has been to produce a rabbit out of a hat in the form of an independent inquiry. We are not fooled, because it seems that this decision to produce a rabbit out of a hat was taken only last week. An announcement was made last Friday and built into the statement, as my hon. Friend has said, was a quote from the Secretary of State which in itself set out to undermine the inquiry. The quote said:

"It did not mean that Government felt Lloyd's arrangements for self-regulation were defective."

The Government set up an inquiry and in doing so said that they did not believe the rules were defective. To some extent that could set the terms of reference for the inquiry. Perhaps, within the curious logic practised by the Secretary of State or the Under-Secretary, hon. Members can find some other way of interpreting that statement.

Mr. Butterfill: Does the hon. Gentleman not agree that it would be even more of a rabbit out of a hat if we were to tag Lloyd's on to this Bill without thinking how it would relate to the Bill?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: As I understand it, we could well have introduced legislation with this Bill to deal with Lloyd's. Nothing prevents us from doing that and it would have been in order, so I cannot see the point made by the hon. Gentleman. He may believe that it would require a different approach, but we were in a position to legislate during the course of the Bill to deal with the problem of Lloyd's. I am sure the hon. Gentleman accepts that. The Government are refusing to place on record the fact that something is wrong. They have spent the last 12 months denying the fact that there has been inexcusable activity in various parts of the City. The Government should ask some of their hon. Friends who lost money in Lloyd's. Those hon. Members have only recently been surfacing.

Salaries in the City are another matter of concern. The major expansion in the City is fuelling a pay explosion. Mr. Nigel Halsem, the managing director of the Michael Page Partnership, a City employment agency, says that salaries have doubled in two years in the Eurobond market. He says that it is commonplace for salaries of £50,000 basic and perhaps a further £150,000 commission to be paid. Some people may say, "The best of luck to those who are capable of earning such salaries when they are young men." What about the people in the country who say, "Where is the fairness in those people earning such high salaries? Is it reasonable that they can secure such high income levels through high commissions?"

Recently, a 31-year-old Eurobond dealer moved from a British to an American bank in the City for a basic salary of £62,000 a year with a guaranteed bonus of £100,000 after two years and a possible bonus of £300,000 if he performs well. A 28-year-old went to an American bank for a basic salary of £50,000 a year and a slice of 20 per cent. of the profits that he makes for the firm — guaranteed £250,000 a year. In a typical deal, a 28-year-old analyst earning £35,000 with one firm of City

stockbrokers was lured to another firm under American control for a pay package of £130,000, including incentive bonuses. Those are almost football transfer fees.

Mr. Butterfill: Or SOGAT.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will 27 October and the big bang deal with this? Estimates suggest that large overseas operators are pumping hundreds of millions of pounds into the City to buy up talent. Will salaries fall when the big bang comes? How will the market respond? Will the operators stop this practice, which is referred to as "churning"? Will they start involving themselves in unnecessary transactions simply to boost their incomes on the back of commissions? Some people do not like pay cuts. How does the City intend making up the salaries of those with a high salary expectation?

The role of the banks is another matter of concern. One of the more positive aspects of the attack by the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on restrictive practices in the City was the ending of fixed commissions. Since then, there has been a steady movement of large international financial institutions, including banks, into the City. Will the banks cross-subsidise from orthodox banking to dealings in the City? We know that the fiercest of competition will be in gilts. At the moment, two jobbers have 80 per cent. of the business — Akroyd and Smithers, owned by the bankers S.G. Warburg, and Wedd Durlacher Mordaunt and Co., partly owned by Barclays, another bank. They rely on fixed commissions. Next year, 29 market makers take over. One United States firm has said that it will not make money for at least seven years. I am told that some banks will be in on that market, but how will they pay for it? There seems to be only one possible way to pay for it — to cross-subsidise. Who pays?

Mr. Austin Mitchell: I do, with my overdraft.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend is absolutely right.

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): What about the chairman?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Member for Winchester, (Mr. Browne) knows who will pay. I think that he is a consultant to one of the clearing banks. I am sure that he would want to explain to the House how it intends funding the losses expected in the gilts market. Some of his colleagues seem to agree partly with my suggestion that there might be a high level of cross-subsidy. Unless the banks cross-subsidise, foreign institutions will move into the market to take it over. It is predicted that within a few years gilts will be under the control of foreign institutions. Perhaps some hon. Members would like to intervene to tell me that I am wrong and that that will not happen.

Mr. Dykes: No.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Member for Harrow (Mr. Dykes) does not want to be bothered.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: My hon. Friend is right. All the viable industries and firms that have been put out of production and closed down by the banks will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that their money will subsidise the banks in the gilts market.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What can I add to my hon. Friend's wisdom? A Labour Government will not want foreign control of that market. We will want United Kingdom control. We may well have to act to restore control because of the conditions that have been created.

The role of auditors is of concern. I agree wholeheartedly with the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) in this respect. He referred to his reservations and to the recent Green Paper which deals with the new responsibilities of auditors. The Green Paper states that, in the spirit of deregulation, confidentiality does not prevent disclosure to an appropriate authority where public interest is involved. This would include cases of suspected fraud and any breach of a statutory duty liable to cause significant harm to a third party. The Secretary of State used the word "expect"—so this is only an expectation of the auditors. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that the Government might introduce amendments to deal with this aspect. I hope that, in doing so, he accepts that we should place statutory responsibility on the auditors to report where they find fraud. Under this method of self-regulation, the system does not work.

Auditors that operate under the Companies Acts are subject to two types of control — Companies Act legislation and professional rules of conduct laid down by the institute of which they must be a member. The Companies Act 1985 contains two relevant sections. Section 237 states the circumstances in which an auditor must qualify his report on the accounts. This includes cases where proper account of records has not been kept. Section 393 strengthens the powers of the auditor by making a criminal offence of anything that

"conveys or purports to convey any information or explanation which the auditors require"

which is

"misleading, false or deceptive in a material particular."

The guidelines issued by the accountancy profession are more vague. The guidelines issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in guidance note 1306 on the disclosure of defaults or unlawful acts states:

"It is an implied term of a member's contract with his client that a member will not, as a general rule, disclose to other persons information about his client's affairs acquired during and as a result of their professional relationship"

during an audit

"against his client's wishes. Therefore, where a member becomes aware that a client has committed a default or unlawful act, the member should in principle keep the matter between himself and his client by virtue of the contract. A member who acquires knowledge of the commission of a criminal offence (other than treason), or a default which is a civil wrong, is under no legal obligation to disclose what he knows to a proper authority. There are, however, circumstances in which, in spite of the contractual position, a member may be obliged to disclose information to the authorities or may be free to do so if he wishes".

Then it sets out the circumstances:

"(a) the auditor is obliged to disclose information by a Court; (b) or where the client has authorised disclosure; or (c) where there is a public duty to disclose information."

The code of practice says:

"Council therefore recommends that members, even though free to do so, should not disclose past or intended crimes or civil wrongs (except treason) which they are legally obliged to disclose unless they feel that the damage to the public likely to arise from the non-disclosure is of a very serious nature."

The truth is that there are no real obligations. Unless this is reinforced in the Bill, once again these people will escape. In my view, self-regulation in this particular area is out.

Is the Bill strong enough? Sir Kenneth Berrill is unhappy and has made his discontent public. He says that

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

he "wants stronger powers to discipline the SROs". He wants the SIB rules to have precedence over SRO rules. What we want is a statutory body with teeth, real power to police the City, something akin to what is available in America, but different.

There has been so much discussion tonight about the difference between what we want and what is available that I can only compare what the Government want to set up with Securicor and what Labour Members want with the Metropolitan police. Perhaps that is the best distinction that one can draw. There is a distinction and it is an important one. Securicor is privately funded. It has powers, the powers available to any citizen. It even has the power of arrest, the citizen's power of arrest. The Metropolitan police force is a statutory authority. In so far as the Metropolitan police would appear to be an effective policer of London, I should have thought that a similar body operating in the City would be seen to be an effective policer of City institutions.

The statutory body would define rules and the SROs would comply. Default would lead to trouble. At the moment we do not even know what the rules are. I hope that we shall learn much in Committee about the intention of the Government in that particular regard.

Several hon. Members *rose——*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. May I repeat Mr. Speaker's appeal for brevity? Many hon. Members still wish to speak and time is getting short.

7.52 pm

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) who traditionally speaks with colour and conviction and today comprehensively. If he will permit me to say so, and stripping away some of what might be regarded as prejudice and hyperbole, he has raised issues with which I can agree—in particular, the anxiety to ensure that this is good legislation and that we stiffen it up and improve it, where necessary, in Committee. I can assure him that if I am able to play any part in that, I will do so.

I welcome the Bill as a significant improvement in investor protection and a radical and much-needed change in the regulation of the financial services industry. The financial services industry now accounts for 7 per cent. of our national income, employs 2 million people and generates over £6 billion in foreign exchange. The reputation, integrity and attraction of the industry to investors at home and abroad have been ensured in the past principally by three forms of control — the law of convention, common law and statute law, in that order.

The law of convention provided, through self-regulation, an acceptance of personal obligation in exchange for privileged membership of exchanges such as, for example, the stock market through membership of the Stock Exchange or merchant banking through membership of the acceptance houses committee. That led to the old adage, "My word is my bond." That motto characterised the City for many years and served its reputation well.

Common law was perhaps less important than that basic self-regulating convention. It provided a recourse to the courts in civil disputes, for example, on matters of agency or contract law, and the recognition of the limits of good practice as defined by precedent and case judgments.

Historically, it can be said that statute law was the last and least important of those forms of control which governed the City, imposing, as it did, legislative restrictions and obligations — examples are the Companies Acts and, in this instance, the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958—on the activities of the multiplicity of institutions in the City.

Since the development of the City under this system of convention and of common and statute law over 300 years, rapid and major changes which have taken place in recent years and months have rendered such regulation inadequate. First, there has been a massive expansion in the number of investors, the medium of investment and the practitioners in the financial services industry.

Secondly, there have been major changes in technology which have led to the more rapid transfer of funds, greater flexibility in the range of investment instruments now available and, indeed, the size of the markets which are accessible.

Thirdly, the internationalisation of the industry and the arrival of foreign companies, many with enormous resources and different standards of practice, have also changed the commercial environment substantially.

Last, and by no means least, the restructuring of the financial services industry and the merging of different activities into financial conglomerates, heralded by the abandonment of stock market minimum commissions and rules on outside shareholdings in stockbroking firms, have made the process of change very substantial.

All these changes have left the investor more vulnerable to malpractice and fraud, created apprehension about future standards of conduct and conflicts of interest, and undermined the old adage, "My word is my bond" to the extent, sadly, that the new motto ought to be, "My word is my flexible and revocable instrument", with the result that statute law has become a more important basis of regulation than the convention of voluntary good behaviour or than common law which has thrown up some conflicting and inadequate judgments in recent years.

For those reasons, I congratulate my right hon. and hon. Friends and predecessors on their efforts to strike the right balance in this Bill and the presentation of it between freedom and fairness, and indeed on consulting so widely among interested groups before presenting these provisions.

Turning to the contents of the Bill, I welcome, in particular, the decision to establish one board rather than two or more for the supervision of self-regulating organisations. The decision to go for the "Snow White and seven dwarfs" regulatory system is a challenging one and will obviously have some teething troubles, but I believe it to be the right decision. My hon. Friends will know that some of us have been pressing for it for years. I am very pleased that this Government have been responsive to the views expressed by Opposition Members and by many on the Government Benches in successive debates on the Gower report. Indeed, in my own submission to the Gower committee, it was my preferred solution, which at the time was felt by the Government and by Professor Gower to be unworkable; but opinion is gradually moving much more in that direction and I welcome it. I welcome, too, the provisions to make it a criminal offence to trade without authorisation or to make false or misleading statements.

This is the occasion to point out, however, those areas where one feels that improvements can be made or where one has some misgivings about the tenor and content of the Bill. I would have preferred to see the SIB or the delegated authority given statutory recognition, authority and objectives rather than the so-called "flexible" structure of enabling the Secretary of State to transfer his functions to a designated agency. Opposition Members make a valid point when they say that such a statutorily recognised authority would be independent, free from sudden discharge, totally responsible for the organisation of its market and more overtly, objectively, publicly accountable for the control and regulation of the many activities within its boundaries. The Bill goes a long way towards establishing such a designated agency, but I would not have minded, and would still like to see in more detailed areas, more statutory definition and authority being given to the body.

Much of the new structuring and many important detailed rules are to be introduced by order after the legislation is enacted. A more general point, which I hope will find accord with my hon. Friends, is that there is far too much legislation by order nowadays. It is preferable to consolidate as much as possible into primary legislation. Examples of that can be found throughout the Bill. I understand the complexity and range of its provisions, but it is in the detail of matters such as disclosure requirements and cold calling limitations that we can judge how authoritative the Bill will be, and the extent to which it can genuinely protect the interests of investors.

In the past, I have expressed strong reservations about the composition of supervisory boards and self-regulating organisations which historically have been, and remain, too practitioner—oriented and cosy. There have been welcome improvements in increasing the so-called lay membership of such authorities, but all too often those lay members are on the periphery of the practitioners, and do not genuinely represent the interests of the consumer and the investor, as they should.

The principal function of both the designated agency and the SROs should not be to provide an easy working machine which is not subjected to criticism. Their principal objective is to protect investors. Their face must always be pointed towards the investor, and they must apply that criterion to every decision. They must ask whether the decision protects the investor. That is their job. Their principal function is not to co-ordinate a nice smooth market and to keep everyone happy, but to represent the interests of the profusion of people who come to the market.

The provisions in schedules 5 and 2, which relate to the composition of the governing bodies of the designated agency and the SROs, are imprecise and place insufficient emphasis on the representation of investor or public interests through lay membership. Also, schedule 5 provides for the appointment or removal of the designated agency chairman by the Secretary of State and the Governor of the Bank of England acting jointly, thereby giving the Governor a veto and an undue influence over the investment market. I raised that question with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State at the beginning of the debate, and we should return to it in Committee.

Clause 151, which enables the Secretary of State in the national interest to disqualify from carrying on financial business in the United Kingdom anyone from a country which does not afford us favourable access to its financial markets, should find no place in the Bill. The provision is irrelevant to the protection of investors, and flies in the face of our long-established tradition of open access to markets. We should consider seriously that aspect of the Bill, although it may be peripheral to some of the Bill's objectives.

I shall now deal with the question whether Lloyd's should be in or out. Initially, I was receptive to arguments for drawing Lloyd's within the ambit of the Bill, but after consideration I have concluded that that would be an error of judgment. First, the principal business of Lloyd's is different from that engaged in by those involved in the investment markets. Just as commercial banking and non-life insurance are outside the scope of the Bill, so should Lloyd's be. Secondly, there is a distinction between the types of people and the objectives of those who become underwriters at Lloyd's and of those who invest in stocks and shares. The former place their assets at risk, although retaining direct ownership of them, in order to engage in the insurance business as principals. The latter convert their assets into investments in the businesses of others. There is a significant difference between the characteristics of the sole trader and the passive investor. They should be afforded the regime of protection.

The Government have announced an inquiry into the regulation of Lloyd's, and we should await the outcome before hastily absorbing an essentially different industry into the ambit of the Bill. Nevertheless, I have a responsibility to point to my preferred alternative. Unlike some, I am not satisfied with the way in which Lloyd's is going even now, although I recognise that substantial changes have been instituted since 1982. My preference would be for a public, not a private, Bill, if we could overcome the legislative problems of hybridity, which would tighten the supervision of Lloyd's and provide, among other things, for the appointment of a chief executive with terms of reference. It should provide less self-interest on Lloyd's ruling body, an end to "baby" or preferred syndicates, legal responsibilities for Lloyd's policy signing office, and more disclosure on such practices as reinsurance to close, and the credentials of offshore rollover funds.

I feel sorry for the affected Peter Cameron-Webb names who, as a result of fraud, maladministration, inadequate supervision and straightforward bad risk-taking, have lost about £168 million over the years. They and other underwriters are entitled to higher standards of probity and supervision, but they are not entitled to evade their responsibility in the final analysis to pay the calls on them. I have heard that they are selling up and moving abroad before further calls are made on their assets. That would do immense harm to the reputation of Lloyd's, whose underwriters have historically been prepared to pay claims promptly, and it would be no less evasive and unlawful than they accuse Mr. Cameron-Webb of being.

Greater protection for investors is needed urgently. The new regime provided for in the Bill must cope with the aftermath of the big bang, which will be bloody with a bear market following this bull market as surely as night follows day, and with marketing techniques and investment instruments the like of which we have never seen before.

It is vital for the interests of investors and the financial services industry generally that we enact good legislation which will stand the test of time, and command the widest

[Mr. Anthony Nelson]

respect. The Bill may not go quite as far as I should like it to go, but it is most welcome as far as it goes, and it will enjoy my support tonight.

8.7 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Most hon. Members who have spoken have dealt with Lloyd's and the City, and little has been said about the guy at the end of the chain who will pay the bill. He is the fellow who pays insurance commissions and is talked into a policy which he does not particularly want because he is buying a house and is sold an endowment policy with it. He is the guy who pays the interest on his overdraft because the banks need to compensate their profits. The Bill should protect such people.

I accept that Second Reading is not the time to take the Bill apart clause by clause. I welcomed the Gower report and hoped for a Bill that would go to the heart of the problem, and look after the chap at the end of the chain, that is the small investor, or the man who pays his monthly premium on his endowment policy or pension fund. I hoped that such people would be looked after, but I fear that the Bill will not do that.

I hope that I shall be fortunate enough to serve in Committee. Perhaps some of the Committee's time could be spent on asking those questions. The chap who pays the bill may be a name at Lloyd's who has been defrauded, a small shareholder who has been sold a pup in a bucket shop, or an old lady who puts her savings on the line and finds her investment worthless. Such people should be protected. It is all very well to say, "Lloyd's is out of this. It is a separate entity." A moment ago the hon. Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) spoke of some members who are thinking of going abroad to avoid further frauds. That people are driven from this country by the fraud of others is an absolute disgrace and a sad reflection upon the institution of which those who committed fraud were said to be proud members.

As a barrister I am not at all satisfied with the running of Lloyd's. I doubt whether, if tested, Lloyd's code of conduct could be shown to be the same as the code of conduct that we expect from the man in the professional office, the man serving behind a shop counter. There are still things going on and things that are talked about which are smelly and fishy. One hears rumours as one walks the streets of the City and talks to the people involved in the business world about what is still being done, about money that is still being shifted abroad, about how there is a new wheeze whereby premiums can now be moved this way or that or reallocated.

While all this continues, the reputation of Lloyd's continues to sink and so does the reputation of the City. There comes a time when one has to end amateurism and have a little bit more professionalism. This is urgent because, as has been said so often tonight, in October this year we have the big bang. This is the arrangement whereby the distinction between the jobber and the broker is to go. This will save everybody money on commissions. The end result has been a rat race of job-swapping in the City, escalating salaries and golden handshakes, for the likes of which many a man in the coal or steel industry would give their right arm, ear or eye.

At the end of the day who will pay? It will be the likes of the small investor because the services and commissions will not be the same. The other effect of the big bang will be the invasion of the overseas banks and the overseas merchant houses. The City will never be the same again. If we change the City but still want it to be the financial market centre of the world we must regulate and order that market so that it equals if nothing else, the rest of the world. We must cut out the crook and the spiv. They should have no place within the centre. We must make sure that when somebody acts as an adviser or as a broker they act by a set of rules which conform to the criminal law. Anyone who makes a sly or fast buck, who seeks to cheat or to deceive must pay the full penalty of the law and quickly.

In clause 147 there is one superb subsection to which I shall refer, and if I am lucky to be on the Committee I shall go back to it in much greater detail. Subsection (9) reads:

"Nothing in this section shall require a person carrying on the business of banking to disclose any information or produce any document relating to the affairs of a customer unless

(a) the customer is a person who the inspectors have reason to believe may be able to give information concerning a suspected contravention."

This is fine until one looks at subsection (2), which states:

"The appointment under this section of an inspector may limit the period during which he is to continue his investigation or to confine it to particular matters."

In other words, we appoint an inspector to investigate insider dealings—we have been so brilliant in tracking down the people in insider dealings that in the last two years we have had four or five prosecutions. If one listens in the coffee shops of London one will hear whisper after whisper about that company and this company. We all know that it is going on but we have done nothing to track down the people.

According to clause 147, the inspector may go in for only a limited period as may be deemed advisable, and the banks are limited as to what they need give away. Subsection (9)*(b)* states:

"the Secretary of State is satisfied that the disclosure or production is necessary for the purposes of the investigation."

I ask you. The Secretary of State has to be satisfied. We are talking about the way dishonest people make considerable sums of money at the expense of other investors — indeed, at the expense of the investment company itself within which the insider dealing is taking place. This is just one example of one clause and one subsection of this Bill which demonstrates how much is needed to be done by way of amendment if we are to create a set of investment protection rules and regulations which in some way might give the investor proper protection.

I want to see the City as the financial capital of the world but we shall only do so if we have a City that is clean and where there are no suspicions of fraud, of people making the quick buck, easy money. We shall achieve this only if we have a set of regulations that are equivalent to those in the rest of the world and of which we can be proud. We shall have this only if the supervising bodies — I agree with much of what the hon. Member for Chichester said—have teeth that can bite fast and deep. We must be prepared to toss out the rotten apples from the barrel. We must have a proper policing force, perhaps police officers in our fraud squads who are sufficiently trained to bring prosecutions speedily. The courts of the land must impose penalties that deter.

Until we have all these things we shall not have protection for the investor. This Bill is a little step on the way. A great deal needs to be done. It has to be done

carefully and with courage. If the prejudices of yesteryear are forgotten and everybody on those committees works with a clean City in mind we may do something that is worth while.

8.17 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): Earlier this afternoon it was declared that Conservative Members who sought to take part in this debate all had vested interests. I should like to say that I am not a director of any public company. I do not own any shares in any public company. I am not a partner in any business. I am not a member of Lloyd's. I am not a trustee of any profit-making property. I have no consultancies or retainers, and I am not a member of a trade union.

Hon. Members may say that all that means that I do not know much about business, and they could well be right. However, I did serve for 20 years in heavy industry and in consultancy before being elected to the House. I have sufficient interest in business to have brought forward specific suggestions to amend company law in every Session of Parliament since 1969. I did this with the support of well-informed Members on both sides of the House.

I consider that the Bill has a number of deficiencies. That is due to the Department's preoccupation with serious fraud and gross mismanagement rather than the milder business diseases which are unfortunately all too common in Britain. Insufficient attention has been given to the way in which fraud and other disasters can overtake a business in a climate of general inefficiency, management sloppiness, malpractice, corner-cutting and business practices which may be within the law but are generally accepted as contrary to the ethics of business people. That is the ground in which fraud can grow, and unfortunately all too often does.

In recent months I moved into a house which had been standing empty for a number of years. As soon as we turned on the central heating, the most hideous mushrooms appeared out of previously innocent-looking timber and plaster. It was, of course, dry rot. The experts told me that I could get rid of the symptoms as and when they occurred, but that the real solution was to have a firm, sound, dry and well-ventilated structure. I think that the Bill is rather like people who are trying to pick off the mushrooms by using chemical methods in this spot and that without attending to the background in which business is carried on in Britain.

The Bill defines investment business in such a way as to include managing investments and advising on the exercise of rights conferred by the ownership of assets. It appears to put most emphasis on the time of the purchase of the asset—possibly the disposal of investments to some extent—rather than on the advice that should be given to investors on constructive, continuing and responsible ownership of assets.

Are the owners of assets to be regarded and protected as absentee landlords once they have acquired their assets, or do we hold to the concept that investors should be component elements in a well balanced mechanism, including suppliers, customers, workers, managers, supervisors and proprietors, all working together in a fruitful relationship? I am sure that that is a more healthy aim, but it is not the Bill's aim.

I have often said that the weakness of the British economy is attributable in quite large part to the fact that so much of our enormously voluminous company law is obsolete. The great 1948 Act was obsolete by the time that it was enacted, and much of what we have done since has added to the complexity rather than attend to the fundamentals of business practice. We ought to consider company law as a whole. The same goes for partnership law. It is a great pity that the Department is not offering constructive thought on the background against which business is conducted.

I welcome the Bill. I am sure that it contains much that is necessary, nevertheless, it seems to be yet another major Bill regulating business which constitutes a rather wasted opportunity and perhaps a rather heavy drain on parliamentary time. But I am sure that it should go through, and I do not believe that we should clutter this already complex Bill by adding provisions relating to Lloyd's. I am not a member of Lloyd's and I do not know a great deal about insurance, but if existing legislation concerning Lloyd's is not working, another Bill aimed specifically at that target or at insurance generally would be better.

We should be making new provisions to strengthen existing supervisory elements governing how investors' assets are used. I am thinking, of course, of auditors and directors, especially non-executive directors, who are often ineffectual components in the business structure. About 100 years ago it was obvious that, as business was becoming more complex, the owners of assets needed advice from supervisory elements who would help to ensure that their businesses were properly managed. In Germany, there gradually evolved the concept of a supervisory board, whereas Britain experienced important battles which led to the imposition of the compulsory audit.

I am not suggesting that compulsory audit is wrong, but it has not stood us in good stead, because the practices and responsibilities of auditors have not been sufficiently sharply defined by Parliament. We have a large body of highly responsible professional people, but we are not making them as effective as they should be in preventing conditions which ultimately provide the opportunity for fraud.

Auditors and non-executive directors could be ruled by company law that could make them far more effective. All we need is quite minor changes in statutory procedures governing how companies are run. I shall not try to define them now. I have spoken on this subject often, and I hope to introduce a Bill in two or three weeks in which I shall set out several specific recommendations for minor changes which I believe could have big results.

That approach, which the Department has neglected for a long time, is just as important as setting up new agencies and could be just as fruitful as increasing the Department's staff.

8.24 pm

Mr. John Whitfield (Dewsbury): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this important Bill. As Lord Roskill's committee so aptly said:

"If the Government cherishes"—

I understand that they do—

"the vision of an equity-earning democracy, with greater encouragement for ordinary families to invest their savings in shares, it faces an inescapable duty to ensure that financial markets are honestly managed and that transgressors are swiftly and effectively discovered, convicted and punished."

[Mr. John Whitfield]

In addition to suggesting changes in the law relating to the conduct of fraud trials — those recommended by Lord Roskill's committee are many, complex and far-reaching —Lord Roskill rightly says that there must be changes in practice and attitudes which will make demands on everybody involved in investment business. The Bill is concerned with such people's practices and attitudes.

The difficulties of bringing fraudsters to trial and securing their conviction are manifold, as is well known. I whole-heartedly welcome the report's recommendations in that regard and was pleased to hear today that parliamentary time will be found in the next Session to enable the majority of those recommendations to be implemented. However, improvement of criminal law procedures is not enough. We must ensure that our financial markets are managed honestly and that transgressors are brought to court, convicted and punished.

Self-regulation is a fine concept, but if the present system worked well, we should not be debating the Bill. Irrespective of whether one considers the Lloyd's insurance market, the stock exchange or my self-regulatory organisation, the Law Society — that is the only interest that I have to declare — the records show that, although each august establishment appears able to deal with the most blatant excesses of its ordinary members, it is unable or unwilling to cope when it comes to the atrocities, if that is not too strong a word — it often is not—committed by members of its hierarchy.

I need mention only three names to prove my case— Sir Peter Green, about whom we have heard a great deal today, Kleinwort Benson in the context of the British Telecom share allocation and the solicitor Mr. Glanville Davies. In each case, the regulatory authority concerned seemed unwilling to deal with serious examples of financial irregularity or abuse of a privileged position. In each case, the people concerned were on what has been aptly termed the inside track—they were members of the top table of the organisation.

Even in less important but equally serious cases when illegal or unlawful profits have been made at other people's expense—for example, the baby syndicates at Lloyd's, insider dealings that proliferate on the floor of the stock exchange, the abuse of buying shares for unnamed accounts, the facilities that have been offered to known rogues such as Mr. Jim Raper to plunder the assets of public companies for their own personal benefit and the share tipster who tips his own shares, the regulatory authorities, when they exist, have more often than not been unable or unwilling to prevent the commission of the offence or to provide a remedy.

Too often recently, we have had to listen to that weak and wet response to criticism which runs, "We have done all that we can. It is now up to the Director of Public Prosecutions or the inspectors of the Department of Trade and Industry. It is not our fault if they do not do anything." The chairmen of the stock exchange and of the council at Lloyd's are especially guilty of such buck-passing.

There is an enormous gulf to be filled between the present system of self-regulation and the criminal law. I understand that the Bill tries to fill that gap by introducing a system of statutory backing for self-regulation, which will preside over our fast-changing financial markets.

In this connection I welcome the new statutory provisions and powers to make rules for the conduct of investment business contained in chapter V of the Bill. Particularly I welcome the surely long overdue provisions in clauses 49 and 50, which will require those conducting an investment business to take out indemnities against claims and to hold clients' moneys in accounts separate from those containing their own moneys. I welcome clause 54, which provides for the disqualification of certain prescribed unfit and improper individuals; clause 56, which enables restitution orders to be obtained against those who have contravened the provisions of the Bill; and clause 57, which provides a new civil remedy for anyone who has suffered loss as a result of any breach of the rules.

I also warmly welcome the powers of intervention vested in the Secretary of State pursuant to chapter VI, which will enable him or the agent he appoints to prohibit an authorised person from entering into particular transactions or from disposing or dealing with any of his assets and give the Secretary of State power to sequestrate those assets. All these very necessary powers should be exercisable in my view in relation to any authorised person when it appears to the Secretary of State that they are required for the protection of investors—which is what the Bill is surely all about — or that the authorised person is not fit to carry on an investment business or has contravened the provisions of the Bill or furnished the Secretary of State with false or misleading information. I am therefore surprised and disappointed that, with one isolated exception, none of these very necessary powers of intervention seems to me to apply to any authorised person who is a member of a self-regulatory organisation or a professional body.

Subject of course to what my hon. and learned Friend has to say on this subject, it seems to me from reading the Bill that the vast majority of authorised persons will be safe from the Secretary of State's powers of intervention simply because they are members of their SROs. The Bill seems to have teeth, but the teeth will hardly ever be used.

It seems to me that this is the weak point, the Achilles heel of the Bill. The Secretary of State in my submission must retain for himself the powers to intervene in the affairs of the members of an SRO, because otherwise the public suspicion will remain, in spite of the new rules and system of supervision which the SIB will exercise, that the SROs exist to protect the best interests of their members, particularly their more influential members. This is the image which the council of Lloyd's, the stock exchange and even the Law Society have in the minds of members of the lay public who have had cause for complaint against many of the members of those organisations.

I hope that, in Committee, the Government can be persuaded to remove subsection (4) of clause 59 which provides that exemption. It is simply not enough to rely upon the Secretary of State's power to revoke a recognition order under clause 11. It is a power which he will be extremely reluctant to use, and the SROs will know that to be the case. One cannot imagine, for example, the authorisation as an SRO of the stock exchange itself ever being revoked.

What of Lloyd's itself? I will not detain the House long on this subject, because the point has been well covered by my right hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin) and my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant). I think that the Secretary of State has headed off the mounting

campaign to include Lloyd's within the ambit of the Bill by announcing last week the inquiry into whether that market is really protecting its members against the massive frauds which have occurred in the past and which many suspect are still taking place. In the light of the coming departure from the council of Lloyd's of the Government-imposed watchdog, Mr. Davison, this was the least the Government could have done. Hon. Members are of course aware that Lloyd's has its own piece of legislation, the Lloyd's Act 1982, but I fear that, even if one tenth of the allegations made in this House from time to time by the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) are true, the system of self-regulation set up by that Act is not working very well. Let us pay heed to that experience now and so be especially vigilant in dealing with the financial services market in the Bill.

There are already—without waiting for the results of the inquiry which has been set up—grounds at the very least for having severe reservations about the working of self-regulation at Lloyd's. We should not and must not discount that knowledge in our consideration of the Bill. Accordingly, we should ensure that, without exception, all those involved in investment business be subject to the powers of intervention.

The Government have rightly obtained a reputation as the champion of law and order. Bearing this fact in mind, let none of us on this side of the House forget, as Sir Kenneth Berrill himself has already pointed out, that to those of our constituents who for modest rewards actually make things there is something obscene about those in the City who, not content with just making a good living, as they do, through sheer greed and worse break the rules in order to make illegal and unlawful profits at the expense of the rest of us. They are a small minority, but they have to be dealt with.

Let us on this side of the House be seen to be imposing law, order and an effective system of regulation on such people and not shrink from setting up procedures which will enable the Secretary of State to deprive those who break the rules of their livelihoods as soon as those transgressions are discovered, while leaving those same people to face any criminal charges at a later date.

8.36 pm

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): The House will be relieved to know that, almost alone among contributors to the debate, I propose to say virtually nothing about Lloyd's, other than to suggest that, while the day may well come when the Lloyd's Act 1982 proves insufficient, I believe those hon. Members who suggest that now is the time are anticipating a course of events that has not yet been able to run its full course. I have no doubt that we will come back to the consideration of Lloyd's, but I regret that in the course of the debate so much attention has been paid to a matter which is not included in the Bill.

Living, as we do, in a period when the consumer's interest is paramount, it is perhaps surprising that we have not thought fit to update the legislative protection in this respect until now. I suppose it is fair to say that one or two scandals which affected relatively few people but received much publicity acted as the trigger. Following the rightly praised report of Professor Gower and the stock exchange agreement, to which reference has been made, it became clear that something approaching a revolution in the provision of financial services was on the horizon. Thus, the combination of isolated but serious scandals, a major change in the City's activities and the era of consumer protection has led to the requirement for legislative change, the manifestation of which is before us in the shape of the Bill.

The Bill enshrines the principles of self-regulation by those offering financial services. I know that many disagree with that approach. Many feel certain that something akin to the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, with central Government involvement, would be preferable. I have to concede that even in the City there are misgivings. Many are convinced that the approach embodied in the Bill simply will not work and that tougher central Government control will have to ensue. I do not agree. In fact, I believe that is an excessively gloomy view and a rather unfair anticipation of the considerable movement represented by the Bill.

I believe that it is appropriate to give those in financial services the challenge to deal properly with the public. The vast majority of providers of financial services are honest people. It is regrettable that so much concentration is upon those who are not and who are clearly very much in the minority. I believe that many people—honest traders—in financial services want to provide a good and straightforward service. To encase such people in the straitjacket of bureaucracy, which I think could be well represented by the Securities and Exchange Commission approach, would be unacceptable, particularly to the small traders who abound in some of the areas under discussion within the ambit of the Bill.

If self-regulation is right, and if the Bill deserves a Second Reading—as it does—does that mean that there is no scope for improvement? On the contrary, there are wide gaps and omissions, most of which are for discussion in Committee. At the moment, all I need say is that although I understand the need for the Securities and Investments Board, I am concerned that so many of the rules that will underpin the legislation are to be left to a body that is effectively outside parliamentary control. If we cannot change that dramatically in Committee, we may feel that more positive guidance to the SIB is desirable.

I instance the licensing of an insurance salesman. There will be different opinions among hon. Members about whether or not that is a good thing, but it may not be wholly desirable to leave the decision on such important matters entirely to the SIB.

Further consideration should be given to whether we could at least lift the veil on the type of regulations that are likely to be issued by the SIB as this whole matter progresses.

More specifically, I draw the attention of the House to a glaring omission that I hope to seek to remedy if I am asked to serve on the Standing Committee. I refer to the failure to include non-life insurance within the ambit of protection of the consumer. Here I declare an interest as the parliamentary adviser to the British Insurance Brokers Association. I believe that anyone who considers that there is no scope for protecting the purchaser of fire, accident or motor policies has never been in the field and has not witnessed the considerable difficulty that can arise when a purchaser receives a policy that is either wrongly based or inexpertly sold. The Government's simple explanation is that this type of insurance cannot be included in the Bill because it does not constitute an investment as defined in the Bill, but that explanation does not go far enough.

I could give many examples of hardship caused by inexpertly arranged policies. It is true that there have been

[Mr. Robert McCrindle]

few frauds in this area, but must we await the development of fraud before adequate consumer protection—which is no more than the purchaser of these non-life type policies has a right to expect—is extended to such policies? I hope that the Government will think again about this glaring omission. I repeat, if I am asked to serve on the Committee, I shall seek to amend the Bill to take care of that omission.

At this stage there is only one other aspect of the Bill to which I wish to draw the attention of the House. I am concerned that the protection offered to the investor when he is dealing with what clause 41 calls "an exempt representative"—before the Bill appeared it was called a tied agent—will be less than when he is dealing with an independent intermediary. In the public interest, there should be equalisation of protection. There should be a straightforward understanding in the public mind either that a person is dealing with an independent intermediary, with all that that implies, or that he is dealing with a representative of a particular life office. At present we are running the risk of obscuring the issue. We should turn our attention to that matter when the Bill goes into Committee.

I give a broad but sincere welcome to the Bill, which is a major step forward in investor protection and places responsibility on the practitioners. That is surely the right way forward. It does that, albeit with powerful guidance from the SIB. It will be welcomed by thousands of honest providers of financial services, just as I believe it will be welcomed by many of those to whom consumer protection will be extended.

8.45 pm

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): Given the remarks of the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle) and other hon. Members, I imagine that we shall have an interesting Committee stage. I wish the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar and Ministers well in their deliberations, which I shall probably not be joining.

The remarks of the hon. Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) reminded me of the campaign that he has fought to get legislation of this sort on the statute book. At times the hon. Gentleman has ploughed a very lone furrow in order to try to bring about changes that are similar to those that are contained in the Bill. He reminded me of previous debates, and when he mentioned the old City adage

"My word is my bond",

he took me back to my banking examinations in the 1950s when I worked in the Midland bank. Before I came to the House I worked in the National Girobank and I am now an adviser to Barclays bank. I have therefore taken a long interest in this subject.

I welcome the legislation. It is overdue and has been long debated. The previous antagonisms and fears in the City about this sort of legislation have been misplaced, and will be proved to have been misplaced when this measure comes into operation.

I wish to make three general points before commenting on the structure in the Bill and the powers and standing of the SIB and the self-regulatory organisations.

First, as a number of hon. Members have already said, the abuses that have recently taken place in the City, as well as in times gone by, are not typical of the overwhelming majority of those who work in the City. That needs to be put clearly on the record, because it would be unfair and unjust if a substantial body of people—who are doing a perfectly honest and hard day's work and performing a useful task for the country—were blackened by recent events.

Secondly, fraud and malpractice will still continue even when the Bill gets on to the statute book. I am amazed at the naivety of those who think that we shall get a whiter than white, Persil-clean Lloyd's simply by bringing Lloyd's within the ambit of the Bill. All the evidence that I have seen from other western capitals and institutions in New York and Hong Kong shows that despite massive regulation, fraud still continues, collapses still take place and there is still malpractice. That is not an argument for not putting the measure on the statute book, but we should not run away with the idea that problems will no longer exist if we move in the direction outlined in the Bill.

Thirdly, the City makes a major contribution not only to our financial affairs but to the manufacturing and service sectors and to the life and prosperity of the country. That should also be put on the record.

So far, hon. Members have indulged in semantics in relation to the structure of the regulation prescribed in the Bill, because the gap between what is contained in the Bill and what the Labour party is proposing is not that wide. The proposals in the Bill have substantial statutory back-up. The kernel of the argument is the balance between the powers of the SIB and the powers of the SROs. I do not know what the Labour party is proposing in detail; I do not know whether it proposes that there should be no SROs. That is not the case in the United States. Although there is a Securities and Exchange Commission, activities are regulated by the New York stock exchange and various other bodies.

Even under the proposals of the Labour party, I assume that there would still be some self-regulation and that it would not abolish the stock exchange council and the other organisations that exist. The question is what balance there is between the two spheres. In our amendment we have gone for a toughening of the Government's proposals. We do not think that they are as tough as they should be but again it is a matter of balance.

It is not just a question of toughness but of the standing of the organisation. The SIB must not be seen as a City body but as a body representing the public interest and, of course, investor and consumer interests. That is why we have suggested that it should be substantially if not entirely publicly funded, so that it is seen to be a public body and not a creature of the City. We have also suggested that membership of the organisation should be reviewed by a Select Committee of the House. That would be similar to the procedure adopted in the United States for public appointments. That procedure would have a beneficial effect on public appointments in this country if it was more widespread.

By those two principal means, the independence of the SIB would be greatly enhanced and its standing as a body protecting the public interest would thereby be greater. Most important, it would have the confidence of the public because it was seen to be a public authority.

If we were starting with a clean sheet there might be an argument for a different organisation of the sort proposed by the Labour party, but we are not starting with a clean

sheet because we already have a substantial number of self-regulatory organisations. Therefore, it is inappropriate to go for the sort of statutory commission that the Labour party is proposing.

The powers of the SIB should be strengthened. Reference has already been made to the fact that the SIB has a nuclear deterrent power to act against SROs or just the power to issue remonstrance to them if they are not carrying out their duties properly. Clearly the SIB should be able to take action to change the rules of SROs without recourse to the courts. That is too complicated a mean of making changes.

In Committee and during the further passage of the Bill in another place the Government should take into account the way in which regulations will dovetail with international requirements. Virtually all the markets in the City operate on an international scale. In so far as it is possible it is important that our regulations dovetail with regulations in other financial centres around the world so that companies and institutions operating here are not at a disadvantage.

I have some worries that I hope will be considered during the passage of the Bill. I am concerned about overlap and confusion between different SROs. Quite a number of them are being established very late in the day. They are being set up without any track record, without real organisation and without real knowledge of how they will do their job. Everything is being done in a great rush. I hope that the SIB and Ministers will keep a close eye to see that there is not confusion and overlap. Individual institutions will have to register with a plethora of SROs because of the different activities within their organisations, and that may cause problems.

I do not believe that all of the City of London is aware of what will hit it after the big bang takes place. There will be rapid changes and an entirely new environment very different to the past. The aggressiveness, power, might and capital of the new international institutions that will come into the City will be a real challenge to the indigenous British institutions. The City will be much more aggressive and competitive. I hope that the City will become a larger international centre for the benefit of this country. It is because of the increased competitiveness that the Bill, with a tougher framework for the SIB, is necessary. I hope that when it comes back for Third Reading it will be of that character. Then we shall be happy to support it on its way to another place.

8.57 pm

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): I support the Bill but first I declare an interest in that I have worked in the stock exchange not only in London but in New York. I also control a company which may become subject to the Bill.

I support the Bill basically because it strikes a well-informed and good balance between allowing creativity in response to the needs of the market place and control in the interests of all participants, including the investors. By going for self-regulation with teeth we shall have policing by professionals rather than by amateurs.

Two basic issues divide the House. The first is about whether Lloyd's should be included. I shall not speak about that, in deference to other hon. Members who want to speak, because much has been said already.

The other issue is the balance of control. How much control should there be and where should it rest? Should there be State control or market control by self-regulation? One can examine the two extremes, one in the United States and one in the Euromarkets. In the United States under the Securities and Exchange Commission, there is relatively tight control.

Some have urged that we should have a Securities and Exchange Commission here. I ask those who do so to think of several factors. The United States' markets are different from the British markets and have a different origin. I worked on the New York stock exchange for about three years. The 1933 and 1935 Acts and the Glass-Steagll Act of 1933 have resulted in much higher costs in the market —there is no question about the enormous legal costs and the many delays. They have also led to two essential ingredients—a relatively clear market where everybody can see what is going on, and a relatively clean market. Those factors have added greatly to the size and liquidity of the United States market.

On the other hand, we have a much freer market in the Euromarkets. For an investor in Eurobonds and securities, there are two hidden securities. All the main issues of securities in the Euromarkets are subject to the United States Security and Exchange Commission because, although the issues are made in the Euromarkets, their main market is the American one. The issuers know that if they commit a crime in a Euromarket, they would be out of issues in the United States. Therefore, the SEC has a hidden effect in the Euromarkets. The second control is the central bank regulations.

The United Kingdom has an immensely important series of markets, which make an enormous contribution to the country in terms both of earnings and of generating business. This allows small companies to grow. Our markets have a different character from those of the United States. There is a need for action because of the advent of the big bang, the resulting growth in size in the markets and the internationalisation of those markets. We are in a good position because we have seen how world markets in currency, bonds, securities and so on have evolved. We are in 1986, not 1936, so we do not have to face the uncertainties that faced the Americans in the early 1930s. We can learn lessons from the SEC and from other markets that may have been over or under-regulated.

We must look first at the essential ingredients of a market for securities, which would include the following factors. First, the market must remain creative and responsive to market needs. Secondly, it must be clear and open. Thirdly, it must be clean—in other words, well-policed. Fourthly, it must be efficient in terms of both execution and cost for the issuer and the investor. Fifthly, it must be liquid—in other words it must be large. Markets become large only if the small investor is adequately protected. Therefore, the Bill should be guided towards ensuring that those factors are kept paramount.

There are two points of difference between the two sides of the House. The Socialist party wrongly believes in control—in other words, a political response to the market — as opposed to our belief in enterprise in responding to the market place and market response. Secondly, it believes in policing by politicians and civil servants, both of whom are amateurs within financial business. We believe in policing by professionals, by people who understand the market. In other words, we believe in self-regulation subject to the Secretary of State.

I urge on my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary three additions to the Bill. One is the protection of the members of the boards. As my hon. Friend the

[Mr. John Browne]

Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) has already said, it is vital if they are to do their job properly that they should have protection from libel and so on. Much more emphasis must be placed on the conflict of interest between the issuing or underwriting of securities and the management of assets — fund management. Thirdly, there must be greater emphasis on a complete and full disclosure of all the facets of a trade or bargain, including the volume of securities. It should not be an enormous task, with computerisation, even with the British way of trading. The sterling value of negotiated commissions must be disclosed to the purchaser.

I support the Bill because it is timely and good. It is self-regulation with teeth and that will allow creative professionals to operate and build up the market even more strongly. That will happen when the market is policed by professionals and not amateurs.

9.5 pm

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, the other Ministers in the Department and their predecessors on introducing the Bill, which is a most imaginative measure. We have denigrated the service industries too much and we have not appreciated the extent to which they contribute to our national life and are likely to do in the future. As many of the Third world countries develop their own manufacturing capability, so it becomes more important for us to rely on added value and on the specialist services that many of the companies in the City provide. It is, therefore, particularly important that we create an environment in which they can operate efficiently, and where the small and unsophisticated investor is protected. The Bill goes a long way towards that.

I have no personal interest in Lloyd's or any other aspect of the Bill, but it would be wrong to bring Lloyd's into the scope of the Bill. If we are to deal with Lloyd's it must be done in the context of insurance as a whole in a way that will not inhibit British insurers, which face increasingly agressive overseas competition.

I welcome the conditions in the Bill concerning disclosure and support the comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne). I have a deep suspicion of the principle of Chinese walls and I believe that that can be overcome only by the fullest possible disclosure. I am concerned that many of the major investment transactions that the Bill deals with relate to the process of house purchase and the purchase of insurance policies or packages related to house purchase. I hope that the Minister can give some assurance that there will be no conflict between what we impose in the Bill on those who are related to financial services and what is likely to happen in the Building Societies Bill. Many of the activities of building societies impinge absolutely and directly on what is proposed in the Bill.

There are many other areas in the Bill where problems remain unsolved. In particular, there is the conflict between insurance brokers and employed agents. I do not think that the Bill contains the necessary measures to protect the public in that area. I hope that some consistency will be imposed upon the self-regulating organisations in terms of their disciplinary procedures or there will be problems of unfair competition. I hope that the Minister can reassure us that the Securities and Investments Board will have a responsibility to ensure consistency of disciplinary procedures.

There are many other areas in the Bill where too much is left to regulations. On that matter I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson). It would be much better if the Bill could spell out exactly what we wish to achieve in those areas. I am particularly concerned about clause 50 which deals with the matter of interest on clients' funds and whether those who are operating in that area will be required to account for interest. The Bill says that at the moment that will be left to regulation. I do not think that that is good enough. We should spell it out that all those who hold clients' funds should account for the interest. That was done in the Estate Agents Act 1979, subject to a de minimis rule. That is right and it should apply to everybody including solicitors, to whom it does not apply now.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: Or on house purchase.

Mr. Butterfill: Indeed.

There are many areas where we need to ensure that the regulations are absolutely clear. For example, the fact that we are proposing that an advertisement can be free from regulation, provided that it calls for a prospectus to be available, is open to considerable abuse because the advertisement could be extremely misleading, and then present the would-be investor with a confusing prospectus.

In general, I congratulate my hon. Friends on producing the Bill. I wish it well and hope very much that I shall be able to make a contribution in Committee.

9.10 pm

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): This long-heralded Bill is handicapped by the fact that it is required to meet a purpose that is far wider and more complicated than the one for which it was originally intended. As many hon. Members have reminded us, the genesis of the Bill was a series of scandals six or seven years ago that led to the report prepared by Professor Gower, which led to the White Paper, which has now produced the Bill.

While the Government were taking that leisurely course over getting to grips with City fraud, the City for which Professor Gower had written his report and for which the Bill is intended has, particularly over the past two years, changed almost beyond recognition. The starting point for that process of change — the City revolution, as some would call it — was, again, as many hon. Members reminded us, a deal struck between the then Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson), and the stock exchange. The deal arose out of the litigation proposed in the restrictive trade practices court, which was almost certain to produce substantial changes in the stock exchange rule book.

Despite all ministerial assurances to the contrary, that deal is universally seen as having been intended to stabilise the situation to buy some time. All that one can say is that rarely can such a step have so directly produced an outcome that was so much the opposite of what was intended. In fact, it launched the City into the big bang and ushered in a period of frenetic change. Far from slowing down the pace of that change, the Government found that they had a tiger by the tail.

As the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) said, it is doubtful whether even the City

itself fully recognises what that revolution will mean. On the evidence of the Bill, it is clear that the Government do not fully recognise that. The City of the future will be dominated by huge international financial conglomerates in which the international giants—Merrill Lynch from New York and Nomura Securities from Tokyo—will play a dominant part. The securities market will no longer be a cosy club; it will be open to all comers. The old clubby atmosphere will have gone. The old institutional safeguards will be swept away. The process will be spurred on by technological change, and the ease of electronic communication. The City will become just one part of a 24-hour international capital market.

The City itself will change in the business of what it sells. It will no longer sell little bits of expert information picked up on the wind, and little bits of gossip. It will find that it has to compete in a way which, up to now, has been unfamiliar to it — in speed, comprehensiveness, accuracy, reliability and price competitiveness, as well as, significantly, the amount of investor protection that is offered. It is worrying that, as a consequence of those changes, the City will be opened up to the full blast of international competition, which manufacturing industry has already had to endure ahead of the City. It will be interesting to see whether the Government adopt the same cavalier attitude towards the fortunes of the City as towards the fortunes of manufacturing industry.

As the hon. Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) said, once that process is fully launched, once the huge international firms are shouldering aside smaller domestic enterprises, there will be blood on the carpet. The smaller firms will go to the wall because the volume of business will not expand fast enough to accommodate all those who want to get in on the act.

The gilts market is a good example. No longer will it be a market that is dominated by two major jobbers that have a cosy relationship with the Bank of England. It will be a market in which 29 market makers will be scrambling for position. Not all of them will survive. There will be a premium on those with the largest resources: those who are prepared to sit out losses over a very long period. In that game the foreign giants will have all the cards in their hands. It will create major problems, not least for the Government. I cannot believe that even this Conservative Government will be content if the business of funding its borrowing requirements is in the hands of foreign institutions that have little or no loyalty to the British economy.

In this context there is much more of a problem for the investor. It is inevitable that, as the competition intensifies, corners will be cut and that rules will be bent. As the old safeguards — the institutional divisions between jobbing and broking—go, no longer will there be shared assumptions about the way in which business should be done. In the new international conglomerates, conflicts of interest will inevitably be built in. I agree with the comment of the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne) that Chinese walls are flimsy structures upon which to place much reliance. With many newcomers, intensified competition and many people scrambling for business, the investor may be at the bottom of the pile. The problems will be compounded when, as was pointed out by the hon. Member for Chichester, the inevitable bear market arrives. There will be a shake-out and the survival of some firms will be in question. At that stage consumer interest will be put under the greatest pressure.

All these developments are taking place against the background of great concern about the level of City fraud. In the five years since Gower was commissioned, the Government have pursued a somewhat leisurely course. Apparently they are in no hurry to put an end to these malpractices or to bring the wrongdoer to book. As some of my hon. Friends have already pointed out, that is in marked contrast to the alacrity and zeal and the tremendous resources that have been devoted to tracking down low level, social security fraud.

During this five-year period, City fraud has grown apace. Scandals have proliferated. An atmosphere akin to a casino has developed, in which huge rewards have been paid to the winners without making too much of a distinction between those winners who abide by the rules and those who do not. We have seen criminals fleeing the jurisdiction of this country and cocking a snook at the authorities from the decks of their yachts. Insider dealing is still rife. If one looks at the Arthur Bell share price before the Guinness bid, one sees a very good illustration of that.

Unfortunately, London is acquiring the reputation of a financial centre that is soft on fraud, where anything goes, where the chances of getting caught are remote, where the police resources that are provided are inadequate to detect fraud and where the prevailing ethos — this is most damaging —fails to distinguish clearly between what is right and what is wrong.

All of these problems are epitomised not just by Johnson Matthey and Lloyd's, although they are important and where everybody can see that things went badly wrong, but, more worryingly, by episodes such as the British Telecom launch. Neither the Government nor the City firms that were involved seem to understand that what happened was unacceptable. May I remind the House that the City firms that were involved professionally in that launch and that were already charging unusually high commissions and fees for their professional services also dealt in the shares. They used their privileged access to the shares, by virtue of their professional capacity, to make huge capital gains for themselves, thereby blurring the essential distinction between acting for others and acting for themselves in the same market.

The reason why I regard this with such seriousness is that it is exactly the kind of practice that can no longer be tolerated in a modern City. Yet that is exactly the sort of practice that will be difficult to control, given the new structures in the Bill. In a situation of revolutionary change, uncertainty and frantic competition, we must ask how the Bill matches up to those responsibilities.

There is much in the Bill that the Opposition can support. We welcome the general structure of authorisation. Contrary to what has been said in wilful obtuseness by alliance Members, we welcome the combination of self-regulation and statutory regulation that is provided in the Bill. Any hon. Member who has taken part or listened for a moment to any of the debates on this subject over the past two or three years, would know that that was the case.

The Government believe that the structure provided in broad terms in the Bill matches up to the general recognition on the part of all but a few backwoodsmen, that the City depends for its survival and future prosperity on effective regulation. If the City will not provide the investor protection that is available elsewhere, investors will take their business elsewhere. There is a clear lesson to be learned from the market in commodities. Ten years

[Mr. Bryan Gould]

ago Chicago introduced very strict regulations and London dealers thought that that was marvellous as business would come to London because the market would not tolerate the strict regulations in Chicago. Experience has shown that the reverse was true: people like to deal in a situation where they know how they stand and that they are properly protected by the rules.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I would like the hon. Gentleman to comment on one point. Too often it is said that the City and the Government are soft on fraud. We all accept that some of the goings on at Lloyd's were not just unacceptable but disgraceful. However, big changes have been made. The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) made great play within the privilege of the House about the Johnson Matthey affair. Does the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) agree that it is unfair to suggest that nearly all the merchant banks and brokers and the City are soft on fraud, when 98 per cent of the City is highly reputable, is jealous of its reputation and works hard to make a great living for this country's balance of payments?

Mr. Gould: I am surprised that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) should think it necessary to make that point, since it has been made repeatedly throughout the debate and is, I believe, common ground. The Opposition, and I believe the Government, are rightly concerned about the hon. Gentleman's own assessment of the 2 per cent.—if he wants to place that figure so high: that is a very high volume of money and business — which is not acceptable. We should concentrate our attention upon that 2 per cent.

Although the Opposition endorse the general approach, we find that the real problem with the Bill is not what it contains but what it leaves out. The missed opportunities and the omissions mean that the Bill is simply inadequate to carry the heavy burden that it is required to bear.

The first problem in assessing the likely efficacy of what is proposed is that so much of what is proposed is not in the Bill. So much depends on orders yet to be made by the Secretary of State and on rules yet to be made by the SIB and the SROs, five of which do not yet exist. The rules on how conflicts of interest are to be avoided have yet to be established. The Opposition share the anxieties expressed in some quarters about the proposals for rules concerning the licensing of insurance salesmen as expressed by MIBOC. The rules on the disclosure of commissions are not yet available. Of the seven SROs likely to be recognised, only two have been in existence for any length of time and only one, the stock exchange, has any record of capacity to provide effective regulation. We are left in the dark as to how effective the structure will be in regulating the City.

The second problem is the sheer complexity of what is proposed. There will immediately be an unnecessarily complicated structure arising from the fact that the Secretary of State intends to delegate his powers to an SIB. The SIB in turn will supervise SROs which will then regulate their members. Bearing in mind that five of those SROs do not yet exist, one can see straightaway that there is an inbuilt uncertainty and complexity about that point.

Added to the already complex structure is the possibility that many people will seek direct authorisation. The SIB will, in a sense, act as an SRO bypassing other SROs. In addition, many of the new financial conglomerates will have to belong to several SROs which will, in many cases, have overlapping jurisdictions. For example, investment managers may choose to belong either to NASDIM or to the as yet non-existent investment management regulatory organisation.

Added to that, some institutions, such as banks, building societies and insurance companies would also be subject to a different system of regulation. Banks will be regulated by the Bank of England, insurance companies by the Department of Trade and Industry and building societies by provisions in the new Building Societies Bill. That will create awkward problems of competing jurisdictions and the SROs will have difficult demarcation questions to resolve for themselves.

The stock exchange and the new international securities regulatory organisation have yet to resolve who is to take the lead in regulating the hitherto unregulated market in international securities. And all that is to say nothing of the professionals—solicitors, accountants and others—who, because they offer investment advice, will also have to be brought within the provisions of the Bill and will have to become authorised persons, presumably by virtue of their membership of a recognised professional body.

This whole ramshackle, unwieldy structure might just have a chance of working if there were a clear statutory framework, established by the Bill, to provide us with much-needed coherence. But much of the complexity and uncertainty that is inherent in the Bill arises from the fact that there is a gaping hole at the heart of it.

When one asks the simple question, "Who is to be at the apex of the pyramid to control the structure of statutory rules under which the SROs will regulate themselves from day to day?", one sees that the Bill is strangely silent or gives only a partial and coy answer. We have to wait until clause 96 before there is a glancing reference to a body corporate. It is not identified; one imagines that it will be a group of chaps on whom the Secretary of State's eye might happen to alight. In other words, what is missing is the keystone of the arch of regulations: a body with its own statutory identity, its own powers and, above all, independence from the City.

The problem with the SIB is not only its uncertain status but the fact that it will be financed by, and largely staffed from, the City. It is hard to see how it can be relied upon to regulate effectively those on whom it is financially dependent.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gould: No. I am sorry, but I have very little time.

The failure to put in place a self-standing commission, independent of the City, with its own statutory identity and powers, is in marked contrast to the position in virtually every other capital market in the advanced world. Efforts are made to allude to an SEC on the American model, but we do not necessarily want a lawyer-ridden and bureaucratic institution of that type, although we must admit that the SEC has improved its operations considerably in recent years. There are in other jurisdictions many statutory models working well and with

the warm endorsement of the practitioners involved. Ontario is an excellent example which I commend to the Government.

The pity is that, in this respect, the Government have allowed themselves to be overtaken by City opinion. The structure proposed by the Bill — the unsatisfactory compromise contained in it — would probably be rejected by a majority in the City which recognises the desirability, or perhaps only the inevitability, of some form of statutory commission. It is interesting that one of the Secretary of State's predecessors, Sir John Nott, is on record to that effect, and I was much taken by the argument of the hon. Member for Chichester in support of that view.

The problems and uncertainties that will be faced are so great that there must surely be a premium on the simplest, clearest and most direct form of regulation that is available. The Bill is weak-kneed and pussy-footing on that central question. It leaves the whole structure broken-backed and we shall table amendments to remedy that central defect.

Further deficiencies arise out of that central problem surrounding the powers that the SIB is to be granted. The Bill fails to give the SIB the power to enforce changes in the rules of SROs quickly and directly. It also fails to provide the SIB with powers to initiate prosecutions. That is probably explained by the fact that it would be inappropriate to give such powers to a non-statutory body.

Lloyd's is the most startling omission from the Bill. Clause 40 specifically excludes Lloyd's because the Government argue that Lloyd's is primarily an insurance business rather than an investment business. Lloyd's is an insurance business regulated by the DTI, but that should not matter, because it would not be the only body subjected under the Bill to two different systems of regulation. For those who are names in Lloyd's and invest in Lloyd's there can be no doubt that it is an investment business. That investment business has caused all the problems. As an investment business, Lloyd's should be regulated under the Bill.

Clause 40 concedes my point, because it takes the trouble to exclude the investment side of Lloyd's operations. If it were not for clause 40, that investment business would be included in the Bill. We oppose that specific exclusion.

It is difficult to accept the omission of Lloyd's, because Lloyd's has given rise to more anxiety than any other City institution. It almost beggars belief that the main cause of worry has been omitted from a Bill that is designed to regulate the City.

Lloyd's maintains that we have nothing to fear because the scandals occurred before 1982. That may be true, but there is good reason for doubt. There is little in Lloyd's recent history to inspire confidence. There have been the problems with the Inland Revenue that necessitated the huge inquiry, the resignation of the Bank of England appointed chief executive following a row about his independence, the difficulty in prosecuting admitted criminals at Lloyd's and the failure to compensate investors in the PCW and other syndicates for their losses. It could be said that Lloyd's role in that affair was to obstruct rather than to help investors.

Let us consider the case of the then Minister for Trade, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher) who was misled about how many members of the syndicate had passed the insolvency test, which led to the Minister making a misleading statement to the House. As my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) pointed out, to protect a former chairman of Lloyd's there was an attempt to prevent the disclosure of his involvement in some of the recent difficulties. Those factors mean that we cannot allow Lloyd's to be left to its own devices.

Lloyd's is important as a body but also because it is the best illustration of what can go wrong and of what has gone wrong when there is self-regulation and no effective element of outside supervision. What went wrong at Lloyd's was not caused by a few crooks at the margin. Those at the heart of the Lloyd's establishment embraced the baby syndicates and the reinsurance arrangements that were the vehicle for fraud. The regulators at Lloyd's lost sight of the distinction between what was acceptable and what was not. The City cannot afford the luxury of that introspection. We shall do all that we can to prevent the Bill from allowing Lloyd's to continue on that course.

The announcement made last week of an inquiry is a transparent tactic to head off an all-party campaign to ensure that Lloyd's is brought within proper control. If the hon. Member for Chichester wishes statutory provisions to define the role of the chief executive, the Bill will be his best opportunity for a long time.

The problem is not only that some elements in the City are too close to the subject to make proper judgments. The Government have found it difficult to disentangle themselves from the interests of that dwindling minority in the City who continue to oppose effective regulation. The Bill is a product of a Government who have listened too attentively to the siren voices. They have been too cautious, too timid and too reluctant to face down those who would oppose regulation, and they have been too short-sighted to face up to their responsibilities. The Bill is a disappointment. It does not measure up to the problems that the City of the future will face.

If the Bill passes into law in its present form, it will fail to resolve the problems faced by the City, and, what is more, it will guarantee that further and more far-reaching legislation will shortly be required.

9.35 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): Before I address some of the numerous issues which have been raised in this debate may I, for the benefit of those few right hon. and hon. Members present who were not in the House at 3.16 am on 19 December, when I replied to a debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill, repeat what I said then about my own position in relation to Lloyd's?

I ceased all underwriting at Lloyd's on 2 September, the day on which I was appointed to the Government, in accordance with the conventions applying to Ministers in my position. I accordingly ceased on that day to be a member of any of the syndicates in which I had previously participated.

I remain a non-underwriting member of Lloyd's, but I have no further business there save for that arising out of my pre-existing contracts before they expire.

Mr. Gould: As the Minister said, so few people were present when he last made his statement that it may be desirable to amplify it somewhat. Will he confirm that he remains a member of Lloyd's and is entitled, for example, to go into the room? If he cannot, for any reason,

[Mr. Gould]

disentangle himself from his involvement with Lloyd's as Peter Cameron-Webb seemed able quickly and successfully to do, does he not regard that as a reason for withdrawing his supervision of the Bill and handing it to another Minister?

Mr. Howard: The answer to that is no.

When my right hon. and learned Friend opened this debate, he began by referring to the importance and success of the financial services sector of our economy. Those remarks have been echoed by several right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House who have contributed to the debate. It is a sector that has proved itself capable of responding to the needs of the marketplace and the challenge of overseas competition. The City of London has become established as an essential leg of the world financial tripod competing effectively with New York and Tokyo.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I was unable to hear the Minister's declaration of his interest in Lloyd's.

Mr. Speaker: I thought that the Minister made a very fair declaration.

Mr. Howard: The City of London has become established as an essential leg of the world financial tripod competing effectively with New York and Tokyo and taking full advantage of its pivotal position in relation to time zones.

Mr. Mitchell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has told us that he no longer deals at Lloyd's. He has not told us what is his financial interest in Lloyd's.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister made a statement of his interests at the beginning of the debate.

Mr. Howard: I repeat what I said——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Howard: I remain a non-underwriting member of Lloyd's.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: The Minister did not say that.

Mr. Howard: That is what I said earlier, and the record will show that. I have no continuing interest in Lloyd's save for the pre-existing contracts into which I entered, until they expire. Those are the words which I read at the beginning of my speech.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): Will the Minister explain when those contracts expire and what they are worth?

Mr. Howard: There is no requirement for me do that. I have no idea what the contracts are worth. It means that I cannot renege on any debts that arise or bring those liabilities to an end in any other way.

I should now like to deal with some of the issues raised in the debate. I should like to express my gratitude to those of my right hon. and hon. Friends who have expressed support for the principles enshrined in the Bill. I will confine myself to singling out for particular mention my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher), who, together with my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), made such an enormously distinguished contribution to the preparation of this legislation. I am happy to have this opportunity to acknowledge that.

I have no doubt that the principle of the concept of self-regulation or regulation by practitioners within a statutory framework is the right basis on which to build. When it comes to the daily regulation of the way business is done in the market place and the application to those who transact investment business of the principles governing the conduct of that business which are set out in the Bill, there is no alternative to regulation in that market place by those who know how it works, who understand the complexities that often arise—

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose—*

Mr. Howard —and who are organisationally equipped to take quick and effective action and to make that action stick.

To suggest that in some way this process could be carried out more effectively on the basis of an exclusively statutory system of law, enforced by the courts at the behest of lawyers, reveals a complete failure to understand the nature of the exercise which is necessary and with which we are concerned.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), the Minister was asked a specific question. He was also asked the question by a number of my hon. Friends. The Minister has not been forthcoming in his declaration. Is it not true that the Minister is in a position to divest himself totally of his interest in Lloyd's? Would he care to deny that that is the case?

Mr. Speaker: The point of order should have been addressed to me and not to the Minister. I cannot answer for him.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. In his declaration of interest the Minister told us that he has a continuing income from contracts agreed at Lloyd's before he became a Minister. We need to know whether the continuation of that income depends on the regulation or the non-regulation of Lloyd's under this Bill.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would it not be helpful if Opposition Members understood how Lloyd's liability actually works before they start criticising people who cannot divest themselves of possible losses?

Mr. Speaker: Points of order are a matter for me. I cannot answer for the Minister. What I can say is that the Minister has made a declaration of his interests and has divested himself of that interest, as I understand all Ministers are required to do.

Mr. Foulkes: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understood that it was the case that Ministers should divest themselves of all pecuniary interests, all outside interests, that conflict with ministerial responsibility and matters about which they are meant to speak to this House. In your view, Mr. Speaker, would it not be more appropriate for another Minister from this Department who does not have an interest to deal with this Bill?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is now seeking to draw me into the argument. I am not prepared to be drawn into the argument.

Mr. Foulkes: Why not?

Mr. Speaker: It is not a matter for me.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Page 411 of "Erskine May" says:

"No Member who has a direct pecuniary interest in a question is allowed to vote upon it; but, in order to operate as a disqualification, this interest must be immediate and personal,".

My point of order relates to the vote which is due at Ten o'clock. Will you confirm, Mr. Speaker, that it is within the knowledge of this House that your predecessor, Mr. Speaker Thomas, when he had this point raised by me and many of my hon. Friends on the Second Reading of the Lloyd's Bill some three years ago, advised people in exactly the same position as the Minister who were members of Lloyd's, including all those who declared any kind of interest as members of Lloyd's, and those who declared the kind of interest declared this evening by the Minister, not to vote on the Bill? If Mr. Speaker Thomas so advised, why should this Minister be allowed to vote on this Bill?

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I could clear up that issue immediately. There is a distinction between a private Bill and a public Bill. In matters of public policy, it has been the long-standing practice of the House — originally formulated as far back as 1811 by Mr. Speaker Abbot— that there is no obligation on an hon. Member to refrain from voting on a matter of public policy.

Mr. Straw: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Page 411 of "Erskine May" directly quotes Mr. Speaker Abbot. The passage which I read out does not relate solely to private Bills; it relates to all Bills. Mr. Speaker Abbot said:

"This interest must be a direct pecuniary interest, and separately belonging to the persons whose votes were questioned, and not in common with the rest of his Majesty's subjects, or on a matter of state policy."

State policy, not public policy. We are discussing a Bill that directly relates to a society of Lloyd's of which the Minister is a member and in which he has admitted that he has a direct financial and continuing interest. Surely that comes within what is said on page 411 of "Erskine May".

Mr. Speaker: I do not need any help on this matter because I have carried out my research on it, as the House would expect. I am in no doubt that on matters of public policy—this is a matter of public policy—it has always been the practice for hon. Members to be able to vote. There is a clear distinction between matters of public policy and private Bills.

Mr. Straw: On a point of order——

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On a point of order——

Mr. Howard *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Points of order are for me.

Mr. Straw: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. If what you are saying is exactly correct, will you explain why there is a separate section in "Erskine May" on page 413 on personal interests and votes on private Bills, while the section I have quoted on page 411 plainly relates to Divisions on public Bills? I have now read the whole section. If this is not a direct pecuniary interest which would disqualify an hon. Member from voting on it, what is?

Mr. Gould: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. It may be helpful if we make it clear that the point that is exercising the minds of Opposition Members is not that the Minister failed to make a declaration. We accept that he has made an accurate declaration. We are prepared to accept also that, for one reason or another, he cannot divest himself of his interest. The point that concerns us is whether, in those circumstances, he should present himself at the Dispatch Box to pilot this measure through the House and vote on it at the end of the debate and throughout the Committee. It is on that point that we seek your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: I give my ruling. On matters of public policy, it is in order for an hon. Member to cast his vote.

Mr. Howard: I was dealing earlier——

Mr. Spearing *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I have given my ruling.

Mr. Spearing: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Howard: I was dealing with the question that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State raised——

Mr. Spearing: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your assistance on the distinction between making a declaration and voting, on which you have ruled, and the question whether a Minister of the Crown who is introducing a Bill may have a direct pecuniary interest in a matter on which he seeks legislation or a potential matter which it can cover. Is not the Minister's interest a separate and different matter from the issue of voting and declaration by an hon. Member on a private Bill?

Mr. Speaker: The Minister, like all Ministers, is subject to the ministerial regulations concerning private interest, and he has so declared.

Mr. Howard: I was dealing with the question some time ago which my right hon. and learned Friend had posed earlier on. He said that it was no use talking about "fully statutory systems" or comparable phrases as if the phrase were a label which could be pinned on a regulatory system as some mark of approval. To discuss the question in that way is to avoid the need to give any real thought to the practicalities of the system and how it would actually work. No one was more guilty of the label-pinning approach to the kind of legislation with which the House is concerned tonight than the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. J. Smith) who, I am sorry to see, is not in his place at this stage—although there is, no doubt, an excellent reason for that.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that he wanted an independent, self-standing commission. He prayed in aid of his case — it was a measure of the weakness of the case — a leading article from the *Financial Times* of 18 October 1984. In order to bolster his case, the right hon. and learned Gentleman had to go back to an issue of the *Financial Times* which was published three months before the publication of the White Paper on which this legislation is based and 14 months before the Bill itself was published. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman had been a little more up to date he would have found rather different statements in leading articles of the *Financial Times*.

No doubt the reason that he did not use the leading article which greeted the White Paper in January of this

[Mr. Howard]

year was that that article said that, although there were reservations about the structures proposed by the Government, there were no quarrels with the guiding principles. He could have quoted from the leading article published on the day after the Bill itself was published, but no doubt he chose not to quote from that because it said that the framework set out in the Bill deserved the strongest support. Rather inconvenient for his argument as those leading articles were, therefore, he went back to one published in October 1984 in order to summon up some scant support for the proposition that he was advancing.

The fact is that Opposition Members who have sought to put forward differences between what they want and what is set out in the Bill, have totally failed to identify with any clarity whatever, precisely what it is that they see as the advantage in some artificial hypothetical system which they choose not to identify but which they apparently commend to the House.

The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), who spoke on behalf of the Liberal party, put forward a number of detailed points, assuring the House that they represented not the first and perhaps not the second reaction of his party to the proposals in the Bill but either the third or the fourth, I was not quite sure which.

Mr. Ashdown: They are well thought out.

Mr. Howard: He says that they are well thought out.

I do not complain about the fact that he and his party were in a state of doubt about the Bill. What is interesting is the way in which they seek to implement that state of doubt. The way in which they do it, as the hon. Gentleman assured us when he came to tell us how his party would vote, is that they will vote against the Bill tonight. He sought refuge in the reflex which always governs the Liberal party's actions in these matters: when in doubt vote with Labour. He and his colleagues are in doubt about this Bill and they propose to manifest that doubt by going into the Lobby with Labour Members when it comes to the vote tonight.

I turn now to Lloyd's and why it is excluded from the Bill. The reason why Lloyd's is not covered by the Bill is simple. The main business of Lloyd's is insurance, insurance that is written purely to provide protection and which is not the kind of long-term investment insurance which is covered by the Bill. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Howard: The way in which Lloyd's is organised means that carrying on that insurance business necessarily implies that some investment business is carried out—for example, the investment management of insurance premiums received by members of Lloyd's before claims are paid — but the essence of Lloyd's is insurance business, which is therefore significantly different from the investment business which is the concern of the Bill.

There are considerable advantages in regulating all Lloyd's activities and protecting fully the policyholders and names in a single piece of legislation and within a single, comprehensive framework. Such a piece of legislation exists. It is the Lloyd's Act 1982, giving the council of Lloyd's very wide-ranging powers. Hon. Members must recognise that it is the protection of the policyholders which is paramount and that Lloyd's has an enviable record of success in this area: no valid claim from a policyholder has ever failed to be met.

We recognise the anxiety that exists in many quarters about the adequacy of the 1982 Act, and the working of the regulatory system set up under it in terms of the protection which is afforded to names. That is why my right hon. and learned Friend set up an inquiry into the matter. That inquiry will be full, vigorous and independent, and I am grateful to right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who have welcomed it.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin) gave the House in measured tones his doubts about the exclusion of Lloyd's from the Bill, and dealt with those reasons which he had not found persuasive, but recognised that in the light of the inquiry there were advantages in waiting for its recommendations and conclusions before taking any decision. Clearly, some people have not been satisfied by that action, and have called for the inclusion of Lloyd's in the Bill in advance of the outcome of the inquiry. They seek to deny the House the advantage of the inquiry's examination of the problem, and its conclusions and recommendations before deciding what action should be taken.

To bring Lloyd's within the scope of the Bill would involve forfeiting those advantages, introducing the extremely difficult practical problems of marrying two different systems of regulations contained in two different sets of legislation, and imposing substantial and unnecessary burdens on both Lloyd's and the regulation of financial services envisaged by the Bill. None of those who have complained about the omission of Lloyd's from the Bill have dealt adequately with those difficulties.

Some right hon. and hon. Gentlemen have raised questions about the extent to which the Bill provides powers for dealing with enforcement. The Government's position is clear. We have repeatedly made clear our determination to tackle fraud, but it is also important to tackle less serious malpractice which results in investors getting a raw deal. The Bill will help to do both. The requirement to be authorised will help to keep potential fraudsters out of investment businesses. Contravention of the requirement will be a criminal offence, and relatively easy to prove. The Bill will make it easier to detect fraud and malpractice. There will be extensive powers to monitor and investigate authorised businesses. The combined investigation resources of the Department of Trade and Industry, the designated agency and the SROs will make it more difficult for wrongdoers to escape detection. Problems once discovered must be effectively dealt with. We are strengthening the criminal law and increasing the resources devoted to enforcement. Criminal law is only part of the solution. Disciplinary action and remedies to recover investors' losses from misconduct are equally important.

The Bill extends the existing rights of an investor to sue a business. That may be expensive, so the Bill enables the Secretary of State or the agency to go to court on an investor's behalf. It is even better to resolve disputes without having to go to court, and I welcome the proposal of the Securities and Investments Board to set up an ombudsman scheme.

The Bill provides tough powers against offenders. The Secretary of State or the agency can withdraw or suspend authorisation, and can use a wide range of intervention powers to protect investors. Those measures will not only

catch misbehaviour, but will deter it, which is even more important. I am confident that the Bill will provide all the powers necessary to investigate and act on all sorts of fraud and malpractice. By harnessing the expertise and resources of the City with those of the Government we should be able to secure better protection for investors.

Shortly after I was appointed, I wrote to many right hon. and hon. Members who had expressed an interest in the subject, including Labour Members, saying that I hoped that we could approach this important legislative measure in a constructive and non-partisan spirit so as to ensure that we ended up with the best possible solutions to the problems with which the Bill seeks to deal. That is my objective, and I am confident that we can achieve it. In that spirit I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. Speaker: The original Question was, That the Bill be now read a Second time, since when an amendment has been moved——

Mr. Walter Harrison (Wakefield): On a point of order——

Mr. John Cope (Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household) *rose in his place and claimed to move*, That the Question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, put and agreed to.

Question accordingly put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 184, Noes 359.

Division No. 35] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S.)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Concannon, Rt Hon J. D.
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'hauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kilroy-Silk, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, M.
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Rowlands, Ted
Ryman, John
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Torney, Tom
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John McWilliam and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Berth, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigga-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruce, Malcolm
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam

Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alexander (*Montg'y*)
Carlisle, John (*Luton N*)
Carlisle, Kenneth (*Lincoln*)
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. (*W'ton S*)
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. (*Plym'th S'n*)
Clark, Dr Michael (*Rochford*)
Clark, Sir W. (*Croydon S*)
Clarke, Rt Hon K. (*Rushcliffe*)
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. (*P'broke*)
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael (*Stirling*)
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter (*Angus East*)
Freeman, Roger
Freud, Clement
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George (*Reigate*)
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter (*Portsm'th N*)
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. (*Epsom*)
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, C. (*High Peak*)
Hawkins, Sir Paul (*N'folk SW*)
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip (*Gedling*)
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan (*Stratf'd-on-A*)
Howarth, Gerald (*Cannock*)
Howell, Rt Hon D. (*G'ldford*)
Howell, Ralph (*Norfolk, N*)
Howells, Geraint
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hughes, Simon (*Southwark*)
Hunt, David (*Wirral*)
Hunt, John (*Ravensbourne*)
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym (*Cardiff N*)
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Roger (*B'ham N'field*)
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg (*Derby N*)
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John (*Pendle*)
Leigh, Edward (*Gainsbor'gh*)
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth (*Stamf'd*)
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Ian (*Havant*)
Lloyd, Peter, (*Fareham*)
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew (*Berkshire*)
MacKay, John (*Argyll & Bute*)
Maclean, David John
Maclennan, Robert
McNair-Wilson, M. (*N'bury*)
McNair-Wilson, P. (*New F'st*)
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael (*Arundel*)
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Meadowcroft, Michael
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal (*B'grove*)
Mills, Iain (*Meriden*)
Miscampbell, Norman
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon P. (*Chester*)
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John (*Harrow W*)
Page, Richard (*Herts SW*)
Parris, Matthew
Patten, Christopher (*Bath*)
Patten, J. (*Oxf W & Abdgn*)
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Penhaligon, David
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William (*Corby*)
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn (*Conwy*)
Robinson, Mark (*N'port W*)
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, Stephen (*Isle of Wight*)
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles (*Pudsey*)
Shaw, Sir Michael (*Scarb'*)
Shelton, William (*Streatham*)
Shepherd, Richard (*Aldridge*)
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley (*Warwick*)
Smith, Tim (*Beaconsfield*)
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spence, John
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim (*Dorset W*)
Spicer, Michael (*S Worcs*)
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, John
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis (*Nuneaton*)
Stewart, Allan (*Eastwood*)
Stewart, Andrew (*Sherwood*)
Stewart, Ian (*Hertf'dshire N*)
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John (*Solihull*)
Taylor, Teddy (*S'end E*)
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald (*Calder V*)
Thompson, Patrick (*N'ich N*)
Thorne, Neil (*Ilford S*)
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John (*Bridlington*)
Townsend, Cyril D. (*B'heath*)
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wainwright, R.
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. (*W'cester*)
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. (*Bexhill*)
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen (*Hertford*)
Wells, Sir John (*Maidstone*)
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George (*Acton*)
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Carol Mather and
Mr. Robert Boscawen.

Main Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 41 (Amendment on second or third reading.)

The House divided: Ayes 335, Noes 205.

Division No. 36] **[10-15pm**

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parris, Matthew
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spence, John
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*

Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Carol Mather and
Mr. Robert Boscawen.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S.)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Concannon, Rt Hon J. D.
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kilroy-Silk, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ryman, John
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds e)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. John McWilliam and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 42 (Committal of Bills).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Ways and Means Motion may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour. — *[Mr. Sainsbury.]*

Financial Services Bill [Money]

Mr. Speaker: The question is the money resolution——

Mr. Walter Harrison (Wakefield): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I shouted, "No" when you put the Question on the business of the House. I did so several times, and I had 20 hon. Members to support me. I wished to vote against the business of the House motion.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have put that question and I have collected the voices, but I shall put again the question on the money resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Financial Services Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of any expenses incurred under that Act by the Secretary of State, the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies and the Registrar of Friendly Societies for Northern Ireland.

FINANCIAL SERVICES BILL (WAYS AND MEANS)

Question put,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Financial Services Bill, it is expedient to authorise the charging of fees and the making of payments into the Consolidated Fund. — *[Mr. Sainsbury.]*

The House proceeded to a Division——

There being no second teller for the Noes, MR. SPEAKER *declared that the Ayes had it.*

Motor Vehicle Emissions

10.31 pm

The Minister for Environment, Countryside and Local Government (Mr. William Waldegrave): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 7283/85 on motor vehicle emissions; and supports the conclusions reached at the meetings of the Council of Environment Ministers on 28th June and 28th November 1985.

Just over a year ago — on 4 December 1984 — this House debated document 7805/84, published by the European Commission in June of that year. That document contained two draft directives, one on the lead content of petrol, and one on vehicle emissions.

In the second half of 1984, progress on the two directives was made at very different speeds. By the time of the debate in December, we were already close to a substantial agreement on petrol-lead; and as a directive that resulted from a United Kingdom initiative, I am pleased that it was adopted as directive 85/210/EEC by the Council of Ministers last March.

By contrast, it was clear that the draft emissions directive had a long way to go; and, not surprisingly therefore, our debate at the end of 1984 concentrated on petrol-lead. I explained during that debate that we expected to have a further opportunity to debate vehicle emissions once the Commission had brought forward new proposals.

At the beginning of June last year, the Commission brought forward new proposals in the form of a revision of its original draft directive. That revision was contained in document 7283/85, which the House is now considering.

As the House will know, agreement on the framework of a new directive was reached by most environment Ministers later last June, and on various outstanding matters in November. Denmark and Greece maintain general reserves which must be lifted before the directive can be adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Before I describe the main elements of the draft directive as it now stands, in the light of the substantial agreements at the Council it is important for me to put vehicle emissions in some historic perspective. The first legislation on vehicle emissions was directed at carbon monoxide, because of the such possible effects on human health as kerbside concentrations built up under certain conditions. That concern has now much diminished as carbon monoxide levels have fallen in the last 10 to 15 years.

Concern is now focused more on levels of nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons, which contribute to the formation of secondary atmospheric pollution, such as acid rain and ozone. These pollutants can give rise to environmental damage to buildings and vegetation and to the acidification of freshwaters.

It is estimated that in this country petrol engine vehicles are responsible for about 30 per cent. of national emissions of nitrogen oxides from man-made sources, and about 40 per cent. of the environmentally reactive hydrocarbons.

In approaching the recent negotiations, the Government aimed for a step-by-step approach designed to tighten standards as improving technology allowed us to do so in a cost-effective manner.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My hon. Friend said that the Greeks and the Danes put a reserve on the directive. Since those debates took place, the Spanish and Portuguese have entered the Community. Do they have a reserve, do they have to agree to the directive, or have they already agreed to it? Will it apply to them at the same rate as it applies to other Community countries?

Mr. Waldegrave: Those countries were not legal participants in the decision-taking; they were not part of the process that led to it. They would have to agree to the directive in due course. I shall check this and write to my hon. Friend to confirm it — I think that they have said that they will conform to the directive according to the time scales laid down in it.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Will the Minister confirm that the Danes put a reserve on the directive because they are concerned that it is not environmentally satisfactory? The Greeks did so for a different reason — they have a fundamental concern about the weakness of the directive.

Mr. Waldegrave: As in some other matters, the Danes are pulled two ways, with their overlapping membership of the Scandinavian bloc and of the European Community. They want to go down the same route as the Scandinavians, towards the full American standards. For reasons that I shall describe more fully, we think that that is unnecessary and would be a mistake in industrial and energy conservation terms. They have yet to persuade themselves to join in. I think that it would be fair to say that the leading country in tightening up the standards is Germany, which has accepted the directive.

An important development in the step-by-step, balanced approach was the new fuel-efficient lean burn technology, which various manufacturers, including those in the United Kingdom, had been developing. That technology produces marked reductions in emissions of NO_x and CO, and because those reductions result from the intrinsic design of the engine, they will continue throughout the life of the car.

Some member states — and the Scandinavians, as the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) said — preferred the technology developed in the United States over the 1970s to meet the, in fact, rather different, environmental problems faced, in particular, in urban California. That is the three-way catalytic converter technology, which can achieve, through a combination of engine combustion control and catalyst technology, substantial reductions in emissions of all three primary pollutants — NO_x, HC and CO — in test conditions. It was a technology that might make some sense in America, certainly at that time, where cars are larger and fuel is cheaper than in Europe, particularly at a time when there appeared to be no feasible alternative. I pay tribute to Johnson Matthey Chemicals, a British company that has won a substantial share of the world market in those products.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for mentioning Johnson Matthey Chemicals, which is in my constituency. It is a market leader in the production and technology of those catalyst converters, as my hon. Friend will be aware. Is he further aware that it has submitted a document on the subject to the Select Committee on European Legislation?

If my hon. Friend has not seen it, he should take the opportunity to do so, because it is a contribution to the debate. It believes that if the directive is not adopted, cars sold in the United Kingdom will cause more pollution than cars sold in Germany or other European countries.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall refer to the timescale and the arguments about implementation. Like all such directives, this directive is permissive. It says what countries are allowed to insist on it. It is crucial for what this country and others will do. I shall mention that at the end of my speech. Although we believe, particularly for medium and small cars, that the lean burn route is right, I do not want to belittle the achievement of that company in winning a major share of world markets where the other route has been taken. It is even more difficult for the company as it does not have a home market in the product.

We have always questioned whether three-way catalysts are the best available technology for Europe in the mid-1980s. There are various reasons for that. The first is that our cars tend to be smaller and more economical than in America, so that additional manufacturing and running costs are a more significant part of the total cost for the consumer. The second is that fuel is more expensive.

The third is that bench test results on a new car do not necessarily give a fair reflection of emissions over the total life of a car. Indeed, experience in the United States suggests that the emissions performance of cars with three way catalysts can in practice deteriorate considerably over their life. Fourthly, we now have, in the new lean burn engine, an alternative technology which can, over the life of a car, reduce NO_x probably as well as a three way catalyst, even though it may not do quite so well on the test bench.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle (Lincoln): I think that everybody accepts that the lean burn engine is a tremendous advance, in that it reduces bad emissions from cars, but does my hon. Friend accept that it does not get rid of hydrocarbons which contribute greatly to ozone in the atmosphere and lead to acid rain? Does he therefore believe that it will be necessary to add to an oxidation catalyst to the lean burn engine in order to deal with hydrocarbons?

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The lean burn engine will reduce NO_x, but if further big gains are to be made in relation to hydrocarbons the oxidation catalyst, with the lean burn, is one of the options that we shall have to consider. The oxidation catalyst is much cheaper than the full three-way catalyst.

I turn now to the agreement that was reached in the council last June, which was further amplified in November. This concerns gaseous emissions from all petrol engined vehicles and diesel engined vehicles up to 3·5 tonnes. As I have said, the agreement is not yet complete, because it is still subject to the two general reserves to which reference has already been made.

Like all the directives governing standards, this directive, if adopted, will be a permissive directive enabling member states to apply standards to various categories of vehicles from specified dates in the future, but leaving them free to apply less strict standards if they so choose.

We expect the directive to contain the following specific provisions. For cars above two litres, member states will be allowed to require emission levels of equivalent severity to those applied in the United States of America by the "federal 1983" standard. The earliest date of any such requirement in Europe will be 1 October 1988 for new type approvals and 1 October 1989 for newly-registered vehicles. Manufacturers will have three options for certifying compliance with these standards. The first is to present results from tests conducted to satisfy United States vehicle test authorities — the straight American test. The second is to meet a replication of the United States test in a European test house. The third is to meet European standards, on the European test cycle, which are estimated to be equivalent to the United States limits on the, different, United States test cycle. The European limit values for this third option would be 25g per test for CO; 6·5g per test for the combined masses of HC and NO_x; and 3·5g per test for NO_x separately. It seems that at least three member states — Germany, Luxembourg and Denmark — will take advantage of these provisions immediately or in the near future. The cars likely to be sold in those markets will be models based on ones that have been developed for export to the United States of America which are already fitted with the three-way catalyst system. The cost of this system is estimated to be about £500 to £800. There would also be fuel economy penalties of about £250 per annum.

For medium sized cars—1·4 to 2 litres—we expect that a technologically more satisfactory route should be possible in most cases. The standards for these medium sized cars should be achieved by lean burn techniques combined with oxidation catalysts, as my hon. Friend the Member for Lincoln (Mr. Carlisle) said, or by comparable cost-effective techniques. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to use the three way catalyst system. This would mean that costs would be similar to those for large cars. Otherwise we expect the additional costs to be of the order of £125 per car, compared with £500 for the three way catalyst system. The fuel economy savings of the lean burn technology will be largely preserved, as opposed to the penalty under the three way catalyst system.

Mr. Iain Mills (Meriden): Has my hon. Friend made any allowance for the effect that this would have on the Austin Rover group compared with European manufacturers in the 1·4 to 2 litre category?

Mr. Waldegrave: As my hon. Friend can imagine, we have had very close consultations, through the Department of Trade and Industry, with Austin Rover, whose interest in the medium category has been in the forefront of our minds. Our view is that we have to decide how far we can push Austin Rover perhaps more quickly than it would like to go at a time when it is re-establishing itself in markets and when it is on its way back to success without running the risk of fragmenting the European market into several bits. That would have greatly damaged the European Community and the sales of cars throughout the Community, and in the long run that would have affected Austin Rover. I will not disguise the fact from my hon. Friend that I can think that, if Austin Rover had been writing the directive, it would not have been so tight. I believe that the group's future development plans and considerable and growing new technological capacities will be able to meet that need and we have preserved a united European market in which it can compete.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Is it not the case that, since the directive was drawn up, there has been the problem of many European states imposing sanctions against the Republic of South Africa? Does not the catalytic converter depend on the use of rodium which can be obtained only from the Republic of South Africa? Is the Minister willing to consult his Community partners to find out how on earth governments are to introduce these converters depending on rodium when, under the law, they are not allowed to obtain rodium from South Africa?

Mr. Waldegrave: Platinum and rodium are indeed two of the important metals involved in the catalytic converter, but I believe that there are alternatives. We have always maintained that we will not impose three-way catalytic converter technology. That is not a problem for us in the immediate future, but my hon. Friend has made a fair point, although it is not perhaps of immediate relevance to the debate. It is true that the supply of these rare minerals that come from the southern part of Africa rely on the stability of that region and that applies to other goods.

Mr. Taylor: In view of that, will the Minister assure the House that he will consult his Community partners to ascertain whether, within their laws, they are still able to implement the directive?

Mr. Waldegrave: With respect to my hon. Friend, if a Community member chose to implement a directive which was not compulsory but permissive, and found that it could not obtain the materials to implement that directive, that would be a problem for the Community member and not for me. There are some other sources of rodium, but my hon. Friend's point is interesting and important and it might help my hon. Friend if I looked into the sources of rodium and wrote to him about that.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): There are other sources of rodium—in Zaire, Brazil and Peru.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is likely to be well informed on these matters, and I am grateful for his information.

I was discussing medium-sized cars. There is some penalty in the capital cost of the car with the lean burn route. Engine development is slightly more expensive. It will, however, retain fuel economy.

The limits for medium cars would be 30 g/test for CO; and 8 g/test for $HC+NO_x$ combined. There will be no separate limit for NO_x. The earliest application dates for this standard would be 1 October 1991 for new type approvals and 1 October 1993 for all new registrations. Generally, a single path of engine development should serve both for countries which decide fully to apply the standards and for those which do not.

Mr. Marlow: My hon. Friend mentioned the possible position of Austin Rover and said that this is permissive legislation. In other words, countries can apply it as and when they feel that it is appropriate to do so. If it were to help Austin Rover for the Government to be slightly more permissive than other Community Governments, would my hon. Friend consider that course?

Mr. Waldegrave: There are two or more items to balance in coming to that decision. There is the interest of the United Kingdom's environment and the motor industry as a whole. It is noticeable, for example, that Ford has recently made a large investment in this country in lean burn engine technology, aimed at the large market in the European Community as well as the British market. When we come to decide when we should implement these proposals, we will have to balance these matters. Of course, as in the past, the interests of the British motor industry will be close to our hearts when we come to make that decision.

For small cars of up to 1·4 litres, the agreement would provide for the Commission's stage I limits to be applied to new type approvals from October 1990 and for new registrations from October 1991. These limits are 45 g test for CO, 15 g/test for HC plus NO_x and 6 g/test for NO_x. That standard would be tightened two years later—the tighter standard to be worked out over the next two years for an amendment to the directive to be made in 1987. No particular technology or other conditions are specified as regards this tighter standard.

Although not part of the Commission's proposals, the June agreement also confirmed that member states that so wished could offer fiscal incentives for purchasers of cars that achieve lower emissions than those prescribed in the present directive. However, in doing so, the Council laid down a set of conditions for the incentives which limit their value.

At its meeting on 28 November, the last meeting, the Council considered a number of important outstanding questions. First, there was the question of dates from which member states might require new cars to be capable of running on unleaded petrol. That is a necessary counterpart to the directive to which I referred earlier about the supply of unleaded petrol. The Government wanted as early a date as possible for this facility, but some other member states and the Commission preferred a more relaxed timetable. Because of its composition, that would have meant 1993 for most of the United Kingdom car fleet. In the end, the dates were settled as 1 October 1988 for new models above 2000 cc; 1 October 1989 for the type approval of new models below 2 litres; and 1 October 1990 for the registration of all new cars, unless the manufacturer can certify that major re-engineering would be involved. That was a good outcome for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Dalyell: The hon. Gentleman mentioned fiscal incentives. What do the Government have in mind? Will they be significant or token incentives?

Mr. Waldegrave: The fiscal incentives to which I referred, which were delineated and limited in the June agreement, were the incentives offered primarily by the Germans against the capital costs of low-polluting cars.

As regards the introduction of lead-free petrol, which is perhaps what the hon. Gentleman has in mind, we recently issued a discussion paper that included the option of different tax treatments for different types of petrol. We are assessing the various comments made on that document, but I cannot yet give the hon. Gentleman our decision. The American experience was that incentives had to be large to be worthwhile, because of fluctuations in the price of petrol.

Mr. Iain Mills: Has my hon. Friend made an estimate of the effect on Austin Rover of a fiscal incentive to use lead-free petrol in the A-series engine, compared with other models, particularly imported models which do not have the same problems in the combustion of the engine?

Mr. Waldegrave: I understand that the principal problem with lead-free petrol is not so much combustion

as whether valve seats are hardened, because lead is the lubricant of the valves as well as an octane booster. Before reaching a decision on whether to use fiscal incentives —we have traditionally been wary of that; we have not had fiscal incentives for the use of diesel—all these matters will have to be considered.

As I said, the agreement on dates was a good outcome for the United Kingdom. We wanted a single, early date and we got a spread, but that is three or four years earlier than France, the Commission and others asked for.

A second question resolved in November was the treatment of cars equipped with direct-injection diesel engines. That is a new, fuel-efficient technology being developed principally, I say with some pride, in Britain by two British companies, Austin Rover and Perkins, which are well in advance of their continental competitors.

Although the June agreement recognised the special characteristics of large diesels by allowing them to meet the limit values for medium-sized cars, the question of the new direct-injection diesels had been left unresolved. It was agreed in November that such engines would not have to meet the new limits until October 1994 for new type approvals and October 1996 for new registrations. This represents a generally satisfactory outcome with regard to the direct injection diesel being developed by Austin Rover and Perkins.

The Council meeting in November also agreed correction factors to ensure that a car with an automatic or continuously variable transmission system should not be penalised in comparison with the equivalent manual transmission version with the same pollution control equipment. It also agreed application dates for new standards for utility vehicles of 1 October 1989 for new type approvals and 1 October 1990 for new registrations. These standards will be less stringent than those for passenger vehicles. The definition of off-road vehicles, which comes within this category, was agreed to include all Land-Rover models, obviously a point of particular importance to us. Finally, the Council settled various outstanding technical criteria for assessing the European equivalent of the United States test for large and medium cars.

That is the basic content of the directive as it now stands. If it is adopted, it will be, as I have said, a permissive directive. That brings me to the question of implementation. I have already explained how emission controls in this country have gradually developed as technology advances have pushed forward the definition of what is cost-effective. These have now brought us to the lean burn engine which, as I have said, promises both emission reductions and fuel savings. The Government wish to encourage this development, and therefore have no intention to impose standards in this country that would require manufacturers to use expensive three-way catalyst technology instead. We shall, of course, keep the situation under review.

It is worth remembering the progress that has been made. As recently as 1970, which is not all that long ago, the first European Community directive review allowed 134 grammes per cycle of carbon monoxide. We are now down to 30. In 1978 controls in Britain produced for medium cars something of the order of 12 grammes per test for NOx. This directive would halve that, divide that by two again. Therefore, progress has been steady. That has to be related to what can be reasonably cost effectively done by technology. That is why we keep the situation under review and proceed in what we hope is a fairly steady way forward.

Our understanding of the environmental effects of atmospheric pollution, and the contribution of vehicle emissions, is increasing all the time. We will have the opportunity to see just how manufacturers succeed in developing more cost-effective technology. I have no doubt that it will be possible in due course to introduce substantially improved standards in the United Kingdom for vehicle emissions without incurring the severe economic penalties and market distortions involved in the policies being followed by some other countries.

In the meantime, work is continuing on other fronts. The Commission is shortly to bring forward proposals for a standard for particulate emissions, particularly from heavy lorries, as far as possible consistent with cost effectiveness, and I hope that we can make progress on this in the Community in the coming months. The Commission is also expected shortly to bring forward proposals for gaseous emission controls on vehicles over 3·5 tonnes. By the end of 1987 we should have proposals for a revised European test cycle; and for the second stage limits for small cars.

The draft directive we are considering tonight will not, therefore, be the last word on vehicle emissions control. There will be further important measures in the next few years. In the meantime the directive, if adopted, will mark an important advance in Community legislation in this field. It would maintain the integrity of the internal market while acknowledging that, because the environmental effects of vehicle emissions vary from country to country, there may be some differences in requirements between member states. I commend the document to the House.

11.54 pm

Dr. David Clark (South Shields): We are discussing an issue which is highly technical and complicated, but important for the public health of the country, for the environment and for our motor car industry. On a number of key issues, the Minister was not as forthcoming as he usually is when he tries to explain rather complicated issues to the House. I felt he kept us on a string. He kept saying, "I will say a word about implementation and I will come to that at the end." When he came back to it, all he said was that the Government were not going to go along the route of the three-way catalytic converter. We knew that when we started: that was about the only thing we did know. A lot of questioning must be done this evening, because we want some assurances and some clarification from the Government.

As the Minister has said, these directives do not directly relate to lead. The elimination of lead in petrol is a prerequisite for the directives. Unless we get lead-free petrol, we cannot pursue the other courses.

I ask the Minister to be more forthcoming. He said that he had consulted widely. The environmental and other groups have appreciated the consultation on the implementation of the lead-free petrol regime. The hon. Gentleman has said that he is not yet ready. When will he be ready? In what form does he intend to respond to the questionnaires that he sent out?

It is worth re-emphasising that these proposals for emission standards are part of three inter-related directives. The first is that lead-free petrol should be available in 1989, and we all approve of that. Secondly,

[Dr. David Clark]

all new models at that time must be able to run on lead-free petrol. However, it is one thing to say that cars will be required to be able to run on lead-free petrol, but will they be required to run on lead-free petrol? Unless there is sufficient demand, the oil industry will be reluctant to install capital equipment to maintain the supply of lead-free petrol. That is a crucial point. Thirdly, there are emission controls.

It is worth while shouting loudly and clearly that, whereas the first directive—the introduction of lead-free petrol by 1989 — is mandatory, the other two are permissive. If this or any other EEC Government wish to do nothing about emission controls, they have the licence to do so under these directives. The directives merely lay down the maximum standards that any country can apply.

A number of fundamental questions arise. The first one is a $64,000 question which the Minister must answer tonight. Will the Government adopt these permissive directives? If they will not, we are wasting our time discussing them. How will the Government adopt them? The two questions are connected. If the methods of implementing the directives are not correct, it is irrelevant even to talk about implementation.

As I am not in any way suspicious, I naturally assume that the Government entered into the negotiations with our EEC partners in good will and honest intent. The Minister has pleaded his case for lower standards with great sincerity. Such was the line of argument that he successfully deployed at the negotiating table that he persuaded most of our allies — excluding in particular the Danes—to follow. Our neighbours agreed to reduce the standards. We should remember that these were maximum standards. Our neighbours, which face much more environmental tree damage than we do — especially Germany — agreed to make the sacrifice because they believed that they would get Britain's co-operation and compliance. I believe that many of them are beginning to mutter the words "Perfidious Albion", because it is clear that the British Government have no intention of implementing these directives. In essence, the Minister blatantly conned his ministerial colleagues when he persuaded them to accept lower standards.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman uses strong words about negotiating in bad faith. I believe that no one in the negotiating chamber is under the slightest doubt that this is a permissive directive. That is a misunderstanding thought up by some outside commentators who do not understand that the directives now, as under the Labour Government, have been permissive. They have always been carried out in the same way. I wholly reject the hon. Gentleman's serious accusation.

Dr. Clark: I am not questioning the rights or wrongs of European legislation, as to whether it should be mandatory or permissive. There are two types of regulations and directives, and I accept the tradition, the convention and the law. The point that I am making is that these directives are permissive. If they are permissive, therefore, we on the Opposition Benches are required to ask if the Government are going to adopt them. That is the whole point that I am making.

One might wonder why the other countries should think in this way. As the Minister has explained, the antecedents of these directives can be traced as far back as 1972, in our own case, but, in particular, the detailed negotiations on the set which we have before us tonight go back, basically, for the past 12 months. They were discussed in great detail last March. If we look at the Government stance on the method of trying to tackle the problem, we see variants.

On 23 March, in a letter to *The Guardian*, the Minister wrote:

"we would like to see the lean burn technology combined with a simple oxidation catalyst."

That seemed a very sensible approach because here we had the benefit of a new technology, with a lot of British input. Ford UK were very much to the fore in this, introducing a new generation of engines which were much more economical in fuel and much more efficient in the way in which they used it. As the Minister knows, Ford is now slowly going into the third generation of lean burn engine with considerable success. So we all applauded the Minister when he made that statement.

However, of course, things change. I suspect that the Department of Transport had some influence on the Department of the Environment and, of course, the Department of Transport has not got the best environmental record in this Government. We then find that in a statement in the other place the Government Minister, Lord Brabazon, said:

"the Government do not intend to impose standards on vehicles sold or used in this country which would require manufacturers to use catalyst technology." — [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 22 April 1985; Vol. 462, c. 972.]

So here we have the Minister in the Lords saying, "We are just going down the lean burn route and we are not going to have any catalysts involved." That is a step back because there are great dangers in following that particular route.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I note the point that the hon. Gentleman has just made, but does he not appreciate that companies which manufacture cars in this country — Austin Rover principally — in fact sell their cars to mainland Europe—Germany, France, Italy and elsewhere — and whatever the standard is in that country their product, manufactured here, has to meet the highest standards in the European market?

Dr. Clark: That is the very point that the Europeans are now making. We have lower standards in their countries, at a sacrifice to their environment and their public health, in the hope that we can make minor adaptations—one can easily add the oxidation catalyst, and it would cost only about £100, to any standard lean burn engine, and it would meet the lower standards which we persuaded our colleagues to accept. The point that the hon. Gentleman makes is very akin to the point made by our neighbours in the EEC.

If I might just develop this thesis of the Government going backwards a stage further, in a letter dated 12 July to Dr. Russell Jones of the Clear the Minister does one of his graceful shuffles again.

"We have at present no intention to set a standard which would require the use of oxidation catalysts."

That was the Government's position in July. It was a case of will-she won't-she. We have the right to know what the Government will do. Are they in favour of the lean-burn engine plus the oxidation catalyst? If so, we shall support them. If they opt for the lean-burn engine without the oxidation catalyst, we must take issue with them.

As the hon. Member for Lincoln (Mr. Carlisle) has already pointed out to the Minister, there are great dangers

involved in having the lean-burn engine without the oxidation catalyst. Unless the Minister changes the Government's approach as he has described it, he will cause greater damage to our environment and public health than if we did not change course. The lean-burn engine reduces oxides in nitrogen, and carbon monoxide, but the Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell has shown that a constant ratio of hydrocarbons with reduced nitrous oxide and reduced carbon monoxide increases the level of ozone, which has largely been causing the damage to vegetation in Europe. Hydrocarbons contain elements which are counter inducive, and many people in public health are greatly worried about the Government's apparent choice.

Mr. Iain Mills: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the effect on jobs at Austin Rover of the policy that he suggests? Is he suggesting that the oxidation catalyst is the answer? Is he prepared to sacrifice jobs at the altar of the environment?

Dr. Clark: It is clear that the hon. Gentleman has not understood what his Minister has proposed. Austin Rover will have to retool and introduce lean-burn engines. When it introduced lead-free petrol the cost of an oxidation catalyst was minimal.

Mr. Mills: £100?

Dr. Clark: Thereabouts, and on mass production the cost would be even less. Let us not quibble about that. The Minister has already acknowledged that those catalysts can be and are made efficiently in the United Kingdom by Johnson Matthey Chemicals, which is a progressive company. One of its disadvantages is that it has no home market. If it had, it could be more effective in the export market. There will be changes and they must be negotiated. Discussions must be held with Ford and Austin Rover. Those companies must change their engines because of the requirement to have lead-free petrol, and at the same time they must introduce a form of lean-burn engine. Indeed, they are working towards it now. The job implications of that are not on the scale that the hon. Gentleman suggests.

The Government have been and are acting irresponsibly. They should consider our neighbours, and if they are not prepared to do that, they should consider our people. Unless they are prepared to make the directives operative, we shall damage our environment, the British motor car industry, and the health of the British people. We expect answers from the Minister later this evening.

11.14 pm

Mr. Peter Griffiths (Portsmouth, North): I welcome this debate. I say that to start with because there is little else favourable to say about my hon. Friend the Minister's speech or the Government's approach to the problem.

The Government demonstrated an evident lack of enthusiasm in their approach to atmospheric pollution caused by motor vehicles. Whether pollution has been caused by lead in petrol, hydrocarbons or nitrogen compounds, they have always had to delay and find a more cost-effective solution and to reject immediately available solutions. The hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) was asked whether jobs should be sacrificed to environmental considerations. I would be prepared to accept such job losses in inefficient industries if the result was clean air.

I was one of the few hon. Members who criticised last night's proposals concerning seat belts. I objected to motorists being nannied into doing something that was said to be for their own good. I said that I strongly believe that anyone who has the privilege of motoring should recognise that he is having an effect on the environment. I see every reason why the Government should grasp the nettle of environmental protection. If that means that some firms are unable to meet such considerations, they, not the environmental needs of the people, are to blame.

Mr. Iain Mills: The real conflict is not between the environment and the motor car but arises from the fact that these directives would disadvantage our manufacturers. Others have engines that are more well developed along the proposed lines. The oxidisation catalyst will disadvantage our manufacturers. Jobs will be lost, not because of any conflict between cars and the environment but because Europeans have better developed engines.

Mr. Griffiths: My hon. Friend shows that we agree about the circumstances and disagree about the solution. I lived in Los Angeles some years ago, before attempts were made to reduce environmental pollution there. I have been back occasionally and seen the amazing results of their efforts. Regulations in California are far more rigid than in the rest of the United States and than those that we can hope to enjoy. The average motor car lasts rather more than 11 years, so it will be many years before we enjoy fresh air.

We did not fail to develop the catalytic converter, but we failed to use it. That is a tragedy. The technology was available at the beginning of the 1970s. It could and should have been used to prevent the untold damage to the environment that has taken place since.

I think it is unfair of the Minister to say that there is a problem in this country when one of his arguments is that the cost of petrol in this country is greater than it is in the United States. In fact, it is not to do with the cost of petrol but with the amount of taxation levied on petrol. Given that the motorist is so heavily taxed, it would surely be possible for us to look for the kind of fiscal incentives to which my hon. Friend referred. There will not be a movement towards the use of modern technology, be it catalytic converters or lean burn engines, unless there is some clear and obvious advantage to the motorist purchasing a new vehicle. We should be considering ways in which to persuade people to use lead-free petrol and to exchange their current types of vehicles for vehicles that have more efficient engines or are fitted with protective devices. These are essentials for the future. The Government should be addressing these problems urgently with a view to ascertaining the solutions.

I have indicated that I am not very happy with what is happening. I believe that we have an opportunity now to bring together the interests of the motorist, the motor manufacturers and the public at large. We have to make use of the technology of today without delay.

If I may return to the California example, to which I have referred, it was suggested that very few foreign manufacturers would be able to sell motor cars in California if the Californian regulations were introduced. Although certain models have been withdrawn, one notes that a large number of vehicles across the range of motor manufacturers have joined the American models on the streets.

[Mr. Griffiths]

Whatever regulations we have in this country will be applied not only to British motor manufacturers but to anybody who wishes to sell in this country. In this country there should be the highest levels of requirement in the protection of the enrivonment and of the air that we all breathe. If that implies costs for the motorist—and I yield to nobody in my support for motoring and the motorist—I would be prepared to pay. I believe we owe that to the people who are not motorists. They have a perfect right to say to those of us who are motorists that we have no right to poison the environment.

It is the job of Government to give an active, positive and a direct lead. We have not had that tonight or, indeed, for many years. It is about time this country set a lead in Europe by demanding higher standards rather than dragging its feet and hoping that other countries will set the pace while we grudgingly accept something less than that which we know is achievable and which could be achieved in a short period of time if we had the will and the determination.

11.23 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): The hon. Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths) has hit the nail on the head. Despite the Minister's long technological introduction, we shall be seen as being incapable of doing anything about our own backyard and as the dirty men and women of Europe. The truth is that the Minister knows that, on the matter of emissions from vehicles, his right hon. and hon. Friends from the Department of Transport have won the day and the green image of the Government is absent on this issue. The environmental consequence of what has been said tonight is that we have spent years negotiating something that we have no intention of implementing. We are going to do nothing about it—that is what the Minister said.

This is a permissive directive which we have made as harmless as possible by the process of negotiation, and we shall not implement it, anyway. It is bad news if British industry and British motor manufacturers believe that they are helping themselves by defending polluting vehicles and claiming that they are satisfactory. If we had been sufficiently far-sighted 10 years ago——

Mr. Iain Mills: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hughes: I shall give way in a moment. It is clear that in this debate the hon. Gentleman speaks for Austin-Rover. He has made his point. He speaks for the motor industry, his constituency, jobs in his constituency and votes. I understand his position.

Mr. Mills: What does the hon. Gentleman speak for?

Mr. Hughes: I speak for the environment on this issue. I speak also for those in inner cities who are polluted day after day by vehicle emissions. If we had had the foresight 10 years ago——

Mr. David Lightbown (Staffordshire, South-East): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hughes: I shall not give way for a moment. If we had had the foresight 10 years ago to anticipate the technology that we would need to ensure pollution-free motoring, we could have made greater advances towards it. I am not the only one to say that——

Mr. Mills *rose*——

Mr. Hughes: For example, the Select Committee in another place, which considered these issues in February 1985, said much the same thing, as the Minister well knows. It said in paragraphs 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 and 77 that it was not satisfactory to wait for lean burn technology to make the necessary progress. We must introduce deadlines and we must abide by them. If we do not, the motor industry will drag its feet. It will say that what we want cannot be achieved.

Mr. Mills: Will the hon. Gentleman give way for a short intervention?

Mr. Hughes: I shall give way in a moment, but I remind the hon. Gentleman that he has intervened on several occasions already. The Minister took 25 minutes to describe the directive and only one minute to say that it would not be implemented. There should be an opportunity for those who are concerned about the environment to say that we have been presented with a somthing-and-nothing document. The Government have made a something-and-nothing decision and it would be deceptive if the Minister were to pretend that progress had been made.

The hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) was correct when he said in answer to a question about the export of motor cars that we shall not have any motor cars to export if the Germans for example, apply the directive and we do not. Our motor manufacturers will not have anything to export that complies with the directive if it is implemented abroad. Alternatively, they will have to manufacture vehicles for the mainland market——

Mr. Lightbown: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hughes I ask the hon. Gentleman to listen for a moment. They will have to make vehicles for abroad that are unlike those that pollute our own streets. In other words, better vehicles will be exported than those that are sold on the home market.

I have told the the hon. Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills) that I would allow him to intervene, and I shall let him do so once during my speech. I have a few more critical comments to make before I conclude my remarks.

Mr. Mills: At Gaydon in the west midlands, Austin Rover has spent millions of pounds over the past few years on computer facilities to try to analyse and understand exhaust emissions and to enable its cars to cope well with exhaust emission regulations. It has spent millions of pounds trying to understand how to make its cars more clean in terms in emission, more acceptable and better for the environment. That money has not been spent on customers or promotion.

Mr. Hughes: I do not doubt that for a moment. However, if the hon. Gentleman thinks that it is not worth charging the consumer another £50, £60 or £100 to have a pollution-free environment, he is wrong. If we continue to pollute the environment, the countryside into which people now drive for enjoyment will not be there to be seen. That is in addition to the damage that we are doing abroad. I have much in mind the acid rain that we are adding to by failing to control vehicle emissions.

Mr. Lightbown *rose*——

Mr. Hughes: No, I shall not give way. The pollution that we are creating will result in a legacy of

environmental destruction, and those who ride in cars want to enjoy the environment as much as anyone else. The polluter should pay. If I, as a motorist, the hon. Member for Meriden or any other Member who is a motorist, pollute the environment when the necessary technology is available in the form of converters and the development of lean-burn engines we should pay for the damage that ensues. We should pay all that we need to ensure that that damage does not ensue. If that increases the prices of vehicles by another £50, it is pretty good value. I do not mind paying that increase and I hope that Conservative Members do not either. I do not think that the majority of people in Britain would object to paying that increased price. Indeed, I recollect that opinion poll evidence tells us that the public are prepared to pay more for their vehicles if the increased price meant reduced pollution.

Mr. Waldegrave: Is it the policy of the hon. Gentleman's party to insist on full United States standards with three-way catalysts for all cars?

Mr. Hughes: We would implement the directive and make sure that it was effective here. As for small vehicles, the Government have given no undertaking. We would make sure that stage two was implemented and the timetable agreed in two years. As yet there is no evidence to show that the Government are likely to abide by that. We also believe that it is appropriate to combine a lean burn engine development with a converter for medium-sized engines. That is the way to proceed. We should not wait for the lean burn engine technology to develop to deal wth the problem alone.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman has been helpful. After all the sound and fury, what he is saying is that he also would have negotiated against the Germans for the standards that I brought back. I am most grateful to him.

Mr. Hughes: The Minister misrepresents the position. That is not what I said. We are used to misrepresentation from the Government Front Bench. *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members should not laugh; they should treat the matter more seriously. We would have negotiated a directive that we would have been prepared to implement rather than argue about. We would have made sure that we complied with a timetable that meant that by the end of the decade there was no pollution that could not be controlled either by converters or by lean burn engines.

Mr. Lightbown *rose——*

Mr. Hughes: I will not give to the hon. Gentleman. He has made sedentary interventions.

We know the position. The Department of Transport has forecast an enormous increase in vehicles by the end of the century; I think the forecast is 25 to 50 per cent., of which the majority will be small vehicles. It is important that implementation of emission controls for small vehicles is carried through urgently so that it is not just medium-sized vehicles that are the beneficiaries of any action that the Government assist them to take. I challenge the Minister to tell us also in his reply whether the Government intend to implement the directive for vehicles over 2 litres. Will he say clearly whether he is in favour of using converters, if necessary, in medium-sized vehicles so that a combination of the two technologies may mitigate pollution?

The Minister came to the House with one good point and one lousy point. I compliment him on negotiating a satisfactory timetable for the provision of lead-free petrol in Britain. I do not want to detract from that announcement. The timetable is good. No one could be substantially critical, although we might argue that it could have been done a couple of years earlier. My party believes it could have been done by 1987 but the negotiated agreement is acceptable.

Surely, however, the Minister cannot take pride in pretending that the agreement on vehicle emissions is satisfactory. I ask him to go back to his colleagues in the Department and try again to win the argument for the environment and not for the polluters. When he spends so long negotiating with our colleagues in Europe he should do so with the intention of implementing the results of the negotiations.

11.34 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): The motor industry as represented in this country by elements which can still be described as British is capable of meeting the European requirements on exhaust emissions. The question we have to ask ourselves is whether those requirements as met by known technology will fulfil what we seek — a cleaner environment. If an enormous amount of time and money is spent on research to develop lean burn engines, the fitting of catalysts of any kind is like putting a belt on one's trouasers when one is wearing braces.

Experience shows that catalysts are not efficient. In America, tests were recently carried out in Los Angeles on cars fitted with catalytic converters, which showed that in well over half the cars that were examined, they did not operate. The problem with such exhaust controls is that, when they do not work, the car pollutes far more than it would have done had such a system not been installed in the first place. Whether these are three-way systems or single systems, their life expectancy is no more than three to four years. Quite apart from that, there is the cost of the raw materials and the fact that the sole supplier of it is South Africa. The alliance would not trade a bean with South Africa, but it is conceding a business worth billions of pounds a year to that country by demanding the fitting of these converters. They are also open to tampering and polluting by the user.

More to the point is to look at the way that the catalyst operates. It works properly only at a temperature of about 600 to 800 deg C. The European test cycle was designed to test the catalysts at a temperature of between 350 and 400 deg C. Therefore, they are not working properly. Even worse, when traffic is being used in a city environment, the catalyst hardly works at all because the engine temperature does not get to the temperature required to trigger the catalytic operation. The end result is that the atmosphere is poisoned even worse than it would have been if the darn thing had not been fitted in the first place.

Lean burn must be the only realistic answer for Europe's travel. If, during the course of the negotiations, we had been able to achieve a level of hydrocarbons plus nitrous oxide levels of 9·5g instead of the 8g at which we eventually arrived, it would be possible for Europe to have concentrated its efforts on pure, lean burn engine technology, and, because of the improvements in fuel efficiency—about 30 per cent. over the cars of just a few years ago—the amount of energy that we would be

[Mr. Roger King]

consuming would go a great deal further. That must concern every environmentalist because energy is a finite resource.

There is no point in developing expensive lean burn if one still has to use a catalyst. That is a deterrent to manufacturers because, to pass European requirements, they have only to stuff the car's exhaust system with filters — never mind how the engine performs. That is the cheap, easy way out, and a fuel inefficient way to do it.

I have one complimentary remark for my hon. Friend the Minister. Thanks to his negotiating staff and that of his colleagues, he has been able to get an extended life for the direct-injection diesel before it has to reach certain emission standards. I am sure that the British manufacturers, and certainly Austin-Rover and Perkins, are grateful for that. However, one thing which that engine does not enjoy which the rival German product does is a fiscal incentive. This is a disadvantage for our engine, and one hopes that this matter can be looked at.

We all want to see a more clean and tidy environment, but not at any cost — not at the cost of dredging up yesteryear's ideas on how to clean up exhaust emissions, which have been proved to be useless, or partly useless in America, where the technology has been found to be badly wanting. We should use the latest engineering technology, the latest advances by scientists and engineers in engine management systems, the design of engines and the way that they are constructed to tackle the real problem of pollution. At the same time, we must tackle the efficiency of the engine in terms of reduction in fuel consumption, which is another concern to which Europe must address itself in its fight to protect the planet's resources. If at some stage we have to compromise, let us compromise on workable technological answers and not on developments that have proved to be wanting.

Eventually, in order for us to have a universal European category or series of requirements, what my hon. Friend the Minister has told us will probably stand. I am sure that the British manufacturers will be able to meet the requirement. But they will meet it at a cost to the individual. It has been estimated that the measure will cost Britain £1 billion a year, and in Europe as a whole the cost will be huge. That cost will be passed on to the motorist. It is all very well to say that we should be prepared to pay a price to clean up the environment. If the system works, all well and good, but people will object to paying £1 billion a year for a system over which hangs many question marks.

Hon. Members with cars in the underground car park may care to reflect that they may shortly have to spend perhaps £500 to replace the exhaust systems on their vehicles. We are speaking tonight of a cost that should not be lightly dismissed.

10.41 pm

Mr. Iain Mills (Meriden): The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) said that I might have been a spokesman for the Austin-Rover group. My only interest in that group is that it supplies jobs for my constituents, as it does to the constituents of some of my hon. Friends. Having worked in the car components industry for about 20 years, I can claim to have quite an interest in the subject.

I congratulate the Minister on taking a bold stance, one that has taken his Department and this party a long way to achieving what many people thought the Conservative party would never achieve in terms of the greens, the ecology groups, and all concerned with looking after the environment. The Minister has gone a long way towards recognising that the people of Europe, and particularly of Britain, want the environment to protected from, among other things, lead in the air and in water.

This important matter should not be dismissed lightly. Nor should the technicalities of how we achieve it be dismissed without much consideration, especially as there is a balance between jobs and the environment. Our car industry has social responsibilities. It recognises that in providing jobs and building motor cars, it must accommodate into those vehicles the technical facilities that will allow the cars to operate without polluting the atmosphere.

For that reason, the motives of the industry are not to be denied. Simply from the point of view of marketing, the industry is keen to make its cars less environmentally polluting. It wants to make our cars better than those of the Germans, the French and the Italians so that they will appeal to people who want cars that do not pollute the atmosphere.

How is that to be achieved? Those with some engineering knowledge appreciate that this is a complex matter. While I approve of what the Minister has achieved, I have some reservations and questions. In particular I have reservations about the category of 1·4 to 2 litre cars. It has been agreed that smaller cars can function on lean burn.

As an engineer — I used to make my living on the drawing board, so I understand the way in which pam, computers and technology can design engines, tyres and other components — I assure the Minister that it is strongly felt in the industry that vehicles of 1·4 to 2 litres could have achieved the right levels by lean burn. But the levels that have been agreed for certain contents of some substances will not allow lean burn to be the solution for engines in the 1·4 to 2 litre category.

In that category, we shall face at least single point fuel injection, electronic ignition and secondary air. Some models may need no catalyst, but, in the extreme, a three-way catalyst may be needed. I agree that, in terms of those who make the catalysts, some jobs may be created, but a serious problem will exist for higher-volume new cars.

I refer to the Minister's brief, sent to the all-party motor industry group. Some of us saw my hon. Friend. The incremental costs for 1·4 to 2 litre cars are associated with the oxidation catalyst and additional controls, and could be in the range of £100 to £150. We have discussed that tonight. If a three-way catalyst is required for that category of cars, the costs could be as much as £800 to £1,000. If that could have been done by lean burn technology, it should have been. Jobs and the environment would have been protected. That would have been a far better solution for British and European car manufacturers. I should be grateful for the Minister's response to that. There will be an effect on the Austin-Rover group and on Ford, which I do not speak for, as I do not represent Dagenham. I represent the midlands, and many of my constituents work for Austin-Rover, so I had to make that point.

I should be grateful for my hon. Friend's comments on whether the Chancellor can be persuaded, in view of the 1·4 to 2 litre categories, which are assuming such great

importance in the debate, to allow the tax benefits and tax costs that accrue from the benefit of having a company car to be brought in line. That would be of great benefit to our domestic car manufacturers. Many would benefit if the tax bracket was lifted to 1·4 and 2 litre cars, in line with the 1·3 litre category. I notice that at least one significant newspaper today has mentioned speculation about this. If my hon. Friend cannot give an answer tonight, I ask him to bear that in mind.

A period is needed for adjustment. However much we might want to see the environmental benefits from the moves that we are making, no less a period than three years will be needed for engineering and the huge and long processes from drawing board to reality. There is speculation that a fiscal advantage of a 16p reduction might be considered for lead-free fuel. The Minister should bear it in mind that some domestic manufacturers may find that a disadvantage. If such a fiscal incentive is offered for the use of lead-free fuel, there should be a time scale allowing domestic manufacturers to accommodate it.

I congratulate my hon. Friend on his stances, not just on the motor car, but on other environmental matters. I urge him forward to greater progress in protecting the environment in a practical way.

11.48 pm

Mr. Waldegrave: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills) for his final and opening remarks. They made a fitting end to the debate because they explained the unusual and increasing vigour, to put it politely, that we see from the various Opposition parties when the subject of the environment comes up. Perhaps they feel that they have to begin attacking the Government when, perhaps, we are doing better than they would like.

The worst speech of the evening—I say this with respect to him because he often makes very good speeches and baits me on the Floor of the Chamber—was that of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). His attack would have been logical if he had said that he and his party stand for the tighter controls for which some of the Scandinavian countries, the Californians and the Germans are pressing. But he did not say that. He said that we should have the lean burn engine and the oxidation catalyst. That has now been negotiated. However, we in this country now have to balance the industrial and environmental advantages that were advocated so vigorously by my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths) and decide when we shall implement the directive. The hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) pressed me to get on with it and to write to him by next Tuesday and tell him when we shall implement it. I cannot yet do so, but that is the next decision for us to make.

These directives are aimed at delineating what can be done without breaking up the European market. There was a real risk that the European motor car market would be broken up, and that would have been very costly for the consumer. My hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North would rightly have been very cross with us, because he has vigorously pursued the case for the consumer. However, he has paid scant attention to the realities of the industrial structure. Viscount Davignon, the former Industry Commissioner, made a formidable remark before he retired. Of the German proposals to provide fiscal incentives for those cars that cause little pollution, he said that it was the first time that a European country had introduced proposals that would directly subsidise Japanese industry. We must take into account such considerations.

My hon. Friends represent hundreds of thousands—indeed, millions—of people who are employed in the steel industry and in the component industries, and their interests must be balanced with those of the environmentalists. My hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North said that untold damage had been caused to the environment of the United Kingdom because the three-way catalyst was not introduced in the early 1970s. That damage is certainly untold because it has not been told to me. I do not believe that the damage to the environment of this country that has been caused by failing to introduce the three-way catalyst in the early 1970s can be measured.

The hon. Member for South Shields quite fairly put the point that several European countries are facing severe air pollution problems. They have the continental atmospheric conditions that produce inversions. Therefore, this is an urgent problem for them. That is why we are trying to establish a market that allows them to do enough without ridiculous costs being imposed upon the rest of us for environmental conditions that we do not share. Those who read *Hansard* may judge from the conflicting advice that has most helpfully been given to me in this debate that the kind of compromise that we have reached may be on the right lines.

The speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) was excellent and full of good sense. He asked me specifically about the fiscal incentives for direct injection diesels. Without breaking the confidentiality rule concerning Council meetings, I am able to tell my hon. Friend what happened. I went in and batted for this, but it was a difficult case to argue that the privilege of fiscal incentives designed to produce lower-polluting engines should be extended to engines for which we have successfully negotiated derogation from pollution control. It was a bit of a try on, really, and I thought that it was better not to press those negotiations to the limit. It was more important to get derogation for direct injection diesels. In due course the technology will undoubtedly be developed for lower-polluting engines as well as for other admirable aspects. We must allow it to be developed a little further. We should have been pressing the point too far also to ask that at this stage in the development of that interesting technology engines for which we have negotiated derogation should be granted fiscal incentives.

It was a little unfair of my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North to say that this country has always dragged its feet. Britain pushed forward the discussions on lead in Europe. The speeches of my hon. Friend before 1983 might well have been fairly made. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) listened to such speeches and took the lead. He saw the matter through and the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey was generous enough to acknowledge that. We came back with a much better date than many feared we would get for the introduction of cars that can run on lead-free petrol. Even the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey gave me some credit for that.

We are not debating implementation. That is the next matter for discussion. The hon. Member for South Shields was right to point that out. We are debating the fact that we have now described the regulations for a coherent European market that preserves the lean burn route. As a Government, we are not ruling out the oxidation catalyst

[Mr. Waldegrave]

and I would not criticise the oxidation catalyst in the same way as I would criticise the three-way catalyst. The oxidation catalyst has simpler and more robust technology, which can work perfectly well with the lean burn engine. As my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North correctly said, there are costs involved, but we must accept that the great advantage of having maintained the lean burn route is that there are also consumer and energy gains. In the long term I suspect that during the development of the lean burn engine, we may see developments even beyond what can be achieved with the three-way catalyst. That is running a little ahead of present science, but that technology is pregnant with hope for the future and is certainly not limited.

The compromise was agreed by the Community—not just by Britain but by France, Italy and the other car manufacturing countries that were most anxious not to be landed with expensive technologies on small and medium-sized cars that could not be justified. The Community compromise is one that defines sensible pollution controls for that market.

Dr. David Clark: The Minister has come and gone like a yo-yo on lean burn and oxidation catalysts. It would be helpful if he would explain why, in March, he was agreeing to the oxidation catalyst but by July he said that the Government had no intention of setting a standard that would require the use of the oxidation catalyst. The Minister has changed his position on that issue.

I am encouraged by what I thought he said earlier. Is the Minister now prepared to look at the possibility, if necessary, of lean burn plus the oxidation catalyst? The Opposition believe that that would be an important step. We should judge these directives in that context and would like to know when they are to be implemented. I appreciate that the Minister cannot say when they will be implemented, but can he give the House and assurance that the Government intend to implement the directives.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Member for South Shields should judge the directive from two sides. The directive is designed to achieve two purposes. It should maintain the coherence of the common market in cars that is one of the great triumphs of the European community. That aim has been achieved. The other object is, at the same time, to achieve gains for the environment in individual countries.

The Government's position on implementation has not changed. My noble Friend Lord Brabazon spoke in another place about the three-way catalysts. In the conclusion to the debate, it appeared that he was ruling out all catalysts, but he afterwards made it clear that he did not mean that.

The rules are laid out for the market and each country now has to consider what it will do. One or two countries have made their decisions, but we are not yet in a position to make a decision. We have not ruled out oxidation catalysts or implementing the directive, but we have always said that we will not have the three-way catalyst. We do not think that the environmental pressures in this country are of such crisis proportions that that would make sense. That is a decision that we still have to make. I cannot give the hon. Member for South Shields the date by which that decision will be made. Nothing is ruled out except the three-way catalyst and I hope that that position is clear to all hon. Members.

On that basis, I hope that the House will approve this hard-fought directive. Even my hon. Friends who would have liked it to be harder fought have been generous enough to recognise that more has been done for some of the interests of their constituents than they had expected at some times.

We always have to balance the need to push industry a little with the need not to load too many costs on it. I believe that the directive just about strikes a happy medium.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 7283/85 on motor vehicle emissions; and supports the conclusions reached at the meetings of the Council of Environment Ministers on 28th June and 28th November 1985.

Reprocessing Plant, Dounreay (Inquiry)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

12 midnight

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): I welcome the opportunity to raise on the Floor of the House the terms of reference of the public inquiry into the proposed fast reactor reprocessing plant at Dounreay in Caithness.

In the latter part of May last year, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy announced that Britain would seek to play its part in a collaborative European programme on fast reactors by seeking to have a reprocessing plant sited at Dounreay. On 3 June, the then Secretary of State for Scotland called in the joint planning application of British Nuclear Fuels and the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority because he believed that the proposed development had implications of greater than regional importance which he wished to see examined at a public inquiry.

The Secretary of State subsequently appointed Mr. Bell as the reporter, and the date for the inquiry was originally set for 17 February. At a pre-inquiry meeting held on 12 December to discuss procedure and general preparations for the inquiry, the reporter allowed a postponement for seven weeks because of the uncertainty of the applicants about what would be the port of entry for spent nuclear fuel that would have to be transported to Dounreay.

I do not think that anyone who has followed the issue would disagree that there has been general discontent in Scotland and further afield about the remit of the reporter. That discontent led a number of bodies and individuals to seek meetings with the former Secretary of State for Scotland, the right hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger).

In July a petition signed by more than 30 organisations and individuals was sent to the right hon. Gentleman. It sought a meeting, but that was refused. A request for a meeting from two Members of the European Assembly was rejected by the Under-Secretary in a letter in September. I twice formally sought a meeting, along with other hon. Members, not only from my party, to try to demonstrate the broad agreement, particularly on the Opposition Benches, over the terms of reference of the inquiry.

In a letter dated 11 November, the Under-Secretary said:

"As the responsibility for the final decision on the application will rest with the Secretary of State, following the inquiry, I do not believe it would be appropriate for George Younger or myself to meet you to discuss issues concerning the case in advance of the eventual decision."

The Secretary of State will act in a quasi-judicial role and to the extent that he might have been addressed on the merits of the proposal, so it would have been proper for him or the junior Minister to refuse to meet delegations to discuss the merits of the case.

There is an important distinction to be drawn between representations on the merits of the proposal and representations relating to the form and the nature of the inquiry. It is on the form and nature of the inquiry that these representations for a meeting were made. The previous Secretary of State for Scotland failed to draw that distinction, as will be evident from the letter I have just quoted, and it is because of that that I have sought to raise the matter in the House.

We have a new incumbent in the Scottish Office who has perhaps the added advantage over the previous Secretary of State in that he is not only a right hon. Member but a right hon. and learned Member. He will note this legal distinction and perhaps be more willing to listen to the representations that have been made about the terms and nature of the inquiry. What is principally proposed by those seeking a wider remit is a joint planning inquiry commission. The basis of statutory authority for referral to a planning inquiry commission, is found in section 45(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, 1972 which states,

"Any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1) of this section"—

that indisputably applies to this application—

"may be referred to any such commission under this section if it appears expedient to the responsible Minister or Ministers that the question whether the proposed development should be permitted to be carried out should be the subject of a special inquiry on either or both of the following grounds—

(a) there are considerations of national or regional importance which are relevant to the determination of that question and require evaluation, but a proper evaluation thereof cannot be made unless there is a special inquiry for the purpose;

(b) the technical or scientific aspects of the proposed development are of so unfamiliar a character as to jeopardise a proper determination of that question unless there is a special inquiry for the purpose."

These provisions in the section are fulfilled in this case. The joint planning inquiry commission is provided for under section 47 of the same Act in circumstances where interests in both Scotland and England are affected. Because of the national policy implications, these are United Kingdom considerations and therefore a joint planning inquiry commission is appropriate.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): The particular importance is that a decision taken in a planning inquiry about Dounreay will clearly have an effect as a precedent on the prospective applications for developments of similar sites elsewhere on the coasts not only in Scotland but in England. It is not just in relation to this particular inquiry that there is great concern throughout the United Kingdom, but also because it will clearly be used as a marker and a remit for future public inquiries even under technically English as opposed to Scottish legislation.

Mr. Wallace: My hon. Friend has added yet another argument why the joint planning inquiry planning commission is appropriate. In correspondence to me in response to parliamentary questions the Minister has taken the view that the considerations spelt out in the sections to which I have referred, do not apply in this case. This is an application of national and, indeed, international importance. The proposals form part of a joint European collaboration project, the terms and implications of which have never been debated by this House. Unlike the inquiries over the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Windscale or the Sizewell inquiry, because of the narrow terms of reference imposed on the proposed local public inquiry, there will be no opportunity for objectors or interested parties to assess or question the policy issues underpinning this development.

It has international importance, because, as I discovered on a visit to Norway last year and from other representations which we received from Denmark, there is fear that any liquid emissions or discharges from a

[Mr. Wallace]

proposed reprocessing plant could, because of tidal currents affect the west coast of Norway and Denmark. It raises issues of proliferation. The Government maintain that there are sufficient safeguards in various international treaties and that there would be no breach of our obligations under the non proliferation treaty.

Writing in the house magazine of the French utilities industry, M. Lammers said that the Superphenix fast reactor in France

"will produce in the mantle of its core enough plutonium of ad-hoc quality to make about 60 bombs each year. Under these conditions, Superphenix becomes of course the technical basis of the French nuclear military force."

I shall not go into the merits of that case — although plutonium from the Superphenix will undoubtedly be reprocessed at any such plant. However, an important issue is involved. The Government say that there are sufficient safeguards, but a man involved in the French energy industry says that the Superphenix is implicated in French military nuclear planning.

What about our commitment to fast reactor technology, of which reprocessing is an important and essential part? There has been general understanding that we would not go down the road towards commercial fast reactors without a full-scale public inquiry. It appears that we are now going a long way down that road with only an inquiry with the narrowest of remits.

In view of the low cost of uranium and the great stockpiles of plutonium in Europe, are we making a worthwhile use of our resources in this plant? Before going down the road towards the fast reactor economy, we should bear in mind the comments of the sixth report of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution, which warned against becoming overdependent on an economy based on plutonium before we properly consider the alternatives. We need a forum to consider the role that could be played by alternative energy sources.

I do not expect the Minister to go into the merits of the arguments on national energy policy, but important issues for this generation and future generations must be discussed and taken into account. A local planning inquiry is not a suitable forum to consider those issues fully.

Environmental considerations are causing considerable concern in my constituency, not least because of what happened at the Windscale plant. The criminal operation of that plant by British Nuclear Fuels lead not only to its successful prosecution but contamination of the Irish sea. Until now, the Dounreay establishment has been operated solely by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, but the present planning application is a joint one by BNFL and UKAEA.

In a letter sent out before the 12 December meeting, the reporter, Mr. Bell, said:

"I regard my remit as extending to the consideration of all land use, environmental and safety questions which can be regarded as the foreseeable consequence of approving this development, provided these consequences are not too remote."

How far can these environmental considerations be looked at in a public local inquiry? I do not believe that it will go far enough. Is an accident a "foreseeable consequence"? It is important to have a proper risk assessment of all the possible consequences of an accident or, in these days of sabotage and terrorism, deliberate interference with the plant. Do the environmental considerations extend as far as the level of discharges? It has been suggested that that is a matter for the Scottish Office, which already determines the level of discharges having regard to internationally agreed acceptable levels. This would exclude any consideration of whether these international levels are acceptable. There can be no safe dose of radiation. It is a matter of subjective opinion—no doubt based on the highest quality scientific evidence—what constitutes acceptable levels. These matters should be open to public debate and scrutiny. Again, a joint planning inquiry commission would refer to circumstances where the

"technical or scientific aspects of a proposed development are of so unfamiliar a character as to jeopardise a proper determination of that question unless there is special inquiry for that purpose."

I do not think that it can be reasonably or honestly said that the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel as part of the fast reactor fuel cycle is a matter which the Scottish Office or indeed Britain is exactly familiar with. I do not think that this type of application is of a familiar character. It is of a unique character and one which can only properly be scrutinised and challenged if one has a special inquiry for the purpose.

Admittedly, there is a plant already in existence at Dounreay, which reprocesses some spent nuclear fuel, but the volume of fuel which would go through the proposed plant is 10 times as much as that going through the existing plant. Although the authorities at Dounreay maintain that they can keep discharge levels down to the present rate, that again is a matter for consideration; and I very much doubt whether proper and effective scrutiny of that claim can be made by a public local inquiry.

Then there is the whole question of transport. The inquiry was postponed because of doubts as to what the port would eventually be. In a comment in the *Glasgow Herald* of 8 January of this year, Mr. Peter Davies, head of the European demonstration fuel reprocessing plant inquiry team for the Atomic Energy Authority, said:

"If British Rail decided to abandon the North Highland line, our plans would fail. There is no way that this inquiry can impose a transport inquiry on us."

So there is this whole question of transport and of the port of entry, particularly from the point of view of my constituents who are worried about the transportation of radioactive material through what I am sure the Minister knows can be a rather stormy Pentland Firth to Scrabster or Wick. It is a matter of considerable importance. In the light of that claim by a senior employee of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, can the Minister indicate the extent to which transport is a relevant consideration? Is it correct to say that a transport inquiry cannot realy be part and parcel of the local public inquiry which is currently to go ahead?

The further advantage of a joint planning inquiry commission is that the commissioner can commission his own evidence, which can to some extent overcome some of the secrecy which unfortunately has been part of the nuclear authority's approach to the present inquiry, and can also help to overcome some of the funding problems.

As I indicated when I quoted from the Act, it is a matter of whether the Secretary of State considers it expedient. He, one fears, wishes to get a quick answer to this because perhaps of other matters — for example, the French desire to site the reprocessing plant in France. Nevertheless, the whole planning procedure which is meant to be there, particularly for local inquiries, to air the fears and the objections of people, not only local people

but those further afield who have an interest, comes into disrepute if it is felt that the procedure does not match up to the scale and importance of the issue before it.

If our planning procedures do not have the confidence of the people generally, we could be building up for ourselves a considerable amount of trouble in the future.

It may be said that the Windscale and Sizewell inquiries went on for too long. They were not joint planning commission inquiry commissions, and I would invite the Minister to reconsider the matter and to take what would be a unique step in setting up a joint planning inquiry commission. The issues involved are of sufficient national and international importance, and relate to matters of scientific and technical interest which are unique. They could certainly not be described as familiar. They warrant the major step of having a planning inquiry commission.

12.20 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): I am glad to have this opportunity to respond to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on this matter, about which we have corresponded on many occasions during the past months.

I shall deal with as many of the hon. Gentleman's points as possible. I must, however, register an apology in advance. Some of the points raised impinge directly on the subject matter of the public inquiry itself. As the hon. Gentleman will know, it is particularly important for me as a Minister with planning responsibilities to refrain from comment on matters which the reporter is charged with looking into, because it will be my duty subsequently to consider his report and to give my view to the Secretary of State about the planning decision. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will recognise my difficult position, and the need for me to exercise great care in what I say.

I should like to recall the events leading up to the inquiry. On 31 May 1985, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and British Nuclear Fuels plc submitted a planning application to Highland regional council for permission to site the plant, known as the European Demonstration Reprocessing Plant, at Dounreay. In accordance with the requirements placed on the council, the application was notified to my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State. Shortly thereafter my right hon. Friend announced that he would in due course call in the application for his own decision, and would arrange for a public local inquiry to be held. He asked the planning authority, the Highland regional council, to proceed in the meantime with the initial statutory publicity and consultations. He also asked the developers to prepare an environmental assessment of their proposals to supplement the information which they had already supplied along with their planning application to the regional council.

In September, my right hon. Friend called in the application, as he had promised to do. He made it clear that he had done so because he considered that the proposal could have planning and environmental implications extending within and beyond the area for which Highland regional council was responsible as planning authority—matters which he wished to be examined at a public local inquiry. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman welcomed that action, and the recognition—which did not in any way prejudge the planning merits of proposed development—that those aspects would be of wider than simply local concern. The hon. Gentleman has reflected that tonight. Following receipt of the applicants' environmental assessment, my right hon. Friend appointed a reporter to hold the public inquiry. He also appointed a technical assessor to assist the reporter in view of the scientific and technical aspects of the proposed development which might need to be considered. The hon. Gentleman has made much of the reporter's terms of reference, which are quite simple. I should like to recall what they are. The reporter was appointed under planning legislation to hold a public local inquiry into the planning application, and to report on the inquiry to the Secretary of State with recommendations, or with his reasons for not making any recommendations. It is clear from the terms of reference that no limitation has been put on the reporter's discretion to examine any matter which he considers relevant to whether planning permission should be granted. That is the question before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and it is for the purpose of helping him to determine that question that the reporter has been appointed to hold the inquiry.

The reporter has subsequently interpreted his remit as covering all land use, environmental and safety questions which are not too remote from Dounreay. He has said that the inquiry will also be concerned with relevant socio-economic issues affecting Highland region and the adjacent islands. At the pre-inquiry meeting held in Thurso on 12 December the reporter also decided to postpone the starting date of the inquiry by seven weeks to 7 April to allow time for the developers to be more specific about their preferred options for the transport arrangements, which, although they are not part of the planning application, are essential to the development. The inquiry will provide an opportunity for all the relevant concerns of the hon. Gentleman's constituents to be considered.

The hon. Gentleman has asked in correspondence, and tonight for the application to be referred to a planning inquiry commission, rather than to be dealt with by normal planning inquiry procedure. Both aspects have been dealt with in correspondence which I have had with him and in replies given to the House, one of which I gave to the hon. Gentleman.

As the hon. Gentleman said, a planning application may be referred to such a commission where it appears to the Secretary of State in considering whether or not to grant planning permission for a proposed development either that a proper evaluation of relevant issues of national or regional importance cannot be made without a special inquiry, or where the technical or scientific aspects of a proposal are of so unfamiliar a character that a proper determination of the case would be jeopardised unless there were a special inquiry. I do not have any evidence that either of these criteria apply in this case. The reporter can consider the technical and scientific aspects of the proposal, and he has a technical assessor to assist him. The hon. Member also mentioned a joint planning inquiry commission. This provision would apply only if there were planning matters involved affecting the responsibilities of planning Ministers in Scotland and England, and in terms of the responsibilities of planning Ministers, it does not apply in this case.

Mr. Wallace: Is the Minister saying that he believes that the technical and scientific aspects of the proposed development are familiar? Does he agree that this is an

[Mr. Wallace]

unique application and that there is no experience in planning terms of a fast reactor reprocessing plant in Scotland?

Mr. Ancram: I have already said that, having considered the matter, I do not have any evidence that the criteria that the hon. Gentleman mentioned, and which I have repeated, apply in this case. It would have to be on that judgment that such a decision would be made.

The hon. Gentleman also said that, regardless of what inquiry procedure is adopted, he would wish the remit of the inquiry to be extended to consider matters of Government policy. Hon. Members may recall that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy wrote on 21 May 1985 to the chairman of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority enclosing a statement of the Government's general policies on the United Kingdom's participation in the European fast reactor collaboration and on the regulatory procedures which would apply to the building of a European demonstration reprocessing plant in the United Kingdom. In making that statement available to this House on 24 May, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy made it clear that the Government see advantage to the nation and to the European collaboration in siting the reprocessing plant in the United Kingdom but that such siting would be subject to the agreement of our European partners in the collaboration and to the necessary planning, safety and environmental consents being granted.

That statement is available to the inquiry, as is a statement of the Government's radioactive waste management policy. Government witnesses will be available at the inquiry to clarify, if need be, these matters of Government policy. It is another matter to suggest that Government policy should be looked into by the reporter as part of his remit. I am afraid that I am not able to agree with the hon. Member's suggestion in that regard. My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State made it clear that the inquiry will not be extended to an examination of the merits of these matters of Government policy. The purpose of the inquiry is to consider the simple question of whether planning consent should or should not be given for the proposed development. The reporter has indeed made it clear in his letter of 9 January to parties to the inquiry that he will make his recommendation on the basis of planning considerations, including the safety aspects and does not consider that there is any presumption that the national interest would justify automatic approval.

The inquiry will also have before it statements of the regulatory procedures governing radioactive waste management, the licensing of nuclear installations and the transport of radioactive materials prepared respectively by Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate, Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate and the Department of Transport. Witnesses will be available to give evidence at the inquiry on these matters.

The hon. Member mentioned nuclear discharge and safety and asked whether they could be considered. The reporter will be able to consider the safety and environmental aspects of the proposal. The regulatory bodies that I have mentioned have made statements available to the inquiry, and they will provide witnesses.

The reporter has asked the applicants to clarify certain aspects of the transport arrangements, although they do not form part of the planning application. It will be for the reporter to determine how far he needs to examine the proposed transport arrangements. Further information and evidence from these and other parties to the inquiry will no doubt become available in due course. I have every confidence that the inquiry will provide an opportunity for a wide-ranging examination of all of the issues relevant to whether planning permission should in due course be granted.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 15 January 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Financial Services

1. **Mr. Michie** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next proposes to meet the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the regulation of financial services.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Leon Brittan): I am always interested to hear the views of the Confederation of British Industry, but I have no plans for a specific meeting in the near future.

Mr. Michie: Why did the Financial Services Bill not make it clear that we ought to have statutory bodies independent of the people whom they are supposed to be reviewing? That is successfully done in most of the financial markets in the rest of the Western world. Why cannot we have completely independent statutory bodies?

Mr. Brittan: The independence of the Securities and Investments Board or its successor is unquestioned, but there is a real advantage in having regulatory bodies consisting of people who themselves are practitioners close to the market. That will lead to tighter rather than looser regulation.

Sir Anthony Grant: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that many of us who are keenly interested in the subject of financial services sought to pose a number of questions to the Government in yesterday's debate, but we could not get an answer from my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary of State because he was subjected to a most disgraceful muckraking campaign by the Opposition, with the result that serious points could not be answered? Will he find an opportunity to answer some of those questions in the near future?

Mr. Brittan: I am sure that I or my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary of State will wish to take the opportunity to put on the record the points that my hon. and learned Friend was unable to deal with yesterday. One is always suspicious of circumstances in which a Minister has answers to give but the Opposition seem reluctant to hear them.

Mr. Ashdown: The Secretary of State might accept that while the personal reputation of the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) is beyond question, it nevertheless remains the fact that Lloyd's is a major issue in the Bill, and to have a member of Lloyd's, of whatever status, pilot the Bill through the House of Commons is bound to be misunderstood——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is concerned with the CBI.

Mr. Ashdown: Does the Secretary of State recognise that the CBI and others are bound to misunderstand that, and that it is bound to undermine the standing of the Bill and, indeed, the probity of the Government? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman reconsider the matter and, if the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe cannot divest himself of his interest in Lloyd's, will he think of giving another colleague——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Brittan: The CBI has made no representations to that effect.

Mr. Gould: Given that one of the major objects of the Financial Services Bill, with which the CBI and everyone else is concerned, is the avoidance of conflicts of interest in the City, is it not odd that the Minister responsible for the Bill is himself involved in a conflict of interest? Is the Secretary of State aware——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The same principles apply to the Front Bench. The question must concern meetings with the CBI.

Mr. Gould: This is a question relating to the regulation of financial services, which is the subject of the question on the Order Paper. Has the Secretary of State had his attention drawn to the Churchill-Butler statement on these issues, which has been endorsed by a line of successive Prime Ministers, the first paragraph of which reads: "It is a principle"——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That does not relate in any way to discussions with the CBI. The shadow Minister must relate his question to that aspect.

Mr. Gould: Nevertheless, this is a matter with which the CBI and everybody else in the City will be concerned. Will the Secretary of State ensure that if the Minister is unable for any reason to divest himself of the interest which he holds in Lloyd's, he will——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is quite out of order.

Privatisation

2. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if it is his intention to bring forward measures for the privatisation of all the publicly owned enterprises listed in the answer of 27 November, *Official Report*, column *870*, within the lifetime of the current Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry (Mr. Peter Morrison): No. It is not expected that all the businesses mentioned in the previous answer can be wholly returned to the private sector during the current Parliament.

Mr. Nellist: Before the Secretary of State departs the Front Bench, will the hon. Gentleman ask him whether he is aware that privatisation so far has cost working people in Britain over £1·4 billion as a result of the Government

under-pricing the assets that they have sold off, has given the mates of the Secretary of State in City institutions £300 million in fees and expenses, and has resulted in worse services and higher prices to working people?

Rather than have further privatisation of publicly owned assets such as Rolls-Royce, which is in my constituency, why does the Minister not ask the Secretary of State to bring forward a one-day Bill, as did the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in respect of that company, to nationalise Westland plc and guarantee the jobs of the workers in Yeovil and the Isle of Wight?

Mr. Morrison *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is Question Time, not an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Morrison: I can assure the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) that I put all those questions, precisely as he would have wished me to do, to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. My right hon. and learned Friend agrees with me that all the hon. Gentleman's propositions are wrong.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Does my hon. Friend agree that denationalisation has been a good policy for this country? Have those businesses concerned not done better and begun to make profits? Above all, do not 90 per cent. of their employees now own shares in their own companies.

Mr. Morrison: I agree with my hon. Friend, and must emphasise that the vast majority of employees now feel the benefits of privatisation.

Mr. James Hamilton: Will the Minister confirm that the Government have given the British Steel Corporation a mandate to accelerate the company towards privatisation, with special emphasis on the tube-producing section? Will he confirm that that is Government policy?

Mr. Morrison: I can certainly confirm that our policy, and that of the BSC, is directed towards a competitive and profitable industry.

EC-USA Steel Arrangement

3. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the EEC-USA steel agreement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The new EC-USA steel arrangement, ratified by the Council of Ministers on 10 December, is generally acceptable to the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom delayed ratification for several weeks, during which assurances were obtained from the United States authorities on adequate access for BSC exports of semi-finished steel to Tuscaloosa Steel of Alabama under an existing long-term contract.

Mr. Hayes: I congratulate my hon. Friend on achieving what appears to be a satisfactory settlement to a very thorny problem. Does he accept that that was done through painstaking negotiation?

Mr. Morrison: I assure my hon. Friend that the negotiations were long, complicated and difficult. However, it was essential for the steel corporation that we hung out for what we obtained.

Dr. Bray: Does the Minister acknowledge that the level of exports of slabs to the United States, permitted by the United States, is nowhere near adequate to maintain Ravenscraig without Gartcosh?

Mr. Morrison: I do not acknowledge that. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, by and large the deal that we obtained, with the exception of that part relating to Tuscaloosa, was based on current exports.

Exporters (Assistance)

4. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with the financial and other support given to exporters by his Department.

The Minister for Trade (Mr. Paul Channon): I am confident that support given to exporters by my Department is effective, but I am, of course, always looking for ways to improve it.

Mr. Atkins: Is my right hon. Friend aware that many of us are extremely grateful to him for his work concerning exports? However, is he further aware of the criticisms of exporters and companies in various constituencies about the ECGD? They think of it as an umbrella available when the sun is shining, rather than when the need arises.

Is my right hon. Friend aware that with many countries, such as Thailand and Mauritius a policy of soft loans would be beneficial to exporters in seeking to achieve success in those markets?

Mr. Channon: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks.

The ECGD has two duties, to provide an efficient support to exports and to break even, and that is difficult in view of the present economic conditions throughout the world.

I shall consider my hon. Friend's point about Thailand and Mauritius. As he knows, I am still doing my best to help him and his constituents with the famous Bangkok bus project.

Mr. Jim Spicer: Will my right hon. Friend take note that in this context the opportunities available to our exporters in Turkey are valuable, and will he pay particular attention to those opportunities?

Mr. Channon: Of course I shall. I take note of my hon. Friend's view about opportunities in Turkey.

Mr. Skinner: Does the Minister recall negotiations with a couple of firms which are trying to sell refuse collection vehicles to Ecuador but which are running into some trouble? — *[Laughter.]* — I know that this is different from normal practice, but that is what the game is about. Is the Minister aware that his Department has been holding up arranging export credit guarantees which would enable workers to build the refuse collection vehicles in the midlands and north-east Derbyshire? Is he further aware that more than 50 jobs are on the line? Why is the Minister causing all these difficulties by stopping the export credit guarantee arrangement? Will he deal with the matter, because if it is not finalised this week the jobs will go and the balance of payments will be the loser?

Mr. Channon: I shall, of course, look at the matter. Ecuador has been a recipient of the DX facility from the ECGD. I do not know about the specific case that the hon.

Gentleman has in mind, but it is likely that it involves a case for which I have just agreed there should be export credits.

Mr. Thurnham: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the purpose of exporting is to make us wealthier, rather than poorer?

Mr. Channon: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Maclennan: Is the Minister prepared to consider whether the financial duties requiring ECGD to break even are too tight and so defeat the purpose of existing exports?

Mr. Channon: I shall certainly look at that, but I should be surprised if any rational man could come to that conclusion. The ECGD's cash flow problems are well known and serious. That is not surprising in a period of great economic difficulties throughout the world.

Cars (UK Content)

5. **Mr. Wood** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is currently taking to seek to persuade car manufacturers based in the United Kingdom to increase the United Kingdom content of their cars sold in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. and learned Friend, I and officials meet senior management of the United Kingdom car manufacturers regularly to discuss this and similar matters, with encouraging results. For example, after a recent meeting with my right hon. and learned Friend, Vauxhall's chairman and managing director announced the company's plan to increase the United Kingdom content of the vehicles that it builds here from about 50 per cent. in the past year to about 60 per cent. by the end of this year.

Mr. Wood: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Concern is caused when individuals are encouraged to buy British and some manufacturers, although based in this country, use a large imported content in their vehicles. Does my hon. Friend agree that good component manufacturers operate in Britain and that they should be encouraged by further purchases from firms such as Vauxhall?

Mr. Morrison: I agree with my hon. Friend. As I said in my original answer, my right hon. Friend and I, and others in the Department, do everything that we possibly can to encourage purchases from home-based component manufacturers.

Dr. Marek: Is the Minister aware that one of the steps that he can take is to ensure that we have a continuing supply of competitively priced and efficiently produced engineering steel in Britain? Will the Minister do everything in his power, if the United Engineering Steels company wishes, to ensure that a concast is installed at Brymbo steelworks?

Mr. Morrison: The hon. Gentleman makes a particular and specific point. I agree that the component parts are important. I am happy to take his point on board and to look at the matter carefully. I can say no more than that at this stage.

Mr. Roger King: Does my hon. Friend agree that there is a contrast between our open attitude in ensuring as free a market as possible for the manufacture of cars in Britain and the attitude of other countries, notably Spain, which is conducting a blockade of our components?

Mr. Morrison: Yes, but as my hon. Friend will be aware, negotiations are proceeding. We hope that they will be brought to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Williams: As nearly all the increased import penetration in the car market since the late 1920s has arisen from the tied imports of Ford and Vauxhall—of course, we welcome the recent modest announcement—does the Minister agree that Vauxhall, with its massive trade deficit on vehicles, must make a far more substantial investment in major components, such as engines and transmissions, made in Britain, and possibly restore a design capability? Have not the Government made such investment more difficult with their record of five years of abnormally high interest rates? Interest rates are almost double what firms would have to pay if they went to Germany.

Mr. Morrison: I would not describe the recent announcement as modest. It represents a significant increase. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the more our domestic component manufacturers sell, the better. His wider question is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Hanley: While recognising my right hon. and hon. Friends' considerable efforts in increasing the United Kingdom content of cars made in the United Kingdom, may I also ask that they recognise the tremendous contribution made by United Kingdom car component manufacturers to the content of cars made abroad? Will they encourage foreign buyers to buy even more components from the United Kingdom?

Mr. Morrison: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The more that United Kingdom car manufacturers buy domestically, the more it will encourage foreign manufacturers to buy products made by British component manufacturers.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

6. **Mr. Gould** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in preparing for the negotiations for the renewal of the multi-fibre arrangement.

13. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the current position regarding negotiations concerned with renewal of the multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Channon: The Council of Ministers will be considering the Community's negotiating mandate at its meeting on 27 and 28 January. I announced the policy of the Government in the House on 9 May last year. I am meeting representatives of the industry and other interested parties next week.

Mr. Gould: Is the Minister aware of the anxiety felt in all parts of the industry at the strong and persistent report that, despite his stated commitment to the effective renewal of the multi-fibre arrangement, British officials are in the van of those in Brussels who are pressing for a weakening of the import regime? Does he recognise that a substantial dilution of the MFA will cause immense

damage to the British industry, and will he assure the House that henceforth his officials will work religiously towards the achievement of an effective renewal?

Mr. Channon: I assure the hon. Gentleman that the British officials in the negotiations are working under instructions from me and are following the Government's policy. I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman, with his experience in this area, should imagine anything else.

Mr. Lawler: There is some anxiety and confusion in the industry about whether the Government believe that this should be the last such arrangement. Will my right hon. Friend clarify the position?

Mr. Channon: We have never said that this should be the last MFA. A new MFA is likely to last for four or five years. The longer-term future of the MFA should be decided in the context of the proposed new GATT round of international trading talks.

Mr. Torney: Is the Minister aware that the textile industry in Bradford has suffered for many years because of the importation of goods produced by competitors who use cheap labour? Is he further aware that if the multi-fibre arrangement is not renewed, or if it is weakened, it will create chaos in the woollen textile industry in Bradford and bring more unemployment to an area which already has above national average unemployment?

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman knows that it is the Government's policy that the MFA should be renewed. He will be pleased to know that during the first 10 months of 1985 wool textile exports increased by 14 per cent. to a record £518 million.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is it not true that many companies have coped and will cope with the diminution in the MFA, and that even within companies, some sections — for instance, spinning—will benefit from imports, whereas other sections, such as finished products, will suffer? Will the Minister remember that in any renegotiation we must be aware of that distinction and assist British companies to cope with the genuine free market at which they are aiming rather than protect them artificially?

Mr. Channon: In general I agree with the hon. Gentleman. I am meeting representatives of the industry next week, and no doubt all those points will be considered in great detail.

Mr. Sims: In the discussions, will my right hon. Friend take particular account of the views of the Hong Kong Government? Is he aware that although the present agreement is supposed to benefit underdeveloped countries the benefit has been very small and it has been to the disadvantage of Hong Kong? Will he ensure that the future agreement, if it does not help Hong Kong, at least does not penalise it?

Mr. Channon: It is not for the British Government alone to decide the contents of the agreement, but we certainly take the view that it should give favourable treatment to the poorest developing countries and to developing countries with very low barriers to British exports, which includes Hong Kong.

Mr. James Lamond: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that import penetration in textiles is six times what it was 10 years ago and that unemployment is again increasing in the north-west, including my constituency, which still depends heavily on the textile industry? Will he check again with his civil servants on the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), because authoritative sources on the employers' side suggest that British civil servants are taking a leading part in pressing for a much more liberal multi-fibre arrangement?

Mr. Channon: I assure the hon. Gentleman, as I assured his hon. Friend, that the civil servants negotiating in Brussels do so with my express authority, and I keep a close control on and watch every detail of the negotiations. What the hon. Gentleman said is correct to a certain extent. That is one reason why we are seeking a renewal of the multi-fibre arrangement, which I believe met with the general agreement of the House last May.

Mr. Madden: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that workers in the textile industry suspect that Ministers at the Department of Trade and Industry are more interested in protecting their own political careers than in protecting the British textile industry? Does he accept that although there is no doubt that the Government are committed to renewal of the MFA, there is considerable doubt as to the extent to which the Government want a major relaxation of the controls? Will he now give a firm undertaking that the British Government do not favour or support any major relaxation of the MFA controls?

Mr. Channon: The first part of the question says more about the hon. Gentleman than about Ministers at the Department. Any renewed MFA is bound to be more liberal than the present arrangement. I think that that is generally understood. As I have said, it should provide favourable treatment for the poorest developing countries and those with low barriers to British exports, and it should also help in relation to children's clothing. I am anxious to see a more liberal MFA, but one which does not damage the textile and clothing industry. The industry understands that very well, and I shall be discussing the matter in great detail with the industry next week.

USSR

7. **Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total amount of trade between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom for the year 1985.

Mr. Channon: The full year's figures are not yet available, but the total amount of trade between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union in the first 11 months of 1985 was £1,150 million.

Mr. Cox: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that as relationships between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world improve, so do opportunities for trade? Is he further aware that the United States has already sent major trade delegations to the Soviet Union to try to build up the United States' share of that trade? What help is the Department giving businesses in this country to do likewise? In particular, what special financial help is available to get contracts under way initially?

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman is quite right. Following Mr. Gorbachev's visit to this country, I believe that there are considerable prospects for increasing trade between Britain and the Soviet Union. In the short term that increase has not yet materialised, but at the annual

meeting of the British-Russian Joint Trade Commission on 6 and 7 February we shall be making a major effort to increase trade. Very good facilities are available for business men to trade with the Soviet Union, and they receive normal help from the Department. If the hon. Gentleman has any specific case in mind, perhaps he will get in touch with me.

Mr. Terlezki: Is it conceivable that some of our industrial technology is being sold to the Soviet Union and may be used in the further development of Soviet star wars plans, nuclear weapons or, indeed, any type of weapon?

Mr. Channon: I hope that that is not possible. My hon. Friend will be aware that there are controls under the COCOM arrangements to stop such exports.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Is the Minister aware that the Gartcosh plant exports considerable orders to the Soviet Union as well as to other countries? Can he say when his Department will respond to the overwhelming recommendation of the Scottish Select Committee? If not, can he whisper to his right hon. and learned Friend and give the House the information?

Mr. Channon: I admire the hon. Gentleman's ingenuity, but that is not a matter with which I have been dealing. However, my right hon. and learned Friend has heard what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Northern Region

9. **Mr. Merchant** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much in regional grant aid has been made available to the northern region since 1979.

Mr. Peter Morrison: A total of £913 million in regional grant aid has been made available to the northern region during the period 1 May 1979 to 30 November 1985.

Mr. Merchant: Will my hon. Friend take this opportunity to reaffirm his personal commitment to beneficial regional aid? Does he agree that his answer gives the lie to those who claim maliciously that the Government have ignored and not helped the northern region? Will he confirm that the Government have given more than £1 billion to the northern region, including inner city aid?

Mr. Morrison: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The northern region benefits more than any other part of the country from our regional policy, and rightly so. Some 97 per cent. of the working population are covered. My hon. Friend's sentiments are correct, whatever anyone else might say.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: Does the Minister agree that, since 1979, 125,000 industrial jobs have been lost in the northern region and that the level of unemployment on Tyneside is among the highest in the country? Can he at least give us the assurance that aid from his Department to the northern region will not be reduced in the next three years?

Mr. Morrison: As I said in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Merchant), the difficulties that the northern region is passing through are onerous, burdensome and personally unappetising to many families and people. That is why our regional policy is directed more towards the northern region than to any other part of Great Britain.

Mr. Fallon: Does my hon. Friend agree that in the 1970s the northern region suffered from indiscriminate regional aid? Can he confirm that the new policy is working well and providing more jobs with the money used?

Mr. Morrison: I agree. When my right hon. Friend the previous Secretary of State announced the new regional policy, it was directed towards job creation. That has to be the right way in which to target considerable sums of money.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Minister confirm that in real terms there has been a reduction in regional assistance to the northern region since 1979, although there has been an explosion in unemployment? Will he answer the question yes or no? We do not want a flannel answer?

Mr. Morrison: I shall answer yes, but I hope that the hon. Gentleman will allow me to qualify my answer to the extent that the money, which is still considerable, is now being targeted much more towards job creation.

Mr. Beith: Did the Minister note the remarks of the retiring regional director of his own Department on unemployment? He expressed disquiet over the point that, in London, it seemed that if there were no riots in an area, there were no problems. Did the Minister agree with the emphasis that the regional director put on the need for public sector spending in the north-east? Does he fear that if something is not done we shall merely store up trouble for the future?

Mr. Morrison: I did not see Mr. Atkinson's remarks, but I do not agree with them precisely, as presented by the hon. Gentleman. The northern region gets more regional aid than other parts of the country, in some of which there have been riots.

Mr. Holt: In view of the failure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to locate Cleveland on the map, and in view of the failure of the Department of the Environment to decide how big the county of Cleveland is, and despite the Government's generosity so far in the northern region, will my hon. Friend confirm that, as the question relates to the availability of money, if any schemes from Cleveland are put forward the Government will not be ungenerous but will consider them sympathetically?

Mr. Morrison: Regardless of what my hon. Friend says about Cleveland, he can rest assured that the county of Cleveland is well put on the map, by himself, constantly. The level of money given out depends on the number of applications. I shall be delighted to consider as many applications as I can.

Mr. Ryman: The Minister has not been in the Department for very long, so he may not be fully briefed. Does he not appreciate that the origin of the trouble is that in 1979 the then Conservative Secretary of State for Trade abolished the special development area status of Blyth Valley, which includes Blyth and Cramlington, so wrongly earmarking regional aid? Consequently, unemployment in Blyth Valley has risen astronomically as a direct result of the asinine regional policy of the Conservative Government.

Mr. Morrison: I am well aware that the hon. Gentleman puts forward the case of his constituents assiduously. I know Cramlington, Blyth and Blyth Valley.

Unless I am gravely mistaken—and the hon. Gentleman will correct me immediately if I am—he will be aware that his part of the country gets regional aid to the greatest extent that is still possible.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Is my hon. Friend aware that in the recent review of regional policy his constituency was included in the map for selective assistance and mine was excluded——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the hon. Gentleman's constituency in the north?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes. Can my hon. Friend tell me what advantage might accrue from increasing unemployment in my constituency so as to reduce it in his own?

Mr. Morrison: I am aware of the situation that my hon. Friend mentions because he and I have constituencies at either end of Cheshire. As he will be aware, the decisions were taken quite a substantial time before I became Minister of State.

Mr. O'Neill: Does the Minister agree that the year to year figures for regional aid prove that the real value of regional aid has not just been cut in the northern region since 1979 but has been halved, as it has in every other depressed region? When will the Minister of State bring to the House the review proposals on regional aid that were promised by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry? When will the Government start increasing regional aid instead of continuing over the next three years their policy of making cuts?

Mr. Morrison: As I have said to other hon. Members, regional aid policy is now directed specifically towards job creation. As to when the review will be brought to the House, the answer is that it will be conducted during the year. The policy has been in existence for only 12 months. I cannot tell the hon. Member precisely when the review results will be ready. I hope that it will be towards the end of the year, but I cannot be held to that at this stage.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: As the figure given by the Minister earlier contains a concealed dramatic decline in support for the northern region during the Government's term of office at a time when there has been an equally dramatic increase in unemployment, and as the number of grants depends upon the number of applications, can the Minister tell us what his Department proposes to do to increase the number of applications from the northern region and to increase the number of new businesses created there?

Mr. Morrison: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has made a particular issue of regional aid. He has made it abundantly clear to all and sundry that he is keen that there should be as many applications as possible. That is the message that has gone out to all regional offices, including the northern region.

Books (Piracy)

10. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to curtail overseas piracy of books published in Britain; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): The Government take every opportunity they can to press upon countries where piracy of British books is permitted to flourish the need for comprehensive and enforceable copyright law. We are in contact with several such countries on this issue at the present time and the European Community is in the process of detailed consideration of the link between intellectual property and trade policy as part of the Community's preparation for a new GATT round.

Mr. Baldry: I thank my hon. and learned Friend for his reply. The Governments of South Korea and Signapore are at present actively considering fresh copyright legislation. What steps are the Government taking to ensure that such legislation adequately protects the interests of British publishers?

Mr. Howard: We have recently written to the Government of Singapore suggesting some modifications to the first draft of the new copyright law that authorities have produced in that country. We are monitoring developments in South Korea and we shall make representations if it seems that that will be useful.

Semi-finished Steel Products

11. **Mr. Cash** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the prospects for exports of semi-finished steel products; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: United Kingdom steel producers export semi-finished products to many countries, and prospects in most of them remain broadly unchanged. However, I am pleased to say that exports to the United States should increase substantially under the British Steel Corporation's contract with the Tuscaloosa Steel Corporation of Alabama.

Mr. Cash: Does my hon. Friend accept that, arising out of the minutes that have just been placed in the Library of a meeting with Sir Raymond Lygo, it is a matter of first importance, as my right and learned Friend the Secretary of State is reported as having said, to ensure that in relations with the United States, especially when dealing with semi-finished steel products, we avoid anti-British protection sentiments in the United States of America?

Mr. Morrison: As I said in reply to an earlier question, when I think my hon. Friend was in his place, the negotiations on the deal with the United States Government over the Tuscaloosa Steel Corporation were extremely difficult. As my hon. Friend is aware, there is a protectionist wave that is evident throughout the United States. All such negotiations have to be handled carefully. Anti-American sentiments can endanger them.

Johnson Matthey Bankers

12. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the most recent annual return and accounts of Johnson Matthey Bankers Limited were received at Companies House.

Mr. Howard: Accounts for the period ending 30 June 1985 were delivered to the registrar on 20 December 1985, and an annual return for 1985 was delivered on 31 December 1985.

Mr. Dalyell: Following the experience of the Johnson Matthey affair, what have Trade Ministers learnt about the operational efficiency of the supervisory authority?

Mr. Howard: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has announced a review of banking supervision, which it is hoped will remedy the deficiencies that were revealed by the events at Johnson Matthey.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Minister happy about the developments that are taking place in the Johnson Matthey business that relate to the accounts? What steps are the Government taking to ensure that the accounts are in a much healthier state, by dealing with people such as Mr. Sipra, who is in India and who owes Johnson Matthey about £70 million? Will he be brought back to this country so that he can repay some of that money? What steps are the Government taking? If they took steps to bring Mr. Sipra and others back to Britain, they might recover some of the money.

Mr. Howard: The House will be aware that the Johnson Matthey matters are under investigation by the police. The fraud investigation group has been established. As for compliance with the law on the submission of accounts, there has been a substantial improvement over the position in recent years.

Lloyd's (Regulation)

14. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the regulation of Lloyd's.

Mr. Brittan: My hon. and learned Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for corporate and consumer affairs, and I dealt with this matter yesterday during the debate on the Second Reading of the Financial Services Bill. I have nothing to add now.

Mr. Fatchett: In the context of the inquiry that the Secretary of State established last week, will he assure the House that the inquiry will be completed before the Financial Services Bill completes its passage through the House? If any recommendations are made by those who carry out the inquiry, will the Committee that considers the Financial Services Bill, or the House, have sufficient time to act upon them and to implement them if necessary?

Mr. Brittan: I cannot give that assurance. That is a matter for Sir Patrick Neill. He has suggested that he would hope to complete the inquiry in the summer. My hon. and learned Friend has said clearly that we do not think that it is at all likely that the Financial Services Bill would be a proper vehicle for statutory intervention, even if Sir Patrick came to the conclusion that further statutory intervention would be appropriate.

Mr. Gould: As the Minister responsible for the Financial Services Bill and for the decision whether Lloyd's should be included within it — the Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) — is involved in a clear conflict of interest in this respect, may I ask whether the Secretary of State's attention has been drawn to the Churchill-Butler statement on these matters—a statement of principle that has been endorsed by a long line of Prime Ministers — which reads as follows:

"It is a principle of public life that Ministers must"—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member must paraphrase, not quote.

Mr. Gould: Very well, I will paraphrase the statement of principle, to the effect that where there is a conflict between a Minister's private interests and public responsibilities he must divest himself of those private interests. Given that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary is able to divest himself of his membership of Lloyd's, as I am advised, will the Secretary of State ensure that he either does that or passes the responsibility for the Bill to another Minister?

Mr. Brittan: We have looked into this matter and explained it, and I am perfectly satisfied that my hon. and learned Friend is well able to discharge his responsibilities with complete propriety.

Ravenscraig Steelworks

15. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received concerning Ravenscraig steelworks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. and learned Friend and I have received a number of written and oral representations about Ravenscraig steelworks in the context of BSC's decision to close the Gartcosh works. Earlier today I replied on behalf of the Government, to the recommendations of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs relating to Gartcosh. In that reply I stated that, having examined closely the recommendations and evidence, I remained of the opinion that the Government should not interfere with BSC's decision to close Gartcosh.

Mr. Wallace: Will the Minister accept, as the overwhelming majority of Scottish opinion accepts, that the future of Ravenscraig is inextricably bound up with that of Gartcosh, and that any long-term guarantee to Ravenscraig would be meaningful and worthwhile only if it were extended to the Gartcosh plant? Notwithstanding the reply that he gave to the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs this morning, may I ask him to look at the figures now produced by the Scottish Trades Union Congress on recent trends and figures for markets for the steel produced there and to reconsider his decision, which is very damaging to Scotland and its industry, in the light of this new evidence?

Mr. Morrison: I can, of course, appreciate what the hon. Gentleman says. There is very significant feeling in Scotland about Gartcosh and Ravenscraig. That is why we looked carefully indeed at all the evidence put to us. Having done so, we came to the conclusion that the decision of the British Steel Corporation on its future strategy, which was endorsed by the Government in August, should not be undermined.

Mr. Ewing: How can the Minister honestly say that he has considered all the evidence and has come to the conclusion that he has reached when the evidence is all against his determination to bring about the closure of Gartcosh? How can the Minister condone a situation where the Government are prepared to spend nearly £10 million a year to keep Scottish workers unemployed when they could be investing that kind of money in the steel industry, not only of Scotland, but of the whole of the United Kingdom?

Mr. Morrison: It is not for me to publish my reply to the Select Committee in which I gave the reasons for the

Government's decision not to intervene in this particular matter, although I am sure that the hon. Member will understand them when he sees it. I perfectly understand that there is very strong feeling in Scotland about Gartcosh, but the hon. Member will be aware that there is overcapacity in the kinds of products made by Gartcosh. He will also be aware of the argument which says that Gartcosh and Ravenscraig are not inextricably connected.

Mr. Hickmet: Does my hon. Friend agree that, in its attempts to survive, the British Steel Corporation, for the past three or four years, has had to take very difficult decisions involving the redundancy of many thousands of men? Now, when the corporation is profitable, excess capacity is being removed and, for the first time for many years, the corporation finds itself the most competitive steel producer in Europe, is it fair that the steel workers in Scotland should be exempted from some of the very difficult decisions that have had to be taken throughout the country, including in my own constituency, where 11,000 men have lost their jobs in two years?

Mr. Morrison: I certainly agree that enormous progress has been made by BSC management and the trade unions within the corporation to make it into the most efficient steel corporation in Europe. I differ a little from my hon. Friend. I fully appreciated the fact that, in the short term at least, closure brings a bleak future for the 800 or so employees at Gartcosh and their families. It was in that context that I took my decision. I do not welcome taking such decisions.

Mr. Strang: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that there is a lobby in the House of Commons today, representative of all walks of life in Scotland, to meet representatives from all parties in the House? Is he further aware that that lobby is clearly saying that the future of Gartcosh is crucial to the future of Ravenscraig, and that the future of Ravenscraig is vital to Scotland's future as an industrial nation? Will the hon. Gentleman recognise that Gartcosh is Scotland's industrial El Alamein and that it must stay open, even if that means driving every Tory out of Scotland?

Mr. Morrison: Of course I realise that there is a lobby in the House today. Of course I realise also that there has been a consistent campaign. I am aware also that several representatives of the work force walked the whole way from Gartcosh to London. The hon. Gentleman should be aware that the very same representatives have had an opportunity to see me, which they requested, since the middle of October. That invitation has been extended, further extended and further extended again, and they did not decide to put their case. I wonder why.

Mr. John Smith: Did the hon. Gentleman advise the Prime Minister to see the delegation that had walked all the way from Gartcosh? Why did she snub those representatives by refusing even to meet them when the request was put? Is the hon. Gentleman aware that there have been few issues in recent times on which majority opinion has been rallied more successfully than in the campaign to save Gartcosh? Why do the Government intervene in the Ravenscraig matter on an explicit political basis and claim credit for it, yet seem totally unable to intervene in the Gartcosh matter?

Mr. Morrison: I made it quite clear to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister that my door was open to see the representatives of the work force, as it had been for more than three months. It seemed unusual, to put it mildly, that they did not take advantage of that. My door remained open. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is well aware of the fundamental difference between Gartcosh and Ravenscraig—*[Interruption]*—in terms of BSC's strategy.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I fully understand and appreciate that there is an important debate to follow Question Time, but Question Time is important to those hon. Members with questions on the Order Paper.

European Community

16. **Mr. Bright** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further progress has been made in opening up the internal market of the European Community.

The Minister for Information Technology (Mr. Geoffrey Pattie): During the last six months the Council has agreed a number of measures which should facilitate the free movement of goods and services within the Community. The Internal Market Council of 12 December endorsed a detailed programme of action for the Netherlands and United Kingdom Presidencies with the aim of securing the adoption of a large number of further measures in 1986. A copy of this programme is in the Library of the House.

Mr. Bright: In what respects does my hon. Friend think that the most progress will be made to the benefit of the United Kingdom, especially with respect to small businesses, which still find that some of the obstacles put in their way when exporting to Europe are difficult to overcome?

Mr. Pattie: The Council has adopted a directive liberalising the marketing of unit trusts, co-ordinating national customs, computer developments and reducing clearance times at internal frontiers. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has taken an initiative that will ensure that all new proposals emanating from the Commission will be scrutinised with respect to the burdens that they will place on small businesses.

Mr. Nellist: Does the opening of the internal market of the European Community include consortiums for the production of helicopters? If so, will the hon. Gentleman advise workers at Westland not to accept job guarantees from the leaders of such a consortium, especially as Lord Weinstock, the leader of GEC, axed 1,000 jobs in Coventry, South-East just before Christmas? Will the hon. Gentleman advise them that they cannot believe the truth of such a spokesman for a European consortium?

Mr. Pattie: The hon. Gentleman should be aware that defence procurement measures, which are largely what are involved in the Westland case, do not come within the purview of the Commission.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: Does the Department recognise that for Londoners and the whole British economy the most important aspect of this process is the achievement of a fully integrated European market for capital over the whole range of financial services, with London playing its proper pre-eminent part?

Mr. Pattie: Yes.

W. G. Allen (Tipton) Ltd.

18. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the conduct of the liquidator of W. G. Allen (Tipton) Ltd.

Mr. Howard: I understand that my hon. Friend is referring to W. G. Allen & Sons (Tipton) plc, which is in receivership, not in liquidation. My hon. Friend has drawn my attention in the last few days to a number of points. I am considering them to see whether exercise of my Department's investigative powers is warranted.

Mr. Taylor: In thanking my hon. and learned Friend for that reply and noting that he is to look into the matter, may I ask him to pay due attention to shareholder concern about inaccuracies in letters from the stock exchange, and the fact that a statement of affairs is still awaited? This company failed within three months of having a clean auditor's report. There seems to be some conflict of interest. Will my hon. and learned Friend bear those things in mind?

Mr. Howard: I shall take all those matters into account.

China

19. **Mr. William Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on trading prospects with China.

Mr. Channon: There are good prospects for steady growth in our trade with China, which has substantially increased in the last two years.

Mr. Powell: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that China will be able to benefit from the substantial increases in the soft loan facilities which the Secretary of State should be able to announce? When does he expect that such loans will become available for China?

Mr. Channon: We have already told the Chinese Government that in principle we are prepared to offer soft loans for project business. We had preliminary talks with them, and it will not be long before some of them come to fruition.

Services (Trade Liberalisation)

20. **Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress is being make in his talks on liberalising international trade in services.

Mr. Channon: The GATT contracting parties agreed at their meeting in November to set up the preparatory process for a new round in which the British Government think it essential that all relevant topics, including trade in services, should be included. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom continues to press for completion of the Community's internal market in services as in goods.

Mr. Hanley: I had always understood that one of the main objectives of the European Community was freedom of trade by the removal of restrictive trade practices. Will my right hon. Friend give me some idea of when the current dispute over the German insurance market might be resolved and the possible prospects for the British insurance market when that has occurred?

Mr. Channon: It will, of course, depend upon the decision of the court. I hope that the court decision in the German case will be made in the not too distant future, and that it will be in favour of the position that we have adopted. Before long that would lead to substantial progress being made in this area.

South Africa

21. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what volume of trade in cash terms was conducted with South Africa in 1983, 1984 and 1985, respectively *(a)* in imports and *(b)* in exports.

Mr. Channon: The value of United Kingdom imports from South Africa were £765 million in 1983, £726 million in 1984 and £914 million in the first 11 months of 1985. The corresponding figures for exports were £1,111 million £1,204 million and £933 million respectively.

Mr. Flannery: Is that not a comment on the political efforts of this Government at a time when apartheid in South Africa is grinding the whole of southern Africa into confusion? People are being shot down daily — *[Interruption.]*—murdered all over the place, because they are asking for some kind of equality. Why do we not take a leaf out of the American book and exert some pressure on that Government and make it clear to them that we are not willing to flourish while people are held in such miserable subjection in that country?

Mr. Channon: I disagree with the hon. Gentleman's analysis of events. No one dislikes apartheid more than do my hon. Friends and myself. One of the major forces for reform in South Africa has been the activities of industry, and in particular British industry, in improving conditions for black workers in South Africa and protecting jobs both here and there over the past few years.

Mr. Hill: Does my right hon. Friend agree that more publicity should be given to the number of jobs that rely on South African trade—in particular, the work that we do in the port of Southampton—and to the fact that many workers take the realistic view that South African trade provides their livelihood? Is it not the case that any way in which we can expand trade with South Africa would be good for this country's work force?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend is right to point that out. There are probably hundreds of thousands of jobs in this country that depend upon trade with South Africa, and many thousands of jobs — including many among the black workers—in South Africa.

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

Mr. Madden *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take points of order arising directly out of questions.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Arising directly out of questions?

Mr. Madden: Indeed, Mr. Speaker. I ask you to reflect on your ruling about question 1 today. It involved the CBI and the regulation of financial services. You will recollect that you asked my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) and other hon. Members who wanted to ask questions about Lloyd's to desist. If your ruling stands, it would seem that in future you are prepared to accept questions about Lloyd's only if the question refers to

Lloyd's, such as question 14. As it is an important matter, I ask whether you would reflect on the matter and give the House your advice.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I can say to the hon. Member straight away that I reflected when the question was first put. I knew perfectly well that question 14 on the Order Paper was the question on which these matters should properly be raised.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order arising out of Questio Time, Mr. Speaker. Would you consider later toda expressing your sympathy, on behalf of the Opposition with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for t fact that, following his loss of his memory yesterday, h has lost his voice this afternoon? He answered only tw questions.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have lost my voice as well.

Solicitor-General (Letter)

3.32 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask your help with a matter, about which I gave you notice this morning, relating to documents for the coming debate? It may be within the recollection of the House that on 6 January the Law Officers wrote a letter to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). It was partly and selectively leaked. For the purposes of greater accuracy, I went to the Library this morning to ask for the complete letter so that one could look at it in full and not selectively. The Library, with its normal efficiency and courtesy, found that it did not have the letter. The Library then rang the Law Officers' Department, which said that higher authority would have to be consulted before it could give me the letter. When higher authority was consulted, lo and behold, the letter was not forthcoming. The House does not have the full text of that letter. It is extremely unsatisfactory to make decisions or speeches on the basis of selectively leaked letters. I wonder whether there is any way in which you can manage to get before the House the full text of the letter written by the Law Officers and sent to the former Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot help the hon. Member. Whether the Government choose to put a letter before the House is entirely a matter for them. I believe that the Leader of the House wishes to say something.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): So that we may keep these matters in perspective, may I say that in no sense do I represent higher authority. The House will appreciate that there are conventions relating to advice from the Law Officers. I can inform the House that the Solicitor-General has authorised publication of his letter of 6 January to the then Secretary of State for Defence, and arrangements are being made for it to be made available to the House later this afternoon.

Cruelty to Animals (Amendment)

3.34 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to prohibit all tests of cosmetics, tobacco and alcohol and similar experiments on animals; to prohibit the draize eye irritancy test and the LD50 poisoning test; to prohibit behavioural and psychological experiments on animals; to prevent use of animals in warfare trials or experiments; to abolish the practices of hare coursing, and fox and stag hunting; to prohibit the use of domestic animals in animal experiments; to increase the penalties for convictions of causing, procuring or assisting at the fighting or baiting of dogs, cats or other domestic animals; to ban the import and sale of bull terriers and the advertising of fighting dogs for sale, including the advertising of qualities related to fighting; to regulate laboratories in which animals are bred; to reconstitute the Advisory Committee on Animal Experiments; and to promote alternatives to animal experiments.

I stress that there is no connection between this matter and the next item of House of Commons business. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member has every right to be heard.

Mr. Cohen: I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that this large gathering today is concerned with animal rights. The British enjoy a reputation as animal lovers. That reputation, I fear, exists more in the hearts and minds of decent British people than in the practices that are embodied in the law of the land.

The shameful reality is that 110 years have passed without improvements to the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876. My Bill seeks to bring the law closer to public perceptions of our humanitarian protection towards animals, and to distance future legislation as far as possible from the barbaric brutality allowed at present. In so doing, my proposals run counter to the Conservative Government's legislative intentions on this matter, which are to afford less protection to animals while employing a deft legislative "newspeak" to hoodwink and placate public opinion.

The Government are too squeamish to use the word "experiment" and have substituted the word "procedure" to ensure that public sensitivities are not offended while appalling cruelty to animals will actually be allowed to increase. This is a betrayal of the public's heartfelt wish to provide proper rights for animals, to see an end to barbaric blood sports and to end unnecessary animal experiments.

My Bill puts a stop to the obscenity of killing animals in the name of sport by abolishing the practices of hare coursing, fox and stag hunting. This is a Labour party policy which I should like to see enacted immediately. To their shame, the Conservative Government have twice overruled the Northern Ireland Assembly's unanimous votes to outlaw hare coursing. Perhaps this tendency to override public and parliamentary opinion will diminish somewhat when the Government are reminded that a recent poll of Conservative voters showed a majority opposed to all forms of hunting. The measure that I propose not only puts a stop to the rights of sadists to enjoy the fun of the kill while devastating our countryside but also sorts out their less well heeled blood brothers who support dog fighting. In line with RSPCA policy, my Bill would substantially increase penalties for convictions for causing, procuring, assisting or aiding and abetting at the fighting or baiting of dogs, cats and other domestic

[Mr. Cohen]

animals. It would also ban the import and sale of pit bull terriers and the advertising of fighting dogs for sale, including qualities related to fighting.

There should be stiff prison sentences for those indulging in dog fighting. The traffic in domestic animals for animal experiments must be halted. This shady enterprise is such big business in residential areas that pet shop owners in my constituency display notices warning animal owners to keep their pets under constant surveillance. What are we to make of the standing of scientific establishments which apparently fail to notice that their stock of animals for experiments consists of every breed under the sun, obviously tamed for domestic life and pining for human contact? Such establishments should have their licences withdrawn instantaneously and permanently. My Bill ensures that laboratories may obtain animals of specified breeds only from licensed breeders who can produce proper evidence of the legitimate origin of these animals. In addition, breeding establishments will be subject to regular and spot inspection and the export of animals will be banned.

The obscenity of current animal experimentation in which over 67,000 animals are killed every week is tackled in my Bill. My objective is to see animal experiments phased out within a decade. However, the overwhelming majority of tests could be abolished immediately, starting with a ban on all animal tests for cosmetics, tobacco and alcohol. The Bill would also immediately end the Draize eye test where irritants are administered without pain relief until the animal's eye bursts. The LD50 test, whereby animals are painfully poisoned until 50 per cent. of them die, would also go. In line with the Labour parliamentary campaign group for animal rights, there would be a prohibition on the use of animals in warfare trials in which they are deliberately shot at, irradiated and subjected to germ and chemical warfare. Behavioural and psychological tests on animals in which they are deliberately driven to madness for so-called "insights" into human psychosis will also cease.

At present, the Government employ 15 inspectors to check on the 21,000 vivisectionists who cut up three million animals each year. That ludicrous situation will be transformed under my Bill as a result of greater powers for the Home Office advisory committee. At present the committee is packed with either licensed experimenters or pro-vivisectionists, including Dr. Coid, the doctor responsible for designing the primate cages which featured so infamously in the recent prosecution of the Royal College of Surgeons. It is essential that the independence of the committee should be firmly established, with membership consisting of persons with a knowledge of the subject but no vested interest whatsoever by way of monetary gain or job dependency. The primary function of the committee will be the responsibility for securing a continuing and sizeable decrease annually in animal usage in laboratories.

The new independent composition of the advisory committee will also free its decision-making processes from the undue influences of the drug companies. As the *Sunday People* so accurately observed:

"The name of the game is profit and to hell with animal suffering".

Research into disease prevention has been passed up because drug companies prefer animal experiments for their latest wonder cures. Thus, animals suffer in their millions as drug companies race to develop so-called "new" products, most of which are simple recombinations of other brands, an increasing number dangerous to humans — such as Thalidomide, Eraldin and Opren. Tackling causes and the prevention of illness are not as profitable as "cures", even if the latter means countless unnecessary human and animal deaths in the process. Yet, the Research Defence Committee, a pro-vivisection group funded by the drug and cosmetic multinationals, confidently assesses the Conservative Government's new legislation with the comment:

"I cannot think of a single experiment allowed now that will not be allowed in future."

Medical research which is so bound up with the fortunes of drug companies lacks any incentive to develop alternative research. The Conservative Government, as the political voice of big business, ensure that the purse strings of state research remain controlled by the vivisectionists. They have allocated a derisory £200,000 over three years for the consideration of alternatives to animal experiments. In this scenario, human life is indeed held cheap, while animal protection counts for nothing. In conclusion, my Bill forces the parliamentary, scientific and commercial establishment to face up to the failure of their endless experiments on animals, to take account of the horrendous issue of assessing the pain and suffering endured by animals, while at the same time insisting upon medical research to follow a more civilised and effective path by using non-animal alternatives. My proposals, not the Government's, are more in tune with what the public want.

This Bill, not the Government's, recognises and responds with genuine measures to meet the growing public disquiet about animal experimentation and barbaric sports. My Bill is a Socialist measure aimed to uphold the value of human life, to free sport from a sordid blood lust and provide protection and rights for animals. It is an essential element towards the achievement of a safe and healthy environment for all living creatures in a civilised society. As Labour's programme says:

"We are partners on this planet with animals, not their masters."

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Mr. Brian Sedgemore, Mr. Roland Boyes, Ms. Jo Richardson, Mr. Doug Hoyle, Mr. Allan Rogers, Mr. James Lamond, Miss Joan Maynard, Mr. Martin Flannery and Mr. Robert N. Wareing.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (AMENDMENT)

Mr. Harry Cohen accordingly presented a Bill to prohibit all tests of cosmetics, tobacco and alcohol and similar experiments on animals; to prohibit the draize eye irritancy test and the LD50 poisoning test; to prohibit behavioural and psychological experiments on animals; to prevent use of animals in warfare trials or experiments; to abolish the practices of hare coursing, and fox and stag hunting; to prohibit the use of domestic animals in animal experiments; to increase the penalties for convictions of causing, procuring or assisting at the fighting or baiting of dogs, cats or other domestic animals; to ban the import and sale of bull terriers and the advertising of fighting dogs for sale, including the advertising of qualities related to fighting; to regulate laboratories in which animals are bred; to reconstitute the Advisory Committee on Animal Experiments; and to promote alternatives to animal experiments: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 7 February and to be printed. [Bill 58.]

Opposition Day

[3RD ALLOTTED DAY]

Westland plc

Mr. Speaker: Before we embark upon this important debate I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

3.45 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I beg to move,

That this House, noting the serious allegations made in public by the former Secretary of State for Defence, the Right honourable Member for Henley, about the conduct of the Government in respect of Westland plc, and aware of the major implications for defence procurement, manufacturing industry, technology and employment, calls on Her Majesty's Government to make arrangements to set up a Committee of the House to consider the issues raised by the matter, ensuring that such a Committee would be provided with all the relevant documents and letters, many of which have been publicly referred to but not yet published, in order to establish for the nation a truthful record of the events relating to the present and future position of Westland plc.

This debate is about helicopter manufacture and the industries related to it. It is about technology and certainly about employment. It is a debate about defence procurement policies and about European co-operation. Indeed, it has now apparently become an issue which affects the stability of interest rates.

The debate on Westland plc is about all those things, but most of all it is about something even more elementary, even more basic in our political life. For I consider that the debate most of all is about the truth; that is why, despite her reluctance to come to the House to make a statement, it was essential that we secured the presence of the Prime Minister to speak in the debate today. It is not just because of the complete collision of testimony about Government conduct in relation to the affairs of Westland plc, nor indeed because the right hon. Lady has ultimate responsibility for all the activities of Government; it is mainly because of the right hon. Lady's particular system of rule and her particular involvement in the issue of Westland plc.

That the Prime Minister is domineering is not a matter of contention or doubt. The whole country knows that. Indeed, there is a growing entertainment industry based entirely upon that fact. What is less obvious and much more serious is that that domineering attitude in a system of Cabinet government in a democratic country has enormous effects on the whole course and style of the way in which our country is governed.

In such a system of Cabinet government it is simply not possible to dominate absolutely and continually on the merits of argument because there are always other good arguments in fair contention. Nor is it possible to dominate always by patronage or even by petulance. To dominate absolutely it is necessary for the domineering to employ other techniques, and plainly they include tactics which go well beyond the bounds of clever politics and become systematic connivance against Cabinet colleagues for the purpose of achieving a particular end.

When those people who will not concede to domination or bullying or will not back down, really make up their minds they must be undermined, isolated or bypassed. The

[Mr. Neil Kinnock]

right hon. Lady has had some success with the system of rule by overrule because she has taken the precaution, generally speaking, of surrounding herself with some jelloid Ministers. But sooner or later someone was bound to resist, even to the point of resignation, and that day arrived last Thursday.

In the course of that resignation the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) made some serious charges about the conduct and course of the Government. His charges relate mainly to the events on 4 and 18 October; 4, 5, and 9 December; 11 and 12 December; 30 and 31 December; 6 January, when the Solicitor-General entered the fray; and the 8 January meeting between the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Sir Raymond Lygo, chief executive of British Aerospace.

Those charges made by the right hon. Gentleman must be answered in detail by the Prime Minister today. Some of them should be easy to deal with if they are false or at all misleading. For instance, the right hon. Lady can determine the veracity of the right hon. Gentleman about the minutes of meetings on 4 and 18 October, to which she has continually referred, by publishing those minutes, including all the details of the meetings that took place and the consideration that took place. It would not be a great leap out of security or secrecy for her to do so.

Before Christmas, sections of the minutes of the 4 October meeting were freely discussed and quoted in the press. Last Monday night, on "Panorama", the minutes of the 18 October meeting were quoted in part. Indeed, *The Times* on 14 January reported that the Government

"took the unprecedented step of quoting from the minutes of two ad hoc meetings of ministers held on December 4 and 5 in an attempt to undermine Mr. Heseltine's resignation statement."

Therefore, it cannot be too much to ask that the same treatment is given to the minutes of other ad hoc meetings in October.

In his resignation statement, the right hon. Member for Henley alleged that, after his efforts in November—undertaken at least with the acquiesence of the Government—to secure a recommendation from the European national armament directors to extend the 1978 declaration on helicopter procurement, he encountered unexpected and strong opposition to his views at an ad hoc ministerial meeting on 4 December, and then at another on 5 December. He encountered further strong resistance at the Economic Committee meeting on 9 December, so he tells us, and that opposition came not from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry but from the Prime Minister. It appears that that opposition was based on the right hon. Lady's efforts to set aside the recommendation of the national armaments directors that the right hon. Gentleman had painstakingly accumulated in the days at the end of November.

I must ask the Prime Minister why she took that course at those meetings and why she has pursued that course so avidly. I must ask her the question that *The Times* put yesterday, about

"why, and in what circumstances, the decision of the national armaments directors in favour of European helicopter procurement was set aside."

The Times continued:

"Was it merely *not endorsed*, as Downing Street would have us believe, or deliberately shelved, as Mr. Heseltine argues? If it was shelved why was it shelved? Mrs. Thatcher has to give the House the clearest possible answer on this point. It is naive to think that there is something as simple as non-intervention in matters of this kind, particularly where the Government is so important a customer of the company concerned. But it is even-handedness that is the Government's claim in the Westland affair. Mrs. Thatcher needs to explain exactly how her administration's practice matched its rhetoric."

There are three crucial questions. First, why was the policy adopted? Was it through the persuasiveness of Sir John Cuckney, with all the great weight of his experience and expertise? Was it, as has been alleged, to do with the strategic defence initiative, or with an anti-European sentiment or for some other reason? We need to know that, and this House and the country deserve to know that.

Secondly, how was the policy adopted without the benefit of collective decision by the Cabinet, which plainly was the case?

Thirdly, how does practice in the privacy of Government match the public declarations to this House and to the country about the Government's policy? The right hon. Member for Henley says that there is no match; he says that there is no connection between private machinations and public declarations. Someone, he plainly implies, has been telling the truth; someone has not been telling the truth.

The right hon. Gentleman says that there was an even-handed policy for public display and a private policy of favouritism for actual use. That is a very grave allegation, but like so many others it could be easily disproved if it were false or even inaccurate. It would be supreme folly for the right hon. Gentleman to make such charges if they could not be substantiated. So I ask the Prime Minister whether the circumstances of 4 and 18 October and of 4, 5 and 9 December were as the right hon. Gentleman has alleged. She can tell us. She can prove or disprove what he said and she must do one or the other.

Much the same applies to the E Committee meeting of 9 December. There are two versions of events. From the right hon. Member for Henley we hear that it was an inconclusive meeting that did not resolve policy and which decided that there should be a further meeting on 13 December. From the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry we hear, in answer to my colleagues, my hon. Friends the Members for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) and for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), that the 9 December meeting was a conclusive meeting which resolved policy and set a deadline of 13 December for the European submission.

These are the two versions. They are in stark conflict and collision, one with another. All that we have to rely on to make up our minds at this stage is the circumstantial evidence as to which version is correct. The circumstantial evidence is that, some time before the Cabinet meeting of 12 December—probably on 11 December—the relevant Departments were notified by the Cabinet Office that the meeting on Friday was cancelled. One can cancel a meeting only if it has been proposed.

Another meeting was fixed for 13 December. We want to know the truth about that, because that is a fulcrum date. This is a crucial set of circumstances. There is essential testimony in public by both right hon. Gentlemen, and the House must decide, because by that decision we shall be deciding what course the Government really have been undertaking and whether there was one course for private use and another for public consumption.

The Prime Minister can prove or disprove these sets of circumstances and she must do one or the other. We have the word of two right hon. Members. This is an honourable

House which accepts honourable words. What are we to do when there is such an exact conflict in the description of the circumstances, the status and even the existence of the meeting—the alleged meeting—of 13 December?

The choice is invidious for us. The conclusions can be reached only by the calling of witnesses. The witnesses are not all hon. Members elected to the House. Fortunately, however, the House has, over the years and in its wisdom, developed a procedure which permits witnesses to give evidence. That is why we consider that it is sensible for all the parties concerned—in the Government, in the public service and elsewhere—who have been witnesses to the various events to appear before a Committee of the House so that a proper assessment can be make and so that they can develop and demonstrate their version and the veracity of their version of events.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. He has been seeking to lecture the House on the workings of Cabinet government. Can the right hon. Gentleman explain the basis of his insight into the workings of Cabinet government? Can he tell us to whom among his colleagues he has spoken about the workings of Cabinet government or what his other sources of information or authority are?

Mr. Kinnock: The issue at stake is much more basic. I can tell the difference between a truth and an untruth. I know a stink when I smell one.

The Committee that we seek, which could be convened and which would be of such utility to all involved, would not just consider the veracity of two right hon. Members. The Committee would inevitably consider why a policy change was favoured and why that policy was so rigorously followed by the Prime Minister from 3 December—so enthusiastically as to inspire the grave allegations that she was ill-tempered and, more seriously, that a meeting was cancelled. There were even implications that a Cabinet minute did not carry an account that had been insisted upon by a member of that Cabinet.

Following the E Committee meeting of 9 December, events marched on. On 13 December, without benefit of further Government consideration of the options, the Westland board met and dismissed the European consortium proposals. In the wake of that, on 16 December, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was able to provide the House with what he must have considered to be a fait accompli that would quieten the issue. He was unsuccessful and the conflict continued. The rival camps exchanged propaganda barrages, to such an extent that, when the Cabinet met on 19 December, we are told that it was decided, presumably collectively, that the lobbying had to stop. However, it did not stop and the contest continued. The allegation is that, far from allowing collective decision-taking to work through the Cabinet and through departmental responsibility, the Prime Minister became even more deeply involved. It is said that she did not direct Sir John Cuckney's letter of 30 December to the appropriate defence procurement department, but to the Department of Trade and Industry, and that she accompanied that directed missile—*[Interruption.]* I should have said missive, but missile will do. She accompanied it with guidance that the then Secretary of State for Defence considered to be materially misleading.

The Prime Minister then set the Law Officers on the right hon. Member for Henley when he decided to communicate directly with Lloyds merchant bank. someone made sure that the Solicitor-General's letter became public knowledge by leaking extracts.

The activities following 16 December ranged from the extremely unconventional in Government to the highly disreputable in Government. In the *Sunday Telegraph* this week Mr. Ian Waller, on behalf of many others, stated:

"This Government has been ruthless in persecuting journalists and civil servants for trivial breaches of the Official Secrets Act, yet Whitehall has been like a sieve in recent weeks—including Heseltine's ministry, which unsuccessfully prosecuted Ponting and had a clerk, Miss Tisdall, jailed. The most flagrant breach of all was the leak of a letter from the Solicitor-General damaging to Heseltine's case. Again it stretches credulity to believe this was an accident and not authorised at a high level."

Mr. Waller asked the question that we all ask:

"Will Mrs. Thatcher act against the culprit—or does she have one rule for top people and another rule for clerks?"

We seek an explanation of why a Government who were so sensitive on Monday of this week about the British Aerospace letter were apparently so insecure on Monday 6 January. Did the leak of the Solicitor-General's letter come about by misfortune—as Oscar Wilde might put it—by carelessness, or as a result of something much more devious than either of those possibilities? The Prime Minister is in a position to tell us the answer, and she must tell us. Was that occurrence inadvertent or was it simply a further episode in the efforts to ensure that the arguments for one option were muted so as to elevate the attractiveness of the other option that faces Westland?

On the matter of muting, we come to last Wednesday's meeting between Sir Raymond Lygo and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. On Monday, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why the Secretary of State had decided to speak to Sir Raymond Lygo at all on 8 December. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry quaintly replied that since Sir Raymond happened to be in the Department of Industry building,

"it would have been wholly artificial if I did not see Sir Raymond."

What was wholly artificial was the version of events provided by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

We have the private and confidential letter in our possession and the records of the House to demonstrate that point more than adequately. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said:

"Let me make it clear that it is untrue to say that in the course of the meeting I made any suggestion that British Aerospace should withdraw from the European consortium or that its participation was contrary to the national interest."—[*Official Report*, 13 January 1986; Vol. 89, c. 781.]

He said that it was untrue. The Prime Minister's letter to British Aerospace, which was published this morning, backs what she describes as his recollection, shared by others present at the meeting that took place at about 5 o'clock last Thursday evening.

Let us examine Sir Austin Pearce's letter. He states:

"Sir Raymond returned directly to a special Board Meeting of British Aerospace which was in progress and made a full report of his conversation to the Board. He also wrote down all the salient points that had been made to him. His report stated that the following points were specifically covered by the Secretary of State."

For brevity I shall move on to point 6:

"that what we were doing was not in the National Interest

7. That we should withdraw."

[Mr. Kinnock]

Can anyone imagine a plausible reason why Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo should fabricate those details of the conversation?

Sir Paul Bryan (Boothferry): Read No. 4.

Mr. Kinnock: The hon. Gentleman calls for No. 4. The letter is now a matter of public record. I invite the whole country to read all the points in the letter. But that does not move one inch from the fact that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said on Monday that it was untrue that he had said during the meeting that British Aerospace was acting against the national interest and that it should withdraw. That point is not negatived, offset, reduced or diluted.

Sir Paul Bryan: Read No. 4.

Mr. Kinnock: Can anyone imagine that a man of Sir Raymond's character — a chief executive of a corporation that sells 80 per cent. of its products to the Government—would leave the Department of Trade and Industry and minutes later, half a mile away in Pall Mall, bear false witness to the assembled board of British Aerospace? Can anyone seriously believe that? The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said that it was untrue. The implications for Sir Raymond Lygo are obvious, and extremely serious.

There is perhaps only one inaccuracy in the proceedings described by Sir Austin Pearce in his letter and by Sir Raymond Lygo in his report. The views of Sir Raymond Lygo and Sir Austin Pearce acknowlege the fact that they are not men given to exaggeration or over-reaction. The letter that we have all now read probably understates the atmosphere and the nature of the pressure of the Department of Trade and Industry meeting.

The House can hear directly from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, but it cannot hear from Sir Raymond Lygo, despite the gravity of the problems that he faces as a consequence of the Secretary of State's statements. The House owes Sir Raymond Lygo the opportunity to present his full testimony and full record to a Committee of the House. Far be it for me to save the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry by calling for his resignation, but I cannot see how he can bring himself to stay in his present position.

Only one question remains in my mind about the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry: is he a culprit, or a victim, in this matter? The Prime Minister sits next to him today, as she did on Monday. Is he her agent, or has he been acting on his own? That is the question which the Prime Minister must answer. She must answer it, clearly and honestly, now.

4.10 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is in the recollection of the House that, very courteously, the Leader of the House said that the Law Officer's letter had been made available. I went to the Library where, equally courteously, I was told that the letter is embargoed, "until the Prime Minister has sat down".

Mr. Speaker: That is not a matter for the Chair.

4.11 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question, and to add instead thereof:

"endorses the Government's consistent objective of supporting Westland plc in its efforts to achieve a financial reconstruction, of supporting United Kingdom participation in collaboration with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies and of safeguarding the interests of the company, its employees and its shareholders, recognises the efforts of the Government to ensure that the Westland board had more than one option to secure that objective; affirms that it will be for the company to determine its future course of action; and further recognises the competence of departmental Select Committees of the House of Commons to consider the issues raised by these developments.".

I do not think that there is a great deal to answer in what the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) said. He seems to have made certain conclusions long before the debate started. In so far as he asked me questions, I will try to answer them during the course of my comments.

At the outset, I wish to refer to the correspondence between Sir Austin Pearce and me, which has been published today, to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, dealing with the meeting on 8 January between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Sir Raymond Lygo. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has given the House his account of that meeting, and the record of the meeting taken by the Department of Trade and Industry has been published today in full—every single word has been published today in full. I fully accept that the record taken by the Department of Trade and Industry is an accurate and fair account of what was said. I very much regret that there is a different recollection in some respects of what was said, but I believe that when the House has had an opportunity to study the record of the meeting right hon. and hon. Members will see that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said that he had no view on the merits of the two offers, that it was for the shareholders of Westland to make a decision, and that it was not in the national interest for the present uncertainty to drag on. There are many in the House who will agree with that sentiment.

I have today received a further letter from Sir Austin Pearce, which has also been published. In it he expresses the hope that we shall now be able to concentrate on the important issues concerning the future of Westland. I agree. It seemed to me that the right hon. Member for Islwyn did very little of that.

This afternoon, therefore, I shall first set out the approach taken by the Government towards Westland during its period of difficulty. I shall then deal with the charges——

Mr. John Gorst (Hendon, North): Before my right hon. Friend leaves the Civil Service minute, may I ask whether she believes, considering the important matters that were discussed on that occasion, and the fact that the civil servants' record was dated two days later, that that record is remarkably skimpy and short? Is she certain that it was not a belated and hindsighted record?

The Prime Minister: No. Ministers and civil servants will have occasion deeply to resent what my hon. Friend has said. The record was taken contemporaneously and was dictated two days later. There were several people present who confirmed that the record is accurate. I do not find it sparse. It is a full account of what happened, and is very much fuller than the alternative which is available in the other letter.

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): The official record of that matter need not be in doubt, because what is important is the sentence near the bottom of page 3 of Sir Austin's letter, where he says:

"Whatever the words used were meant to convey, the message was perfectly clear."

The Prime Minister: That is why it was absolutely vital to get out the full record of the meeting at the Department of Trade and Industry, unusual though it was. The meeting was attended by several people who confirmed that that is a correct record of the meeting.

I shall set out the approach taken by the Government towards Westland during its period of difficulty and then deal with the charges that have been made against the Government and against me personally. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), who served in the Cabinet for more than six and a half years, has now made accusations about what he considers to be the breakdown of constitutional government. The House will therefore expect me to answer that charge.

It may help the House if I begin by setting out the developments in relation to the Westland company during the past 18 months. I do this to demonstrate to the House: first, that the company and the Government's approach to it have been the subject of the most thorough collective consideration by Ministers; secondly, that during this period the Government have been aware of the company's precarious financial position and of the particular legal obligations that that imposes on the board of directors; thirdly, that the Government wished the board of Westland to explore fully all possibilities for minority shareholdings in the company, including what has become known as the European option. It is important that the company should take the course which it judges to be the best safeguard for the future of the work force and the shareholders. Fourthly, I shall show that the defence implications of the company's future were given full weight in our discussion, which took account of the need to ensure that our armed services are given the best equipment to meet their operational requirements. I will then come to the circumstances surrounding the resignation of my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley on 9 January.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Given the large-scale movements in shares of Westland during the past four to five days, and the possibility—some would say likelihood — of Friday's meeting blocking both offers to Westland, and since the Prime Minister's fourth item said that defence was the highest priority for the Government, have the Government considered following the example of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in 1971, and pushing an Act through the House in one sitting to secure the public ownership of Westland so that the jobs of the workers in Yeovil and the Isle of Wight can be properly guaranteed? Any surplus capacity could go to civilian use, such as making helicopters for air-sea rescue and food transport in Africa.

The Prime Minister: I shall deal with that point later. Clearly the Opposition line is that the whole lot should be nationalised at the taxpayers' expense.

The fact that Westland faced a difficult situation was first brought to the Government's attention late in 1984. We were told that the company's problems stemmed partly from a decline in the market for civil helicopters, including delays on the prospective Indian order for 21 W30, helicopters and partly from the lack, in the short term, of large orders from the British armed services.

The Government remained in close contact with the firm in the latter part of 1984 and early in 1985. Westland's difficulties were the subject of discussion at both ministerial and official levels between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence. Careful consideration was given to what action might be open to the Government to help Westland—in particular, whether the services' helicopter requirements could be met by the purchase of the Westland W30. The Government concluded that we could not justify giving Westland orders for helicopters for which our armed forces had no operational requirement. It was judged that there was no defence interest that called for a rescue operation by the public sector. Instead, Westland should be encouraged to seek a market solution to its difficulties that would involve an injection of private sector capital. That was and remains the Government's position.

It was against that background that the Bristow Rotorcraft company announced an offer for Westland in April 1985. As the scale of Westland's problems became apparent to him, Mr. Bristow asked the Government a number of questions, including whether we would procure the W30 helicopter. I took the chair at meetings of Ministers on 18 and 19 June to settle the Government's response, which was in accordance with what I have already said. We also agreed that, if Bristow Rotorcraft withdrew its offer, the Bank of England should be encouraged to bring together the main creditors to develop a recovery strategy. Bristow Rotorcraft did withdraw its bid and on 26 June Sir John Cuckney became chairman of Westland. At the beginning of July, Defence Ministers were told that the United Technologies Corporation, the parent company of Sikorsky, were interested in the possiblity of some form of participation in Westland. On 8 July 1985, as hon. Members will recall, the future of Westland was raised on the Adjournment of the House. My hon. Friend the Minister for Information Technology made clear in replying to that debate that it was not for the Government to seek to intervene in the management of the company or to seek to influence the form the company's future should take.

Throughout the summer, Ministers and officials at both the Departments of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence kept in close touch with Sir John Cuckney. On 24 September, Sir John showed the Government reports on the company's financial position that had been prepared by Price Waterhouse. He told us his plans for the financial reconstruction of Westland, involving the introduction of a new industrial partner. He revealed that he was having discussions with a number of companies of which those with Sikorsky of America, a part of United Technologies —with whom Westland had a longstanding relationship dating back to 1947 — were the most promising. The company had also been in touch with MBB of Germany, Aerospatiale of France and Agusta of Italy. Sir John also stressed the urgency of reaching a solution before Westland had to finalise their accounts later in the year.

At a meeting of Ministers on 16 October, it was decided to encourage Westland to explore further the possibilities of co-operation with the European companies which were partners or potential partners of Westland in a number of collaborative projects. That view was communicated to Sir John Cuckney by the Secretary of State for Trade and

[The Prime Minister]

Industry on 17 October. Sir John said that he had made it clear to the European companies that he would consider any reasonable proposition. He again emphasised Westland's need for a rapid conclusion to its plans for a financial reconstruction.

It was apparent that, unless such a reconstruction was clearly in prospect before the 1984-85 results were announced, the company could be legally obliged to go into receivership. A number of contacts subsequently took place with European companies and Governments and it became known that Fiat of Italy was associated with United Technologies' proposals. But as late as the last week of November, by which time negotiations between Westland and United Technologies-Fiat were in their final stages, no formal proposals had appeared from European helicopter companies for participation in a reconstruction.

It was at this stage, on 29 November, that the national armaments directors, who are senior defence officials, of the United Kingdom, France, West Germany and Italy met in London at the request of their respective defence Ministers. The national armaments directors recommended that the four Governments should cover their main helicopter needs in future solely by helicopters designed and built in Europe. This would have represented an exclusive commitment to buy only helicopters which qualified as European in this special sense, that they were not only built but designed in Europe. That would have gone far beyond the 1978 declaration of principles to which we still adhere.

On 2 December Sir John Cuckney wrote to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to urge that the recommendation should not be accepted by the Government. He stressed that, if the recommendation was approved, the board felt that it would not be able to recommend to the company's shareholders any reconstruction proposals involving Sikorsky and Fiat. He added that, while Westland had received indications of interest from the European companies, they did not mark any commercial advance over earlier proposals which had been rejected as inadequate. In consequence there was a serious risk that there would be no effective reconstruction proposals in place within the urgent timescale to which the company had to adhere.

In the light of these developments Ministers met under my chairmanship on 5 and again on 6 December to consider their response. In doing so they were very conscious of the approaching deadline for publishing the Westland accounts—with losses publicly predicted to be of the order of £100 million—in fact they were about £98 million attributable to shareholders—and the need therefore for the company to have a financial reconstruction package clearly in prospect by then if it was to avoid going into receivership.

The issues before us were, first, whether to agree to write off the launch aid of nearly £40 million for the W30 project if it were subsequently terminated. It was evident that that was now a condition for any successful financial reconstruction which would allow the company to continue in business. The second issue was how to respond to the recommendation of the national armaments directors. The groups of Ministers to which I have referred considered those two issues at the meetings I have mentioned.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Will the right hon. Lady give way?

The Prime Minister: I shall not give way as I should like to complete these very tightly argued points.

At the end of the second meeting on 6 December it was clear that a majority of the Ministers present were ready to decide that the Government should reject the recommendation from the national armaments directors, thus leaving Westland free to reach its own decision. But because a minority of Ministers—including my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley—felt very strongly about the matter, I decided that a further discussion must be held in Cabinet Committee, namely in the Economic Sub-Committee, for which a full paper should be prepared.

The Economic Sub-Committee of the Cabinet therefore met on Monday, 9 December. Sir John Cuckney and his advisers were invited to attend for part of the time to report on their company's position and to answer questions. After considerable discussion, it was concluded, first, that repayment of launch aid for the W30 would be waived if that project were terminated, and, secondly, that, unless a viable European package which the board of Westland could recommend to its shareholders was in place by 4 pm on 13 December—Friday of that week—the Government would make clear that the country would not be bound by the recommendation of the national armaments directors. That deadline was set in order to allow reasonable time for more specific European proposals to be put together without running up against the deadline imposed by Westland's need to have a financial reconstruction package in place by the time its accounts were published. At the end of the meeting, Sir John Cuckney was informed in confidence of the conclusions so that he knew where the company stood. I repeat that if the national armaments directors' recommendation had remained he could not have brought forward the Sikorsky-Fiat bid. The fact that the Government were not bound by that recommendation enabled there to be a choice of two options eventually—Sikorsky-Fiat and the alternative European option which developed.

The conclusions of the meeting of the Economic Sub-Committee of the Cabinet on 9 December laid down a clear line of policy and made it unnecessary to hold a further meeting. It was recognised in discussion that the timetable would allow for another meeting of Ministers before 4 pm on 13 December if unforeseen developments required one, but no decision to hold such a meeting was taken or recorded. The conclusion was clear, the events happened and the decision took effect. No meeting was agreed, so there was no meeting to cancel.

A firm proposal from the European consortium, which by that stage included British Aerospace, was received by the board on 13 December. The proposal took into account a provisional agreement reached between defence Ministers of the four countries based on the recommendation of the national armaments directors.

The European consortium's proposal was not acceptable to the board. Accordingly, as decided at the meeting on 9 December, the Government were not bound by the NADs' recommendation. In the light of the decisions taken on 9 December, there was no further issue to discuss, though the matter was raised in Cabinet on 12 December.

The position was fully reported to the House in a statement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 16 December, including the decision about the national armaments directors' recommendation and the Government not being bound by it. I answered questions on 17 December. On 19 December, as I told the House the same afternoon, Cabinet reaffirmed the Government's view that it was for Westland to decide what was the best course to follow in the interests of the company and its employees.

Westland subsequently put proposals to its shareholders on 21 December to effect a capital reconstruction involving United Technologies and Fiat. Those proposals, and those of the European consortium, which in this period was joined by GEC, were subsequently improved in various respects, but that did not affect our fundamental policy that it was for the company and not for the Government to decide between them.

On 30 December, Sir John Cuckney asked me to confirm that Westland would still be considered a European company by the Government if the UTC-Fiat consortium took a minority shareholding. In replying on 1 January I told him that, as long as Westland continued to carry on business in the United Kingdom, the Government would continue to regard it as a British and therefore a European company and that we would support it in pursuing British interests in Europe. I also said that, whichever of the two proposals currently under consideration the company chose to accept, the Government would continue to support Westland's wish to participate in European collaborative projects and would resist to the best of their ability attempts by others to discriminate against Westland.

Cabinet on 9 January confirmed unanimously the Government's conclusions of 19 December and agreed that to avoid any possible prejudice to the sensitive commercial negotiations then in train all statements by Ministers should be cleared interdepartmentally through the Cabinet Office to ensure that all answers given by the Government were consistent with Government policy. Every member of Cabinet agreed except my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley. He then left the Cabinet. I shall return to that point in a moment.

I have given the House this full account because I think it is important to set the developments of the past month in the wider context of the Government's clear policy and the company's difficulties over a period of a year and a half, the attempts made to find a solution to them and the urgency in the closing weeks of last year of finding a solution which would allow the company to continue trading.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): The Prime Minister has now passed 6 January in her account, but she has omitted all reference to the leak of the Solicitor-General's letter which I believe took place on that date. Is she satisfied that neither the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry nor any of his officials had anything whatever to do with that leak?

The Prime Minister: I answered written questions either yesterday or this morning making it quite clear that an internal inquiry had been instituted. The hon. Gentleman asks me about a particular leak, but if I had to answer every question raised in the newspapers we should have a very long task.

The Government's approach throughout has been guided by a number of important considerations.

First, the Government concluded that no national interest considerations required the mounting of a public sector rescue bid. It followed that we could not dictate a solution to the company's problems. Responsibility for its future had to remain in the hands of its directors and shareholders — where it ought to be. Had the Government pressed the board of Westland to favour or adopt a particular solution it might have been taken to imply that we were ready to use public funds to underwrite the company's finances. We were not and are not prepared to accept any such liability.

Secondly, and in line with our active support for greater co-operation in European defence procurement, we were ready throughout to encourage the possibility of a European solution, while affirming that it was for the board and the shareholders to decide what was best for the company.

Thirdly, we wished to ensure that our armed forces would have and would continue to have access to the most cost-effective equipment which fully meets our military needs.

I believe that the House will agree that the record shows that the Government have acted consistently with those principles throughout.

There have been suggestions that the Government did not discuss the issues in sufficient depth or in a timely way. The account that I have given shows that such an allegation is absurd. There have been innumerable discussions of Westland's affairs between Departments and with the company over a period of 15 months. The company's future was the subject of collective discussion between Ministers on 18 June, 19 June, 16 October, 5 December, 6 December, 9 December, 12 December, 19 December and 9 January.

There can be no doubt that the problems have been considered properly and responsibly. Colleagues in the Government, particularly those most closely concerned, were given ample opportunity to express their views, and did so, and ample opportunity to seek to persuade other colleagues before the policy was decided.

I have dealt in considerable detail with the points concerning the Government's approach to Westland. I should like to emphasise one particular point in that account. Unanimous agreement was reached at the full Cabinet on 19 December. I repeat—unanimous. On 9 January Cabinet confirmed the identical policy and once again the policy was agreed unanimously. It was vital from that day forward that we should give strict practical effect to the policy as the crucial time for the company's decision was approaching. This was not a technicality. It was essential for the effective discharge of collective responsibility.

The whole of the rest of the Cabinet agreed the procedure that we should adopt — with the sole exception of my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley. He was prepared to acknowledge the advantages of collective responsibility without being prepared to accept the disciplines that it requires. That the rest of the Cabinet could not accept. It would be a denial of the collective responsibility on which our system of constitutional government depends. Cabinet heard his decision with great regret. They recognised his services to Government over six and a half years in office. But the decision was his, and his alone.

[The Prime Minister]

It follows from what I have said that the Government have conducted themselves properly and responsibly throughout and that there is no cause for an inquiry. The amendment in my name and those of my right hon. and right hon. and learned Friends recognises the important role of the departmental Select Committees in matters such as this. The Government's concern is to see a financial reconstruction of Westland as soon as possible which maintains a British helicopter design, development and manufacturing capability, supports United Kingdom participation in collaboration with NATO allies, and safeguards the interests of the company, its employees and its shareholders.

I believe both sets of proposals put to the company could achieve these objectives; I hope that the shareholders will be able to take their final decision very shortly.

I commend to the House the amendment which endorses the Government's consistent policy.

4.41 pm

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): The most brazen part of the amendment moved by the Prime Minister is that which asks the House to endorse

"the Government's consistent objective of supporting Westland . . . and of safeguarding the interests of the company, its employees and its shareholders".

My basic disagreement with the Government is that, as the Prime Minister has just shown adequately, the Government's consistent attitude has been to say that it is nothing to do with them, that it is entirely up to the company.

My hon. Friends the Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross), who, between them, represent the bulk of the work force of the company, had a total of six meetings last year with Ministers in the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Trade and Industry. All were designed to stir the interest of the Government to try to secure the stability of Westland and the continued employment of its work force in its helicopter, hovercraft and other divisions. No doubt the records of those meetings could be added to the plethora of paper that we already have.

In each case, the Government steadfastly and consistently refused to assist. They said that these matters were for normal commercial consideration. The Prime Minister quoted to the House a section of the speech made by the Minister for Information Technology on 8 July. He said:

"It is not for the Government . . . to seek to influence the form its future should take."—[*Official Report*, 8 July 1985; Vol. 82, c. 881.]

There, of course, lies the basic division across the Floor of the House. Most of us on the Opposition side of the House believe that it should be possible for any Government, especially where defence interests are at stake, to have at hand some means of securing the interests of companies that get into temporary difficulties. If the Government still had the National Enterprise Board it would have been perfectly possible to have public participation for a necessary temporary period in which the company could get back on its feet and not necessary to have a nationalisation solution. We believe that, given the state of the company last summer, the proper course would have been for the Government to consider taking a 21 per cent. shareholding and thus actively put together some kind of European consortium under the 1978 helicopter agreement. The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) subsequently did this in the last two months of 1985.

The truth is that the Prime Minister and the whole Government continued, throughout most of last year, to operate a free-market theory in a world where the free market no longer exists. Every other country, whether it be the United States or our European partners, give far more support and active assistance in various forms, including public participation, to their defence industries than this Government are prepared to do. That is our basic quarrel with the Government's attitude to Westland throughout last year.

Later in the summer, the new chairman and the new board took their places. At this point Members of Parliament, the Sikorsky company, Sir John Cuckney and British Aerospace were all told that the Government would not get involved. The strong impression among Westland personnel was that the Government would not be surprised if, although they did not necessarily hope that, the company went into receivership. Various other companies would then pick up the pieces. This is where the Government are consistent in their non-industrial strategy. It does not matter if we do not have a helicopter manufacturing capacity, it does not matter if we do not have a pulp-making mill capacity or a steel rolling mill —such has been the Government's strategy all along. The result of this strategy since the Government came to office has been a reduction by about one fifth in the manufacturing capacity of this country. The result has been that 1983 was the first year when, excluding oil, our imports exceeded exports. This is the record, and into it the Westland saga fits with total consistency. We cannot support such an attitude, partly because if Westland had gone into receivership I am told that about 90 other supply companies could also have gone into receivership. But the Government allowed that threat to continue throughout last summer.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): The right hon. Gentleman says that the Liberal party does not support the Government's attitude. Recently the right hon. Gentleman was reported in the press as saying that the European possibility should be pursued. However, in recent days, other Liberal Members have backed Sikorsky. Does the Liberal party have an attitude at all or is it sitting on the fence?

Mr. Steel: If the hon. Lady will be kind enough to let me make my speech she will know my attitude. I shall make it perfectly clear. I have already said what should have been done last summer. I am taking the matter in sequence and I shall now move on to what happened last autumn.

The Cabinet, including the former Secretary of State for Defence, must accept responsibility for the united attitude that it took towards the Westland company throughout the summer of last year. It was not an attitude that we supported.

The Government have also lacked a defence procurement strategy. I am one of those who stand firmly behind the twin-pillar concept of the NATO Alliance. That concept cannot operate if one of the pillars gradually acquires the bulk of the technology and manufacturing

capacity for our defence equipment. Surely that was the reason behind the 1978 helicopter agreement. It was also behind a number of other collaborative ventures that Britain has entered with our European partners.

It is not anti-American to say that there ought to be greater common manufacturing efforts among NATO's European partners. That is why the Government should have followed this concept in the middle of 1985 when Westland was in trouble, but they did not. In September, the new Westland board, as the Prime Minister described accurately, had to put into effect a rescue package by mid-December — a short time — to avoid going into receivership after the accounts were published in mid-December.

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North) *rose*——

Mr. Steel: The Prime Minister rightly says that the Sikorsky-Fiat deal was built on a long record of collaboration between Westland and Sikorsky. Therefore, in the tail end of last year, the board recommended to its shareholders a bird in the hand rather than any number of birds in the bush. It is not surprising that the bid has been supported by the shareholders, the employees and the board. They have supported it because it is the only available deal to come forward of its own accord and therefore it deserves support. The company has been perfectly right to be irritated at the manipulation by Government throughout November and December, having been told earlier that it was all up to the company.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): The right hon. Gentleman knows that both his hon. Friends the Members for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) now support the Sikorsky deal. Does he agree? Is that now Liberal party policy?

Mr. Steel: I thought that I had just made that point clear.

One of the more interesting points in the correspondence to which much attention has been given lies in a comparison between the official record of the minute and Sir Austin Pearce's letter. According to Sir Austin Pearce, Sir Raymond Lygo

"found reference to the national interest confusing".

In the official minute, however, Sir Raymond

"questioned what was the national interest".

It is no wonder that industrialists found the national interest confusing. It appeared to be whatever the latest Cabinet Minister said it was when they met. There has been no clear direction of national interest in this matter. The Prime Minister more or less glories in the fact that the Government saw no national interest in this issue at any time last year. On both manufacturing and defence grounds, we dissent from that view.

As for the constitutional issues raised by the resignation of the Secretary of State for Defence, when last did a Government have so many ex-Cabinet colleagues out on their ears, not through old age or incompetence but for deviation from the given line? A Cabinet room which increasingly becomes converted to an echo chamber for one person's views is a danger to democratic government. The long-term lessons of this affair are that the Government have been industrially incompetent and that the morale of government has been undermined by a failure to conduct the processes of government on the basis of collective decision-making.

I agree with the leader of the Labour party — the Prime Minister did not answer one point yesterday. The relationship between the Prime Minister's reaction to leaks by Ministers and ex-Ministers as compared to the alleged offences of civil servants under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 is obscure. Can there be one law for the rulers and ex-rulers and another for the ruled? The Prime Minister must now declare that section 2 is formally dead and buried unless she intends to mount prosecutions.

The Prime Minister has manipulated the processes of government unacceptably. Most serious of all, she has been cavalier with Britain's long-term manufacturing interests. It has been a discreditable episode in the life of an increasingly discredited Government.

4.52 pm

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): May I begin with an apology to the House? Much of what I have to say I would have preferred to say to the House first, but circumstances did not make that possible and I apologise for that.

Much of what has been said so far shows that there are two issues at the heart of the matter—the relationship of Britain with its European and American allies in the Atlantic Alliance and the role, if any, that the Government should play in their relationship with industrial companies in seeking to enhance and protect the defence industrial base of the country.

I hope that I do not need to say to the House, and certainly not to my party, that I am as committed to the concept of the NATO Alliance as anyone in our party. I hope that I have played a role in selling the advantages of the NATO Alliance. I am wholly dedicated to the concepts and advantages that have come from it. I know of no other credible way in which to protect and defend the freedoms that we cherish. The issue, however, is the relationship and whether it should be one of partnership.

The political processes would be uncontrollable if, on either side of the Atlantic, tensions developed so that either side felt unfairly disadvantaged by the processes of the Alliance. We have one great thing in common—a common enemy—but the scale of the resources presents great problems. The United States of America spends some $280 billion a year on its defence requirements. That undoubtedly gives it and us enormous defence and deterrence, but it also provides an enormous industrial dilemma. That vast resource flows into the technology frontiers and creates huge production runs. It is spent largely within one market, which is perhaps the most protected market in the Alliance, by technology transfer regulations, by "buy American" protection laws and by extra-territorial controls.

This scale of taxpayers' resource is irresistible and it is co-ordinated through the vast buying machinery of the Pentagon. It is also protected by the immensely zealous interest of Congress. It is channelled into the largest and richest companies on earth. It is irresistible and if unchecked it will, in the legitimate pursuit of American corporate ambitions, buy its way through sector after sector of the world's advanced technologies.

Two consequences flow from that. The bigger and richer the companies become, the more they centralise their design and high technology facilities, and the more the flow of brains and talent is drawn to the western sun belts and the more the resentment will grow in Europe. The slower we are to react, the less effective we become as industrial partners to the United States. The more

[Mr. Michael Heseltine]

Europe is criticised for failing to play its part in sharing the burden of the defence of the free world, the more the resentments will grow in the United States.

So, for the strength of the Alliance and to preserve the conviction of partnership upon which it must politically depend, the more we in Europe must recognise that it is in our interests—and in America's—to strengthen and co-ordinate our industrial base.

Should we try to influence our companies? Are there any arguments about our defence interests, about our aspirations as a European partner or about our commitment to the preservation of the high technology base in Britain? At the end of the road, are there even any arguments about the maintenance of jobs in Britain when large sums of taxpayers' money are being paid out? Since Government is far and away the largest customer, should it not expect to play some role in influencing the destiny of our defence contractors?

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Heseltine: Forgive me.

I have absolutely no doubt that the answer to all those questions has to be yes. In the starkest case, our companies, with few exceptions, are too small to survive individually as genuine partners with American companies. There is no point at which the process of acquisition would stop if Government believed that a market place flickering at the margin of the taxpayers' resource would lead anywhere except American domination, company by company, sector by sector.

My position has been consistent ever since I had the privilege to help establish the European Space Agency in 1973. The background is for me clear. So is Government policy on this critical matter. The Government White Paper of 1985 made clear that we were committed to a major drive forward in the co-ordination of the defence industrial base in Europe. The helicopter agreement of 1978 made it clear that we were committed to seeking the co-ordination of the European helicopter requirements. So could there be—should there be—an exception in the case of Westland? Should Britain dine a la carte in Europe, going for the airbus, supporting Tornado and the European fighter aircraft, but opting out of helicopters? Such a theory has its attractions. Often one gets a better choice a la carte, but it is usually more expensive and one's companions tend to copy one's example.

The longer that we in Britain go on preserving an uncoordinated, fragmented European industrial base, cowering behind our frustrations every time somebody else wins, or tries harder than we do, or gets up just that little bit earlier than we do, the longer our relative decline compared with the United States of America will continue.

Let us come to that small helicopter company in the west of England. My position has always been that if in the end there was only one way to save Westland on reasonable terms I would back Sikorsky. My own belief is that at the critical moment the Government had a clear preference for Europe and that, for reasons that I fail to understand, Sir John Cuckney set his face against any reasonable exposure of that European preference to his shareholders. I fail to understand his statement yesterday that, come what may, he will not put the firm, financially better, technologically more advanced, British-European offer to his shareholders.

I do not believe that even the most laissez-faire of my colleagues would have intended that leaving the choice to the Westland company would result in unidentified and unidentifiable financial groups slogging it out behind the closed doors of City institutions, as is witnessed, as though we were selling one of Britain's defence contractors in job lots to the highest bidder.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): I am most grateful to my right hon. Friend. We have all been listening with rapt attention to his grandiloquent statement and we are impressed with the idealism behind his observations about European collaboration. But is it not simplistic to paint a picture of an entirely one-way street, seeing that British industry has most successfully, to our advantage, collaborated with the Americans on the Harrier 2 and on the Hawk for the United States navy? We are also providing the Rapier to defend United States air bases in this country. Europe has provided the spacelab to go in the shuttle and is to collaborate with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on a space station for the 1990s. Is my right hon. Friend not being simplistic about these matters?

Mr. Heseltine: There are examples on both sides of export successes to the continent of Europe, to the Third world and to the United States. We are not talking about co-operative success; we are talking about the simple question whether the United States would allow a significant defence contractor to be owned or effectively controlled by an overseas country. The answer is a categorical no. I do not understand why we should have a different answer in this country. It is well known—I have made no secret of it and never will—that I hope the shareholders of Westland will recover some sense of national pride when they meet on Friday.

I must elaborate on the two specific points that I have just made. First, at the critical moment the Government had a clear preference for Europe in the rescue of Westland. Throughout 1985, as the Prime Minister has fairly said, every option was canvassed. There are virtually no opinions that are not represented on the files on the matter, but my preference clearly follows the European co-operative sentiment in the White Paper which my Department was responsible for publishing last year.

Of course, throughout the early months, when the Prime Minister rightly said that there were considerable interdepartmental discussions and even meetings, the scale of the Westland crisis was hardly perceived. The first serious solution was the Bristow takeover bid. So none of the anxieties about effective foreign control were on the agenda in a practical sense at that time. It was only with the withdrawal of that bid—I remind the House that that took place only in June of last year—that we had the disclosure of the financial crisis which many of the existing board who were there then seem hardly to have perceived. It was only when that crisis broke in June that Sir John Cuckney took over.

It often appeared as though there was no way through for the company. The only way through might have been an extremely expensive public rescue. Every option, including a Sikorsky rescue, had to be preserved and encouraged. Every one of us would have been guilty if we

had blocked off such options. The Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence worked through the options. As events unfolded I had no cause originally for concern that my European preference would not receive consideration. Of course, the DTI was the sponsoring Department but at that time it was faithfully maintaining the European option.

By October — this is the point at which the difficulties which have led to my resignation from the Government began to develop—the preservation of that choice had become a clear preference. I must say to the Prime Minister that her description of the account in the two letters of 4 and 18 October does not tally with my reading of those letters. I have a very full understanding of what is in them. If the Government can publish Sir Austin Pearce's letter and now the Law Officer's letters, I cannot understand why they cannot make available the letters of 4 and 18 October.

Those letters would show that Sir John Cuckney recognised a European preference and that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry declared a European preference. I have to say that about that time Sir John Cuckney was beginning to advise the Government that there was no realistic European option. It was only then that my anxiety began to grow. It was at that time that the willingness that I had had until that moment to support the sponsoring Department turned to an anxiety that the preference for Europe was being choked off.

During August, as the House knows, I had concluded on behalf of this country the European fighter aircraft agreement. If I dare say so, perhaps more than any other Minister I have deep experience of how Europe works. I told my colleagues privately in mid-October that Sir John Cuckney had the wrong experience to give him an insight into how European collaboration works. It is not his fault. It is an unusual experience to have, but nevertheless it remains a fact. Collaboration in Europe, where companies —even in this country—are in practice close to their Governments, is actually led by Governments and not by companies.

I obtained, therefore, my colleagues' agreement to see whether I could help to counter the increasingly certain view of Sir John that there was no European option. I met Sir John—as the House knows, I was abroad in early November — on 26 November. He said that he welcomed help. He explained that he had not the staff to process the work himself because he was so involved with the Sikorsky negotiations and that it would be good for the company to have a choice. So I began my negotiations with the full support of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and with that of Sir John.

It has been suggested that I was indifferent to Westland's future. I shall say something about that, because nothing could be further from the truth. My Department's responsibility for Westland was to ensure that the industrial capability, which is a critical defence interest, was maintained. I always made it clear that I would insist on the maintenance of that defence capability. Secondly, it was its responsibility to secure the best, or at least reasonable, value for money for the defence budget. It was not the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence to take over the sponsoring role of the Department of Trade and Industry or to use defence money for company rescue plans, unless the cost of so doing could be extremely limited. It is for the Department of Trade and Industry to propose in such matters, and it made it clear on 4 October that it would not use DTI money for rescue purposes.

I stated clearly that receivership would be the best solution in certain circumstances. I said that most clearly on 25 September when I became so concerned about what was happening that I instructed officials in my Department that no options other than receivership were to be discussed further without my express authority. Why did I react so strongly? I did so because, on that day, I received a submission from my Department which said that, although no costed options for Westland yet existed, there was a plan. The Government were to fund £120 million for underwriting sales of 45 W30-160s, a civil helicopter, write off £40 million of launch aid on civil projects and provide perhaps another £25 million of further cash for redundancy. As my officials said at the time, to maintain the supply of spares and other Ministry of Defence requirements would cost Her Majesty's Government, on current information from the company, about £120 million to £165 million in cash and £40 million in written-off launch aid. It might have seemed just a small helicopter company in the west country, but my perspective had changed dramatically.

The military advice to me on the value to the Ministry of Defence of the helicopter order was that it would not be justified on military procurement grounds even as a gift. It will be seen clearly that by 3 October I am recorded as saying that I was not in favour of a receivership option.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): My right hon. Friend will be aware that on 21 September I had a meeting with him in his office with principal officials from Sikorsky. Would he care to tell the House what he told them at the meeting?

Mr. Heseltine: Yes. I told them exactly what I have already told the House. I told them that we had to preserve all options. It would have been unthinkable, not knowing whether there was a European option, to reject one option that was sitting in my office at that time. I should add that my hon. Friend behaved properly on all occasions and that I believe that I have answered his question as honestly as I can.

It has been suggested that I withheld £6 million from the company. It was my accounting officer who withheld £6 million on what he believed to be grounds of commercial prudence. I instructed that I was to be kept in touch immediately, even when out of the country, with the attitudes of Westland's bankers on this matter.

In June, I put forward a limited form of Ministry of Defence guarantee to help with the uncertainties over the Indian order. My colleagues felt unable to accept it and I think that their reasons for refusing to do so were perfectly proper. I formally directed my accounting officer to pay the £6 million to Westland in October and, therefore, I took upon my own personal political shoulders the responsibility for making a payment of that large sum of taxpayers' money, which my accounting officer would not make. I remind the House that I was the Minister who was deputed to talk to Mr. Gandhi about the W30 order from India when he was in Britain.

In the end, whatever else I may have done, the Westland shareholders have a choice, and substantially better terms than those negotiated by the Westland board. The original Sikorsky offer, which the board firmly

[Mr. Heseltine]

supported, argued that the only practical offer was for up to 40 per cent. of the shares in the company and 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. of the work to go the United States of America. Sikorsky is saying now that it will perhaps accept the transfer of only half that shareholding and only half that amount of work to the United States of America. So much for the company that, as we were told on 5, 6 and 9 December, might go away if we did not sign up without more ado. No one knows now who is buying what shares from whom in the stampede by an American multinational company to break into the European markets.

I wholly reject the suggestion that I have been indifferent to Westland's interests, but I plead guilty to the charge that I have intervened in what I believe to the legitimate interests of Britain's industrial defence base. I delivered a deal from the British and European sources to rescue Westland. On Friday 13 December, the bid, deal or offer was rejected by the Westland board in what I calculate to have been about 40 minutes. There was not a phone call and there were no meetings. There was a simple no.

I had been empowered by my colleagues in the British Cabinet to pursue the possibility of a British-European rescue for Westland, but I was given no chance to report back my proposals to the Cabinet Committee which authorised me, or to the full Cabinet I was required instead to report them to the board of a private company. Virtually every Fleet street commentator said that the proposals were better. Even Sir John Cuckney's remarks indicated something of the same flavour. It was so much better as a deal that Sikorsky had to improve its offer in every material respect. Of course, no meeting took place in Government after my deal had been made available. There were meetings before but no meeting took place after the British-European deal had taken a form in which it could be discussed sensibly.

On Friday 20 December a full, as I am advised, legal offer was submitted to the Westland board by the European consortium. On Saturday 21 December, Westland proceeded to circulate to its shareholders the Sikorsky-Fiat proposals, which offered the company less money, less work and less technology and involved scrapping an existing agreement to produce Black Hawk helicopters, which is still in existence, to the best of my knowledge, with Short Brothers of Belfast.

Much of what has happened since is in the public domain. In the absence of any collective judgment, which I continued to ask for as late as 23 December, I continued publicly to answer quetions, as I was, I think, properly entitled to do as the Secretary of State for Defence. I felt that I owed that at least to those who had responded so quickly and generously to the approaches which my colleagues in government had authorised me to make.

I must now come to the closing chapter of this extraordinary affair. I have explained that Sir John Cuckney, in discussions with me on 26 November, said that he would welcome a choice but had not the staff to process it. I fixed a meeting, after consulting the Defence Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, for 29 November, consisting of four national armaments directors and representatives of three companies. I met the national armaments directors and the companies and explained the urgency of the matter. I then left to speak for my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. M. Clark). By the time I returned, agreement had been reached.

Even before the meeting had taken place, Sir John Cuckney telephoned the permanent secretary of my Department, saying that he had learned of its existence in the *Financial Times*. He said that he was expecting a telex in hours from Sikorsky and that as soon as it came he would convene a board meeting which would confirm the Westland-Sikorsky deal. So much for the man who, only a few days earlier, had said that he would welcome a choice. I am at a loss to understand how Sir John could on 26 November encourage a Minister of the Crown in the belief that choice would be welcome and three days later threaten to stifle it at birth.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood) *rose——*

Mr. Heseltine: I have a limited knowledge of company law. That is a matter for the Department of Trade and Industry. *[Laughter.]* I am, however, under the impression that it is the duty of a board of directors to seek the best deal for its shareholders. The only excuse could be that even the knowledge of such an alternative deal would frighten Sikorsky off. That would have to be a miscalculation of historic proportions.

The House knows the background to the deal that I was trying to negotiate. In 1978, the four countries had signed an agreement to use their best endeavours to produce helicopters in Europe. The four, including the United Kingdom, had continued with that policy. At the meeting that I called, the national armaments directors agreed on the rationalisation of European requirements for helicopters for the rest of this century—the EH101, the NH90 and a merged version of the PAH2 and A129. That was the culmination of what had been embarked upon in 1978, the opportunity for Europe to keep within Europe all the design, all the technology, all the jobs, and to standardise, with no competition from any of the countries concerned, on three helicopter requirements.

At that meeting, therefore, the national armaments directors took the 1978 agreement a stage further. They said that they would in future not simply try to co-ordinate but would purchase helicopters designed and developed solely in Europe. They had decided on helicopter requirements for the rest of the century.

I must make it clear that I took no part in that decision. I was in Southend. The proposals were awaiting my return from Rochford. They were contingent on the European offer being accepted for Westland. With the national armaments directors' constraint, of course, Sikorsky would be ruled out in terms of its Black Hawk helicopter, and Sir John Cuckney asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to lift this proviso of the national armaments directors at once. I refused to agree until a proper choice was presented between Sikorsky and the European offers.

The purpose of the meetings on 5, 6 and 9 December was to persuade colleagues to support the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in his request to lift this provision. I have to say to the Prime Minister that I do not agree with her sense of urgency about this matter. There was no need to lift the national armaments directors' directive to allow the negotiations with Sikorsky to continue. It would have been necessary to lift the directive

only if the agreement with Sikorsky was to be signed. Sikorsky could have been told about it and that the directive would not be implemented if its preference was exercised. During the negotiation of that preference, there was no need for it to be lifted.

Mr. Wilkinson: My right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State has throughout his tenure of office taken great pride in the fact that, under his stewardship, competition has been maximised and, with the help of Mr. Levene, the Chief of Defence Procurement, alias the national armaments director, great savings in cost have accrued to our taxpayers. How come that my right hon. Friend was so pleased that his national armaments director should announce to him a provisional agreement which would specifically preclude competition in the very important area of armaments where over the years a great deal of public money has been expended?

Mr. Heseltine: I wonder whether my hon. Friend has really thought through where the competition options would be in Westland if it were effectively owned by an American company which had already designed the helicopters for the United States forces, which were then to be available under licence to this country on work-sharing agreements. The House must understand that in all the procurement policies of the advanced world Governments actually buy the helicopters that suit the countries in which those companies are situated. If there is an effective American control of one of our major defence suppliers, I do not believe that there would ever be a really competitive choice to buy from Europe.

I accept, therefore, that there are limitations on the concept of competition. I have discussed it very fully with my colleague, the Federal German Minister. The way in which we will do it, if we see the Europeans advance in this way, is to ensure that the competitive pressures are arranged within Europe precisely as the Ministry of Defence is making arrangements now for competitive pressures to be exercised within Britain. It is no accident, because I share my hon. Friend's view that the percentage of new contracts to the Ministry of Defence subject to competition has risen in the past 18 months from 45 per cent. to 70 per cent.

Mr. Ashdown *rose——*

Mr. Heseltine: No. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Heseltine: I come to the two meetings of 5 and 6 December. I do not think that any of my colleagues would dispute that they are not of constitutional significance because they were ad hoc meetings. It is a perfectly legitimate way of conducting the business of government to gather together the immediately interested Ministers to dispatch uncontroversial or relatively uncontroversial business. There were, however, sufficient numbers—not a majority, but sufficient numbers—of Ministers at those meetings on 5 and 6 December to ensure that a properly constituted Cabinet Committee should meet to resolve the matter. That meeting took place on 9 December. It was, of course, a meeting of the Economic Committee of the Cabinet. Sir John Cuckney was invited —I think helpfully—to put his views about the urgency of the Sikorsky situation and about the European option to all my colleagues on that Committee. He stressed, of course, how essential it was to lift the national armaments directors' directive. A significant number of my colleagues came new to the arguments.

At that meeting I put forward a totally different proposal. I asked for just five days, until Friday 13 December, to ensure that the European proposals, which now included British Aerospace, were proved or not. I made it absolutely clear that if I failed I would back Sikorsky. After hearing all the arguments and after listening to Sir John Cuckney, a clear majority of my colleagues supported my proposals. The meeting ended with a clear statement that we would meet again on Friday at 3 pm, when the Stock Exchange closed. The officials of the Cabinet Office recorded the words. They are not in the minutes but I believe them to be in the notebooks from which the minutes are prepared. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"]

It was no surprise to me when, therefore, the Cabinet Office arranged the meeting for Friday at 3 o'clock. It was a devastating surprise when it subsequently cancelled the meeting. I was content with the outcome of that meeting on 9 December because my colleagues had given me time, and I had another meeting at which colleagues could take whatever steps they felt then appropriate if they wished to give advice to Westland's board. That was the very least that the Government could do in common courtesy to the Ministers of other allied countries who had already made and still had to make such efforts to consolidate the offers for the rescue of Westland.

It is now well known that that meeting on Friday never took place. The board of Westland threw out the British Aerospace-European proposals as though they were a mere public relations handout. Collective judgment had been frustrated. I had no doubt where my duties lay. I had been entrusted by my Cabinet colleagues to seek a European deal. I had been entrusted by my European colleagues with the advocacy of their case. I therefore circulated details to my colleagues in Cabinet and sought a collective decision. That was denied me. I was told not to raise the matter in Cabinet. I refused to be silent. I protested about the cancelled meeting in Cabinet on 12 December. The Cabinet minutes did not record my protest.

At the next Cabinet meeting, on Thursday 19 December, it was stated that we should show no preference. I explained that events would shortly unfold that would cause us to rethink that position. The next day, British Aerospace, the General Electric Co. and the Europeans put forward a full proposal. I again asked for collective judgment. It was again denied me.

I explained that I would have to answer questions on defence procurement policies or the resulting uncertainty about the European proposals would be fatally damaging. This was not challenged in Cabinet; but otherwise the public controversy was to be cooled and there were to be no ministerial public statements. That night, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry implied that I was holding a pistol to Sikorsky's head. I did not respond to those words. On Sunday, he spoke on radio and recorded a broadcast for "The World This Weekend". The BBC informed me, and I agreed to respond only if I was convinced that he had broadcast. I heard the broadcast by the Secretary of State and agreed to go ahead. Efforts were made to stop the programme—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] —but I was told that, whatever the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry did, I was not to appear. I could not accept such one-sided treatment.

[Mr. Heseltine]

I withdraw not one word of my account of the Prime Minister's reply to Sir John Cuckney on new year's eve. Sir John wrote to the Prime Minister, in my view, to get answers that were perhaps different from those he had got from the Secretary of State for Defence. There was a draft of an indicated reply. It was sent to the Department of Trade and Industry and not the Ministry of Defence. There was an intervention by the Law Officers which materially changed the sense of the proposed reply.

I do not think that there is any point in delaying the House with more details of the events as they unfolded. I say at once that I would not support the form of inquiry suggested by the official Opposition, because I believe that there is ample precedent in the instruments of the House, which I did all in within my power to support when they were brought into existence to make any full exploration of the circumstances that the House may consider necessary, but, if there is to be an inquiry, I would expect to be called to account for everything that I have said and my role to be fully and carefully examined in detail.

Suffice it to say that the culmination of events came in the Cabinet on 9 January. We were supposed to be even-handed, leaving the matter to the shareholders, standing back. At that late stage, there was perhaps, realistically, nothing else to do once the board had made its final, and in my view ill-judged, recommendation. There were then selective leaks from the Law Officers' letters, which were used, wrongly, to damage my credibility. The Foreign Office instructed the British ambassador in Rome to ask the Italian Government to send no more messages of support for the European consortium. [HON. MEMBERS: "It is a scandal."]

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry urged the managing director of the leading company in the British consortium to withdraw in the national interest. I reported that incident at once on Wednesday night to No. 10 Downing street. The next morning, in Cabinet, it was suggested that all answers to questions on Westland should be submitted to the Cabinet Office before release.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Heseltine: No.

This included answers to questions which already publicly carried my name. I had no confidence, in the light of what had already happened, that such a constraint would be used fairly or without prejudice to the interests of the British-European offer. What I had said with confidence one week would be at the mercy of the most trivial form of interdepartmental squabbling over words. The board of Westland could have been forgiven for seeking to exploit those uncertainties.

I was with great pride Secretary of State for Defence in Her Majesty's Government. There are special responsibilities in that job, and one of them is a conviction in one's capacity to do whatever one believes to be right and against all pressures. With great regret, but no doubt, I left the Government.

5.38 pm

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South and Penarth): I have listened over a long period to many great speeches. I do not think that I have ever heard a resignation speech in which the position of the resigner has been so firmly founded as the one we have heard today. It is inconceivable that the Prime Minister and the Government should refuse some form of inquiry into the allegations of the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). He has made statements that directly contradict points made by the Prime Minister and others of her Ministers. There can be no confidence in the Government until this matter is cleared up. I say to the right hon. Lady that in the interests of good government she has a responsibility to see that the right hon. Gentleman's points are fully examined independently and that the truth is asserted and delivered to the House.

The decision to resign is not an easy one to make. It means parting with friends and colleagues. It means that whispers and slanders and untruths will be told about the person who has resigned. When a person resigns he will be told that he has weakened the party, and it will undoubtedly be said that he is fulfilling some long-range ambition. I am sure that it is an agonising decision. Sometimes resignations do not take place on great issues. They are sometimes the culmination of a long series of frustrations which eventually explode and boil over.

I listened to the right hon. Gentleman outlining the framework, the philosophy, against which he was taking these decisions and carrying out, up to a certain point, what he believed to be Government policy, and I contrasted his speech with the turbid recital of dates that we had from the Prime Minister. I have no doubt who has so far had the better of this argument. I salute the right hon. Gentleman for his courage in resigning. He will have a difficult path ahead of him. I do not believe he planned it, nor do I believe the Prime Minister wanted to push him out. It is one of those inevitable consequences of two stubborn people meeting and neither being willing to give way. When stubborn temperaments clash, we may well ask what the rest of the Cabinet was doing to try to prevent —*[Interruption.]* If my hon. Friends are interested I will return to this point a little later.

We are not dealing just with a clash of two strong personalities, as has been brought out by the right hon. Gentleman, because there are important public issues at stake that the House should address. The first issue is the future of this insolvent company. Can it be given a prosperous future? As we have been told by the Prime Minister and the right hon. Gentleman, the background is fairly straightforward. When it first fell into trouble both the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the right hon. Gentleman were in favour of and ready to adopt a European solution, taking along with them, perhaps, a rather unenthusiastic Prime Minister.

Before such a European solution could be adopted, it was necessary for the Government to put some work into Westland and, as has been made clear to us, they were not ready or able at that stage to do so. The future for the company was grim, and I have no doubt that it was with thankfulness that the Prime Minister and the other Ministers involved learnt that Sikorsky was ready in July to offer both finance and work so that the company could carry on. In its weak position the company eagerly grasped that, as there seemed to be no other future. Much later this prompted the European Governments and companies to come forward with a proposal for collaboration.

Criticism may be made of the European consortium in that it did not come forward earlier in view of the 1978 agreement for which my Government were responsible. But it did come forward, and the Government have not yet

explained to my satisfaction and to the satisfaction of many others why they did not examine the European option as fully as they should have done. It is at this stage that the first criticism of the Government must be made, and so far the right hon. Gentleman has made the case that there was inadequate consideration.

The Prime Minister's defence this afternoon was that the company had to produce its accounts by the end of the year and would have shown a loss of £100 million, and that without any financial reconstruction in sight it would have had to go into receivership. There was a great deal to be said for that solution and I understand that at certain stages the right hon. Gentleman put forward that solution.

What is the position of this company today? We are told that the shareholders will take a decision. But that decision will not be in the hands of the shareholders if the banks choose to exercise their powers. If the National Westminster bank and Barclays bank were to say tomorrow that they refused to cover the borrowings of this company any further, the company would immediately go into receivership. The shares that are now changing hands at £1·25 each are worthless—pretty well worthless; I exaggerated slightly but not by much. On Friday the shareholders will take decisions on shares which have little value and those decisions will be on matters of supreme national interest. I want to demonstrate why this is so.

Westland is not a unique company, especially in the defence field. As the right hon. Gentleman said, to some extent the company depends on collaboration with others and on foreign technology in its work. That illustrates the important and central issue with which he started his speech, that for many years Britain, like other medium-sized countries, has not been capable of meeting its arms requirements from its own arsenals. The question of what policy we should adopt in purchasing arms from other countries or in co-operating with other manufacturers in joint production is not a new issue.

The House is aware that there is much history and there are many precedents on policy decisions to assist a Government confronted with a problem such as Westland. The Government were faced with the two options and the Prime Minister seems to have conducted the discussions, especially in the last two or three weeks, with all the restraint and rationality of a Saturday late night pub dispute after the pub has closed and people emerge with black eyes. The Secretary of State walks out of the Cabinet and the Leader of the House has an uncomfortable half hour on television. The Solicitor-General has his letter leaked without his knowledge, the poor pathetic Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has to weave his way around half truths and evasions and then has to come back and confess. It has been a miserable week for the lot of them on the Government side. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman is not yet on the Front Bench but I am sure he will be one day if this lot go on as they are.

The work force has spoken out strongly in favour of Sikorsky and the opinion of the work force should be respected — *[Interruption.]* I will not give way — *[Interruption.]* I am told that the hon. Gentleman has Barbara Castle's diaries. I have not read them, so I shall not give way as I would not be able to answer his question. If the House will allow me I would like to make a serious speech. The work force has said strongly that it wants the Sikorsky solution and we must respect its opinion. It believes that the Sikorsky solution will give it the best chance of retaining its skills. None of us can give the workers a clear assurance that if the Sikorsky solution is adopted it will give them a future, and that is by virtue of some of the reasons given by the right hon. Member for Henley.

Mr. Ashdown: Or from the other solution either.

Mr. Callaghan: There is, for example, one company that would certainly have a future. I am sure many people will echo what the right hon. Gentleman had to say about the disgraceful way in which huge blocks of shares are being bought and sold by faceless individuals who will then throw the shares into the scales on Friday. This kind of predatory company acquisition has nothing to do with the efficiency of the market place about which Conservative Members are always regaling us. It has nothing to do with the productivity of the work force, and the defenders of unbridled capitalism will be hard put to it to argue that what is happening in the City of London this week is the best way to safeguard the future of one of our defence industries.

He would be a bold man who would reassure Westland that its future was secure. After all, Sikorsky, as has been pointed out this afternoon, is not the principal in the matter. It is one of the divisions of United Technologies, a vast American corporation, to whom the investment of a few million pounds in Westland is no more than the office petty cash.

I shall forecast one likely pattern of development. Sikorsky, despite its 10 per cent., will dominate the future of Westland and its policy. It will use Westland as a useful tool to attack the rest of the European helicopter industry. In which case, Aerospatiale will survive because France will determine that it survives, unlike this Government's attitude. Fiat, already linked with Sikorsky, will make a bid for Agusta and the Americans will secure a dominant position in Italy. That is not the way to conduct American-European defence procurement — in their interests or ours.

We need a basis of equality in our relationships, and the helicopter agreement, to which the right hon. Member for Henley referred in his statement of resignation, was intended to secure that basis of equality between Europe and America. That is not anti-Americanism. It springs from the understanding that a true partnership requires equality between the partners. If one partner can do without the other, there is no real partnership.

I speak today because there is history to guide us on these matters which the Government have neglected. Eight years ago—the House will have noted the date 1978—the Boeing aircraft company was on the prowl in Europe, dangling offers of joint production in front of British aircraft firms as well as those in Italy and France.

At that time, British Aerospace was a nationalised company and the Labour Government were brought into discussions with Boeing at an early stage. I had become Prime Minister and I made it my business to meet the leaders of Boeing and the other American aircraft companies in Washington. After a long series of discussions, my advisers and I came to the conclusion that, despite the offer that Boeing was making of an apparently equal partnership with British Aerospace, the consequences, whatever its intentions at the time, would have been different. Boeing's long-term aim was to choke the infant Airbus, to suck the technology out of British Aerospace and to reduce its role to that of a sub-contractor.

[Mr. Callaghan]

The principal officials of British Aerospace were of the same mind as my colleagues in the Cabinet. We authorised fresh vigour to be imparted into our negotiations with France and Germany with a view to a joint European production of the Airbus. It was a difficult negotiation. At one stage it involved President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt before the three countries could reach an agreement. But we did, and the results today — this surely has a moral for helicopter production — is that Europe has an independent aircraft industry; that British Aerospace is renowed as one of the foremost manufacturers of wings in the world; and even American airlines are buying the European Airbus.

If only the Government had shown the same enthusiasm, had overruled some of Sir John Cuckney's proposals and had secured his enthusiastic co-operation, and if the right hon. Gentleman had been allowed to pursue the line that he was following, the result might have been different.

We had other problems in 1978 with the Americans over the financing of Rolls-Royce engines. We got the Export Credits Guarantee Department, on what I believe was a good piece of financing, to support the sale of Rolls-Royce engines to American companies. The Americans accused us of unfair competition. They went to Congress. The matter was taken up by President Carter. I was in Washington again. We had a talk about the matter with the American Secretary to the Treasury, and I say in fairness to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that he would have been on a fair point if he had limited his conversation with Sir Raymond Lygo to pointing out the dangers that British Aerospace was running, and of anti-American sentiment. I must say, however, in view of the present position of the Airbus and its American relationship, that it would have been rather like teaching his grandfather to suck eggs.

Our experience was that, although we had a rough passage with the Carter Administration for several months, which needed a great deal of smoothing over, in the end, the President and I recognised that the Americans were fighting their corner and that we were fighting ours. We both made a calculation of where our national interests lay. Surely the moral is that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry should not have been so timorous as to pressurise British Aerospace to withdraw because he was afraid of American displeasure. *[Interruption.]* I am not sure what the right hon. and learned Gentleman is saying, but if he wishes to interrupt I shall gladly give way.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Leon Brittan): I am simply repeating what I said to the House and what is confirmed by the official record, which is corroborated by three senior officials who worked, I imagine, for the right hon. Gentleman's Government and whose integrity was not questioned, and by my hon. Friend the Minister of State. At no stage did I ask British Aerospace to withdraw.

Mr. Callaghan: It is extraordinary, is it not, that when there is a difference of opinion between the Prime Minister and the right hon. Member for Henley, it is the Prime Minister who is correct. When there is a difference between the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Sir Raymond Lygo, it is the Secretary of State who is correct. The Secretary of State is still muttering. Despite his vehemence, I cannot say which version is the truth. I say to the right hon. and learned Gentleman and to the Prime Minister, how does she think that the Government can keep any respect when there is a direct contradiction between the letters that we hold in our hands and what the Secretary of State has just said?

The European Nations—the Secretary of State is not worth wasting time over — decided on the helicopter declaration agreement for three reasons. First, we were fearful that the United States in its vigour, appetite and size would swallow us one by one. Secondly, in those technologically advanced sectors, the need to invest huge resources in research and development forces even market leaders into collaborative deals with their competitors, leading to common sourcing of components and much else. The third consideration was the failure of the two-way street, an arrangement under which America undertook to purchase part of its defence requirements from Europe to offset the huge flow of American equipment purchased by Europe. Both sides were to purchase from each other.

I heard what the right hon. Member for Henley said about some of the traffic that had gone the other way. If the right hon. Gentleman were to draw up a balance sheet of the two—if I may continue my metaphor of the two-way street — all the American vehicles were pouring down the track towards us, but we had nothing but a rather broken down cycle for the return journey.

Those important policy considerations do not seem to have been taken fully into account. I have mentioned three factors—the fact that we were going to be demolished by the Americans, one by one, the need for technological collaboration and the failure of the two-way street—which do not seem to have been given the consideration that they should have been given.

I come to the Prime Minister's conduct. The right hon. Member for Henley claims that it amounts to a constitutional outrage. With respect, I believe that that is overegging the pudding. Every Prime Minister has his or her style of conducting Government. It is up to the Cabinet whether it puts up with it or not. That lot will put up with almost anything. There is the well-known example of Attlee's strong rebuke to Churchill over conduct of the wartime Cabinet. We have since been told that Mrs. Churchill apparently agreed with Attlee. She told Winston so, and then he tried to mend his ways. I wonder whether there is a role here for some other sensible spouse? The right hon. Gentleman let the cat out of the bag by publicly blowing the gaff on what his less courageous colleagues have long whispered behind their hands: that they find the Prime Minister's method of conducting business objectionable. I think that the House can understand what they are getting at.

But what were Ministers doing during this period of growing controversy between the Secretary of State for Defence and the Prime Minister? Was the Chancellor of the Exchequer doing his best to calm things down? I suppose that the Foreign Secretary was off on one of his foreign travels and that he was not available to help. But what about the ebullient tones of the Leader of the House? Where was the Chief Whip? What were all these Ministers doing while this issue was boiling up? I can only say to them all that if they behave like mice they must expect to be chased and that if they act like doormats they must expect the Prime Minister to trample all over them. I am

bound to say to the Ministers who are sitting on the Treasury Bench today that, with one or two exceptions, the present Cabinet has less spirit and contains fewer men of talent than any Conservative Government since the war. Most of them are sitting outside it. I wonder whether the Prime Minister ever considers whether the fault is that the tallest tree in the forest will not allow any substantial growth in her shade?

However, all is not lost. If the Ministers play their cards properly, the resignation of the right hon. Member for Henley has given them another chance. He is the sacrificial lamb, although he will be a pretty tough lamb to digest. They can now, if they choose, re-establish Cabinet authority, because the Prime Minister dare not risk another resignation on the same grounds. If the Ministers care to do so, they can now rein in these authoritarian instincts that they tell us they find so objectionable.—[HON. MEMBERS: "They would not dare."] If they do not dare to do so, then it is a job for the Back Benchers. And if the Back Benchers do not, in due course the electorate will.

The right hon. Member for Henley told us that just before he left the Cabinet meeting there was not a single member of the Cabinet who supported him. He should not worry overmuch about that. There is a precedent. When Anthony Eden left the Conservative Government in 1938 in disgust at Neville Chamberlain's willingness to treat with Mussolini behind Eden's back he could not find a single supporter to speak for him in the Cabinet, but two years later Eden was back and Chamberlain was out. In case the thought has ever crossed the right hon. Gentleman's mind—although I do not suppose that it has—let me remind him that Eden went on to become Prime Minister.

As for the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, I have been screwing myself up to try to find something favourable to say about him and to try to show some understanding for his position. I fear that the trouble is that the decent instincts that I am sure he possesses have, somewhere, become atrophied behind that lawyer's mask. I say to him in all seriousness that on Monday he failed to understand or to weigh properly his responsibilities to the House on the one hand and to British Aerospace on the other. The House is aware that commercial matters have always been given special confidentiality by the Department of Trade and by Government generally in the conduct of Government business, for obvious reasons. The fact that a letter was marked "Private and Strictly Confidential" should certainly have led him to refuse to divulge its contents but never to deny its existence.

Last Monday the Secretary of State should have let his instincts guide him. Then he would not have had to weave and shuffle as he did and eventually be forced to come back to the House and confess. He has had an awful lesson, but by his demeanour since I wonder whether he has learnt that lesson and whether he really understands the House of Commons. If he does not, the sooner he goes back to the Bar and makes his reputation there the better.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has called for an inquiry. I repeat to the Prime Minister that, whether or not she accepts this form of inquiry, it is now absolutely imperative that these matters should be inquired into if confidence is to be restored in the Government's position and integrity. The inquiry should, I suggest, go a little wider. It should also review some of the policy questions raised by the right hon. Member for Henley—and I hope by me, too—about how to carry further European defence procurement co-operation and how to integrate this with the Atlantic Alliance.

The Prime Minister cannot be very proud of the way that she and her colleagues have handled the future of Westland. If the Sikorsky offer is accepted, it will be the wrong decision: wrong for this country, wrong for European co-operation and wrong for European-American relations. What has happened shows, I regret, a readiness to ignore the lessons of the past, a refusal to examine seriously the European option, an attempt to deceive by saying one thing in public and doing another thing in private. Most dangerous of all, it shows a lack of understanding by the Prime Minister of the way to handle her colleagues in order to get them to work as a team. For her, the verdict must be that it is getting very late.

6.6 pm

Mr. Jim Spicer (Dorset, West): I have an almost impossible task in following the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), the Father of the House. I shall not attempt to follow the broad-brush approach that he has used during the last half hour. However, at one point he said that he intended to speak about the workers at Westland. I hope that at this point, as I speak about the workers at Westland, the right hon. Gentleman will pay some slight attention. Three or four hon. Members have a constituency interest in Westland. We form a strange alliance. I refer to the hon. Members for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross), my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) myself and one or two other hon. Members. Over the years we have followed Westland's fortunes and we speak from experience of that company. When the tumult and the shouting has died away and when all the politicans have departed, having had their say about the dates of various meetings and their outcome, the problems of Westland and companies like it will not have disappeared. Therefore, we should address ourselves briefly this afternoon to Westland's problems and I will not go very far away from that main point.

All hon. Members who fall into this category knew quite well that in the spring of 1985 Westland was in deep and dire trouble. There was the possibility of a cancellation of the Indian order and there was a lack of orders for the W30. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister mentioned that a year or 18 months ago the storm clouds began to grow over Westland. We were made well aware of that fact by management and also by the trade unions and workers at Westland. It was against the background of a worsening situation that Sir John Cuckney took up the incredibly difficult task of chairmanship of the company. When he was appointed I did not hear one word of criticism from the Government or the House of his appointment or of the board. He had an almost impossible task to perform and he set about it with vigour.

In the interests of the board, the shareholders and the workers of Westland, there are three simple questions that I believe must be answered during this debate. As is often the case during some debates, the answer is known before the question is put but I ask my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) when Sir John Cuckney first went to the Ministry of Defence to ask for help, to explain the problems facing the company and to point out the obvious future if that help did not arrive.

Mr. Heseltine: Sir John Cuckney rightly went to the Ministry of Defence very early on. I had to refer him to the Department of Trade and Industry, which is responsible for taking decisions about how rescue operations should be handled.

Mr. Spicer: I accept that. This first meeting took place on 17 July. I fully accept that the Ministry of Defence was not the sponsoring Department. However, my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley has made it clear during the debate how vital that Department's interests are and how important it was for there to be continuity of supplies from Westland to the Ministry of Defence.

My understanding is that when Sir John Cuckney went to the Ministry of Defence on 17 July he did not receive any promise of direct support from the Minister either in trying to get together a European consortium or any direct intervention from the Government because my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State made it clear that he would be against any direct intervention at that stage. Therefore, the possibility of bankruptcy loomed large.

My second question is: what would have happened to Westland if Sikorsky had not come forward with its offer? I emphasise that the offer did not just appear at the end of September or October. At the end of July Sikorsky, as a friend of Westland, was beginning to talk, even in Washington, about the problems of Westland and saying that it had worked with Westland for a long time and it wondered whether it could help in any way. That news must have filtered back, if not in July then early in August, and it was quite clear that there would be a move by the Americans at an early stage.

What would have happened if Sikorsky had not come forward? The chairman of Westland, having spoken to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, went round to speak to British Aerospace, the General Electric Company, Aerospatiale, Agusta and Messerschmitt. All of those companies said that it was bad luck and that they were sorry. However, we all know that, with the exception of Agusta, which was genuinely concerned because of its collaboration with Westland, they were all hoping that when Westland went into bankruptcy they would pick up the pieces. Some were happy that a company which might have been a future contender was going out of business. Those were the problems that Sir John Cuckney faced in July and August.

British Aerospace is leading the European consortium. Firm guarantees should have been given to British Aerospace from all the partners in the European consortium that they will be willing and able to live up to their commitment of providing genuine work for Westland over the next three or four years. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley took part in the "Panorama" programme on Monday and he knows the reaction of the Westland workers as they listened to that debate. There must be no mistake: Agusta and Aerospatiale are not in good shape at the moment.

Also, the memories of the workers at Westland are long and they do not need to be reminded of the agreement made in 1968 between Aerospatiale and Westland, which was to be a splendid example of collaboration. With the connivance of Aerospatiale the French Government broke that agreement almost immediately and halved their order for Lynx helicopters from Westland. One cannot blame the workers or management of Westland if they remember that occasion and if they fear that it might be repeated.

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the managing director of Westland has been telling the work force that he has attended at least three meetings with the French and the Italians in recent months and has had little support from them?

Mr. Spicer: I made that point earlier on. It was in July and August that the exchanges took place and there was no support and no clear-cut commitment. The tragedy of the resignation of the right hon. Member for Henley is that he has been a leading and respected figure in bringing the European concept together. With his support behind it, a future European consortium for helicopters would have carried more weight and conviction. Now that he has resigned I have less sense of conviction about the way in which that cobbled-together European commitment will hold up under the stresses and strains that will come about over the next few months and in the years ahead.

Mr. Dalyell: I visited Westland on 21 November as the company's guest. That was when the problems were starting. It was my impression, as a visitor—I cannot put it higher—that the workers were deeply worried because they had not been told what the various options and possibilities were. They were worried about the constant changes in management and in decision-making. Can the hon. Gentleman tell us whether the European option as it is now put forward has been fully spelt out? I do not know.

Mr. Spicer: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that comment, because it serves to illustrate my point. There is not a single person, including Sir John Cuckney and Members of the House, who in July or August would not have welcomed the sight of two contenders emerging at the same time. We would then have had a race, and the winner would have been fleetest of foot and the one that was prepared to offer the most to the Westland workers and shareholders. The fact that that did not happen is an indictment of what happened during the period from July until September. In my view, the European offer was too little too late.

Mr. Ashdown: I will try to assist the hon. Gentleman in answering the previous question. I am aware of the criticisms mentioned by the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) about the deficiencies in the spread of information to the work force of Westland. It may be helpful to the hon. Gentleman to know that the members of the work force that I have consulted, from the trade unions to the shop floor, feel that over the past two or three weeks they have been provided with a magnificent service of briefing by the management and are now well aware of the full details.

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman is well qualified to speak on that. His work at Westland is well known and respected.

If the European offer had been made two or three months earlier there would not have been the same confusion in November or December. That is the nub of the problem. It is no wonder that the work force, the shareholders and the board of Westland look upon Sikorsky as a friend in need.

There comes a time in all walks of life when one has to stand by someone who has helped one out before. Half of the problem about the way in which this whole affair has been dealt with by the board is that it did not have a

convincing offer early enough. It knows in its heart of hearts that all those great European companies wanted to see Westland go into liquidation, and that cannot be a welcome thought.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way; one neighbour cannot possibly refuse another. I am interested in what he said because a number of my constituents work for Westland. No one could fail to understand why the work force, given the direction of the board and the view that it takes in this matter, is now of the view that it is. But it is hard to understand from the account that we have heard this afternoon, however late the British-European consortium deal has come along, the apparent inadequacy of the consideration given to that proposal — not previous proposals but that proposal which my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley said is something that could only be Minister-led — by the Westland board of directors for the benefit of the company.

Mr. Spicer: My hon. Friend makes a point, but I can only say that the board of Westland has lived for the past three months with the nightmare of liquidation hanging over it. There comes a time when one no longer has the opportunity or the time and decisions are made in haste. It is a tragedy that such a situation has been allowed to come about. I would say only that those of our constituents who work there have a much better future now than seemed possible six months ago. For that we have to thank the Government, my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the former Secretary of State for Defence and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

6.22 pm

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): The House has been concentrating its attention on the activities of the Cabinet during the past two or three weeks. I shall not dwell on that because it has been more than adequately dealt with by my right hon. Friends the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan).

It should be recognised that the crisis has lasted now for well over a year. Deplorable activities have taken place with regard to the personal conduct of members of the Cabinet but I want to put on record some of the facts of the unfortunate situation in which the company finds itself.

The hon. Member for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer) said that he had a constituency interest and referred to one or two alliance Members. I also have an interest, being an engineer by training and a member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. We have a great interest in the fact that 7,000 workers are involved. For that reason I and my hon. Friends have during the past year continually asked questions during Question Time on defence matters and made representations which have evidently fallen on deaf ears.

Numerous deputations have come to the House of Commons to meet Labour Members. There have been deputations from management and trade unions. I remember one meeting a few months ago when the management briefed Labour Members. They came along with slides and advised us in great detail just how critical their position was. At the same time, they also pointed out the problems of suppliers in the helicopter industry. We should remind ourselves that suppliers in other parts of the country are involved with the engines, electrics, instruments, metals and several other major components, and they are desperately interested in maintaining their companies and the jobs in them.

The last meeting that we had with the trade union group from Westland took place on 12 December. Its members said that they did not want to be treated as political footballs. Understandably, we had a great deal of sympathy with them. That is exactly how Labour Members felt the workers had been treated. It is all right being concerned about the shareholders and the stock exchange, but there has been little comment during the debate on the livelihoods of so many families who are dependent on the contracts. It is not due to any failings on the part of this group of skilled workers that they find themselves in a difficult position.

On 12 December the members of the engineering union told us that on numerous occasions the management had encouraged them to come to Westminster to lobby Members on behalf of the company. Suddenly, a directive was issued by the company forbidding trade union members from doing that. I was rather suspicious about such a trend.

Numerous deputations went to the Ministry of Defence and I joined one or two. We met the Minister with responsibility for defence procurement when we made special pleadings, explaining the desperate situation that the company was in. The Minister sat rather stony faced and gave us no encouragement whatever. We pleaded with him to tell the company what was required. We asked him, if he did not know the specification, to turn to his expert advisers to find out what kind of helicopter he wished the company to tender for. The reply from the Minister and his civil servants was to advise us that they did not know what specification the armed services required. I can understand that, but it is like constantly moving the goalposts. The management do the tendering and say what can be done and suddenly the civil servants change the specification. I remember pointing out to the Minister that it was not good enough for the company to be at the whim of the Ministry which, in six months, would provide such a specification.

Sir Adam Butler (Bosworth): I think that the hon. Gentleman is referring to one or more occasions when he came to see me about AST 404. He must not distort the record. He knows that there was no question of the civil servants changing the goalposts; it was the Army, which, in the light of experience on various manoevres, decided that it did not want the smaller helicopter. It had to go back to the drawing board and see what was needed. That is what I told the House and his delegation when he came to see me.

Mr. Eastham: I am not in any way distorting the facts; I am but stating the simple fact that the company was given no indication of the required specifications. At that meeting, I told the Minister that it was unrealistic to expect a company to continue to meet a wage bill when it was not obtaining the necessary contracts essential to its survival. Other hon. Members were present at that meeting——

Mr. George Park (Coventry, North-East): The delegations to which my hon. Friend referred met successive procurement Ministers, not only the right hon. Member for Bosworth (Sir A. Butler). The problem was not only one of the Army making up its mind about what

[Mr. George Park]

it required — it continually added requirements for further equipment until it reached the point where the aircraft virtually required a new engine. The Army could not make up its mind about how many troops the planes should carry, so the orders could not be placed with Rolls-Royce and negotiations broke down.

Mr. Eastham: My hon. Friend was present at the meeting to which I referred, and his comments are accurate. It was nothing but a can of worms. The MOD would not help the company by telling it what it really required.

Although the MOD consistently said that it was unsure of its requirements, shortly before the House rose in December the Minister said that his Department was placing an immediate order for six helicopters. How could the MOD suddenly know what it needed? How was it able to place an immediate order for six Westland helicopters? I have not been given adequate answers to those questions.

The debate during the last few weeks has centred on the shareholders, so it is especially interesting that the company is now wooing its work force and asking it which company it would like to succeed. I am not making a case about which firm should own Westland, but perhaps in future takeover bids for other companies the managements and shareholders will follow the precedent being set by Westland and consult their work forces. However, I doubt that that will happen. Workers should beware of Greeks bearing gifts. If Sikorsky takes over Westland, they can be sure that it will be the last time that they are consulted. They will certainly not be consulted about any slimming down of the work force and the consequent redundancies.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman persists in carrying on the misunderstanding widely perpetrated by the former Secretary of State for Defence that Westland will fall under effective American control if the Sikorsky bid succeeds. Can the hon. Gentleman explain how a partnership shareholding of less than 20 per cent. is effective control?

Mr. Eastham: I do not want to become involved in share ownership. My prime interest lies in ensuring that the skilled engineers retain the jobs to which they are entitled. I believe that to be a legitimate point.

Much has been said about the American proposal, and the trade unions have studied it with great interest. A meeting in Brussels last Monday with the vice president of the Commission, Mr. Narjes, was attended by Mr. Jack Whyman of the AUEW, who is chairman for the trade unions, assisted by Mr. Chris Darke of AUEW-TASS. There were also three representatives from France, one from Germany and three from Italy. They said in their written account of the meeting:

"Following a full and frank discussion, we all agreed on the need for European co-operation in Aerospace and the following statement was issued to the Trade Unions.

On behalf of the EMF Bureau, a delegation composed of representation of EMF affiliated organisation in the UK, Germany, France and Italy met with Mr. Karl-Heinz Narjes, Vice President of the European Commission, whose responsibilities include industrial policy, on Monday 13th January, 1986 in order to discuss the future of Westland.

The EMF delegation re-affirmed its support of European co-operation in the aeronautics field and hence chooses the European Consortium option whilst expressing the wish that this does not exclude other groups stressed that this sector, and especially the helicopter sector, is of strategic importance and that European manufacturers are fully capable of meeting demand."

They also called for a debate within the European Parliament and asked the Commission to make its position known as quickly as possible. They intend to follow up the employment problems arising from whichever option is chosen.

Usually, we do not hear any mention of trade union interests, yet they have a vital interest. The buying and selling of shares is not the only factor—jobs are on the line, and that is often forgotten.

I always put a question mark over guarantees that companies might give their workers. Has Sikorsky given any clear guarantee about design and technology work? Are we certain that that will be retained in Britain? Are there guarantees about the manufacturing content of the helicopters—or will there be a system of sub-assembly, with the helicopters arriving in Britain in large cases and the workers getting out their screwdrivers and assembling Sikorsky-brand helicopters made in America? Is it simply a matter of Sikorsky wanting to secure the order book? Is it another example of asset stripping? We all know the consequences of asset stripping—the casualties are the thousands of workers made redundant. Those workers have done nothing wrong; they are the victims of wheeler-dealers.

The Government should remember that a considerable amount of taxpayers' money has been invested in Westland. Members of Parliament who represent the engineering industry believe that the workers are entitled to job security. The Cabinet has hardly distinguished itself during this affair, and we have all suffered half truths and statements that are supposed to be truths. It is nothing but a can of worms, so I am cautious about Cabinet proposals. A cooling off period is needed so that we can make a proper assessment. The decision is not just for Westland, nor is it for America. It is a decision for Britain and it involves 7,000 jobs.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Many hon. Members wish to speak in the debate, so I appeal for short contributions.

6.40 pm

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): I have no wish to detain the House long. I realise that many of my colleagues wish to intervene.

I must declare that I have no interest in these matters. Although for many years I had a connection with the helicopter industry, none of the events which concern Westland involves anyone with whom I am connected in a professional sense. I know many of the personalities. I do not conceal that from the House. I have known them for many years and I know something about the background.

I might help the House by mentioning some of the personality involvements which I have had in the affairs of Westland and with the aerospace industry, with my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), with whom I served as a junior Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry between 1972 and 1974.

I regret the course of events that led to my right hon. Friend's resignation, as do most of his colleagues

However, not all of us—not even a minority of us—think that his action was right or that his resignation was for the right reasons.

If my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley were here, I am sure that he would not deny that between 1972 and 1974 he was an interventionist Minister in an interventionist Government. The Government actually managed the affairs of Rolls-Royce (1971). That Government sought to make the board of the newly constituted British Airways get on with bringing BOAC and BEA together. That Government were deeply concerned about the future of the British Aircraft Corporation, Hawker Siddeley and GEC. The Government sought to influence those companies. That never came to anything, but the Government were interventionists in a positive and thought-through way. My right hon. Friend mentioned the European Space Agency, and there was Concorde and all the European collaboration which that project involved.

I hope that my right hon. Friend will not mind my saying that he was an interventionist in that term in office and that he showed in his comments today that he is still an interventionist. But he has been an interventionist in a different Government—in a Government who are not committed to intervention. In that fact the House can find the root causes of much of what has happened.

It is also clear from what my right hon. Friend said that, in the particular case of Westland, the Cabinet had taken a conscious decision that it should not intervene. It is possible to disagree about the reasons for that decision and the merits of the issue. We have heard differing views this evening from hon. Members who have an acquaintance with Westland matters.

It is important to get one issue straight in the minds of the House and of the public. Westland is not a big company. It is not involved in the highest areas of technology. The company is not crucial to our defence effort. Those facts were no doubt in the mind of the Cabinet when it approached the Westland problems, which have been well known to the House for a year or more.

Westland is unlike Rolls-Royce. That was a large company in enormous trouble. It had enormous commitments to our national defence effort, to the defence efforts of our friends and allies and to great companies in the United States and elsewhere which could not be allowed to fail. Rolls-Royce could not be allowed to go bankrupt and be bought up—as I said at the time—by the Kamikaze Aircraft Corporation. We could not let Rolls-Royce go. A decision recognising that Westland today is different from Rolls-Royce then is not unreasonable. That decision should not have come as a surprise to my right hon. Friend.

If there ever was a time when Westland could have been taken into public ownership, it was when the Labour Government were in power. The employees at Westland persuaded Ministers of the day not to nationalise the company. If I had been asked at the time, I should have said that that was probably the only company in the aerospace industry that should have been nationalised. It could have been restructured and been given different management. That could have solved the problems. That opportunity was missed by a Labour Government, not a Conservative Government.

In its approach to the difficult problem the Cabinet might also have been persuaded, rightly, by the type of arguments deployed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport on one of those almost continuous television chat shows about Westland's problems after Christmas. He argued that unless the Government were prepared to use public funds to bring the company into public ownership they could not force the company to carry out Government policy.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley should have recognised that. He should have seen earlier that his authority must come under severe constraint. It was clear that the majority of the Cabinet, having considered these matters on various occasions, did not think that the disadvantages of whatever solution the Westland board recommended to shareholders were serious enough to warrant intervention by the Government, using public funds. The disadvantages must have included the fact that the company was caught—as we are sometimes—in the crossfire between the Americans and the French.

We are talking about an industry in which, apart from the American capability—which is considerable—the French are the leading helicopter manufacturers and have the greatest guarantee of support from Government. Some who study such matters would say that the French motives in this affair have simply been to use Westland as a blocking tactic to keep the Americans out of Europe. The French probably have no intention of furthering or fostering the company's capability, of maintaining its design staff or of giving it work which can be relied upon. I pass no judgment, but I think it is right to make that point in answer to the crude, anti-American sentiments voiced by the Opposition.

Having heard what my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley said about the Alliance and the American defence capability, it seems to me, and to others who also study the subject, that the United States Government's commitment to NATO somewhat exceeds the French Government's commitment. That is to our advantage, not disadvantage.

The Americans understand the politics, the logistics and the procurement problems of the Alliance. They know that if there is to be a genuine commitment by the United Kingdom to the continuance of the Alliance it must pay off in terms of worthwhile jobs. There is a good case for saying that it is more probable that the Americans will genuinely and positively seek to solve the difficulties of a company such as Westland more than will Aerospatiale. Those are matters about which it is possible to have different opinions. It is reasonable to say that the Government may not agree, but they agree at least that there is no need to intervene and that, without detriment to the national interest, the decision should be left to the shareholders. The more options that the company has before them, the better.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley should have seen the position sooner—certainly before October. He should have realised that, whatever may have been said to him, he was not authorised to strike a deal with Europe, to pledge the Government's credit or to go beyond the influence that his former Department possesses.

The Prime Minister was entitled to put an end to disagreement between her Ministers. I say to her with diffidence that when the historians compile their analysis of these events there will be some who will write how remarkably patient and long suffering my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was during the disagreement. The House knows that I say that not to curry favour with the

[Mr. Cranley Onslow]

Prime Minister, but because I believe it to be so. Sometimes hon. Members say things because they believe them to be so.

In his account of the course of events that led to his resignation—on television and on the radio—my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley complained of a constitutional outrage. In a perceptive article in *The Guardian* Mr. Hugo Young said that that was hyperbole—exaggeration carried beyond any reasonable point—and I agree with him. Mr. Young gave some examples about what he believed to be constitutional outrage.

During the Christmas recess I read the diaries of Sir John Colville dealing with his experiences as private secretary to Sir Winston Churchill at Downing street. He relates the time when the Prime Minister had just had a stroke and told his private secretary, "Do not let my Cabinet colleagues know about this. Carry on the Government as if I were in full control." Mr. Colville and Mr. Christopher Soames, as they then were, had the opportunity, if they had wished to take advantage of it, to do just that. Sir John Colville states that to do that would have been a constitutional outrage and he is right. To cancel a Cabinet Committee or to make provisional arrangements for a Cabinet Committee and then not to hold it is not a constitutional outrage. Indeed, I suspect it may have happened before.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Will the hon. Member give way?

Mr. Onslow: I am sorry. There are other hon. Members whom the House may wish to hear, but the hon. Gentleman is not one of them.

Some of those who have commented on the Westland affair have called it a trauma, which shows the depth to which our education system has descended. I think that they may have meant a drama, which is what it could be called. My main complaint about the coverage of the affair is that it has been made into a melodrama. Much has been magnified, developed and distorted out of all proportion.

Mr. John Hannam (Exeter): That is nothing new.

Mr. Onslow: No, it is nothing new, especially when Parliament is in recess and the media can have a field day. It is standard practice. If the "Today" programme, which is dedicated singlehandedly to getting the nation out of bed on the wrong side every morning, and the rest of the media are allowed a clear run, they will take advantage of it. I do not complain, but I think I am entitled to make the observation.

I am glad that Parliament is back and that parliamentary matters of great importance can be debated and considered in their proper place, which is in Parliament rather than on the television screen. I am pleased that we have had this debate and I welcome the Government's amendment. I believe that in his speech my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley supported the proposition of a Select Committee process to show its capacity for investigation rather than the type of inquiry suggested by the Opposition.

Matters must be investigated. Challenges and assertions have been made, which no hon. Member should allow to be lightly brushed aside, such as the unlikely charge by my right hon. Friend about the Foreign Office, which I do not find credible. Things have been said about Sir John Cuckney and Sir Raymond Lygo and even about Sikorsky and civil servants. There are many other cases about which it is important to establish the facts and not simply to hear partial accounts bound by the limitations of a one-day debate.

It would be interesting and valuable for the House to have from Sir John Cuckney, as chairman called in to rescue the company, an account of the way in which he believed it to be his duty to carry out that function. It is important for Parliament that there should be no prejudging and no leaping to conclusions just because something has been said and an opportunity to deny it has not yet come along. I hope that the House will avoid that temptation from now on.

The right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) mentioned in his speech the affairs of the British Aerospace letter about which we had such a storm in a teacup on Monday night — when the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) came shuffling in from behind his green baize door like a sort of geriatric Jeeves to do all the mischief that he could.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry — with hindsight — could have done better. He should have known from the fact that my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley asked about a letter that he presumed that such a letter existed. It could be assumed that the letter's existence was likely to become public knowledge. However, the contents of the letter were the burden of the matter. Even the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), who is so adept at whipping up a parliamentary storm, will concede that this is not the most serious of matters that have engaged the attention of the House. There are serious issues, but that matter need not detain us.

With due diffidence, Mr. Speaker, if the debate is to be a credit to Parliament, as it should be, it is vital that it should proceed to its conclusion with the House being able to give a fair hearing to both sides. I would say to the Opposition Front Bench that we have recently had the unhappy experience of a type of trial by decibel. I do not believe that the House or the country wish to have that repeated tonight. Nothing is more important than that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, whom we on this side of the House know and admire, should have an absolutely fair hearing during his reply.

6.59 pm

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): The hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) described Monday's events as a storm in a teacup. Those events do not deserve that description.

I do not wish to pursue the apology that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made on Monday about the non-disclosure of his awareness of the British Aerospace letter in his reply to my hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Brown). I wish to query two aspects of the Solicitor-General's letter.

The House will know how the Law Officers Department generally operates. It is briefed by other Departments, which provide the basic information. It would be extremely unusual if the Law Officers were suddenly to act of their own accord without being requested, briefed or instructed by the Department. The

Law Officers are the Government's legal advisers; they do not act on their own. Therefore, one wonders who instructed the Solicitor-General. Who inspired him? Who advised him? How did he come to write his letter? Was it part of the black information campaign being run by No. 10 to denigrate the then Secretary of State for Defence?

Mr. Winnick: The hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow), who is the chairman of the 1922 Committee, came to the defence of the Prime Minister in a rather shoddy speech. Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the deputy chairman of the 1922 Committee is quoted in *The London Standard* as saying this:

"The skids are under Leon."

The London Standard states that the deputy chairman

"said that Mr. Brittan's job was now in serious jeopardy. Mr. Fox added, 'What we have got to get clear is that there are not two standards, one for one Cabinet Minister and one for another.'"

Therefore, what the chairman of the 1922 Committee said was contradicted by the vice-chairman.

Mr. Morris: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who will be able to develop his point later. But I do not wish to be detracted from the questions to which I seek answers from the Government. Who inspired the Solicitor-General to write his letter? If we get nothing else from the debate, the House deserves and demands an answer to my question about who motivated him to put pen to paper.

The Solicitor-General states in his letter that he writes on the basis of Cabinet papers, and, he adds,

"on the basis of the information contained in the documents"—

those are Cabinet papers and what he has read in *The Times*—

"which I emphasise are all that I have seen."

That is a somewhat unusual phrase for the Solicitor-General to have used, unless he wished to protect himself against a future suggestion that he was inspired to write by someone else. If that is true, who was it and what was the state of knowledge of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry? Was he full and frank with the House on Monday in reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), who asked:

"Was the correcting letter from the Law Officers to the Secretary of State for Defence seen by the right hon. and learned Gentleman or his Department before it was sent to the Ministry of Defence?"

The reply was:

"I saw the letter after it was sent."—[*Official Report*, 13 January 1986; Vol. 89, c. 783.]

That completely ignored the other part of my right hon. Friend's question as to whether the Department had seen it.

Against that background, I have asked—I want a reply tonight because we cannot wait until tomorrow or Friday when it would normally be given—whether the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry or anyone in his Department saw the Solicitor-General's letter in draft before it was sent. All that he says in his answer is that he saw it after it was sent. Did he see a draft, did he see the material upon which the letter was based, or was he consulted about the contents of the letter before it was sent?

The purpose of my asking that is this: it is all very well for the Secretary of State during questioning to confine himself narrowly, as he did on the British Aerospace letter, to a precise answer on exactly what he did or saw at any one time. Although he ignored my right hon. Friend's invitation to reply for his Department, he was answering not only for himself, as he said earlier, but for the entire Government. It may be true that he saw the letter only after it was sent, but we know from our experience that letters are prepared in draft. On such a matter, a letter would go to No. 10, come back again and be seen by several people in several Departments, such as the Foreign Office. Although the Secretary of State may be accurate in saying that he saw the letter sent only after the event, can we be sure that he did not see the basis for the letter? In this instance, too, was he less than frank with the House?

Mr. Dalyell: Does my right hon. and learned Friend believe that it is all the work of an over-zealous civil servant? Would not any civil servant, understandably mindful of his career, be extremely careful to get political instruction before doing any such thing? Would not those exceedingly careful men at the Law Officers Department take infinite trouble in contacting the Departments concerned before they wrote any such letter?

Mr. Morris: I find it inconceivable—the House will respect my view on this, if on nothing else—that the Law Officers would have sent such a letter without consulting and obtaining the fullest possible instruction from the primary source, which is the Department concerned. In this instance, where the Solicitor-General was writing to correct another hon. Member he would have got full clearance from No. 10, too. That is my experience, and I doubt whether anyone who has served in Government would come to a contrary view. If I am wrong, I am happy to be corrected, but I want a precise answer, not another evasive answer that will cause the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to return to the House to apologise once again for a half-truth.

How did the Solicitor-General's letter come to be disclosed in part? Prima facie, such a disclosure is contrary to section 2 of the Official Secrets Act. Who would have authorised that? It would not be in the interests of the Secretary of State for Defence to do so. Indeed, he adopts a high moral tone on disclosures by civil servants or anyone else. He sends for the chief constable of the Ministry of Defence. He consults the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Solicitor-General, who then telephones the Attorney-General in the south of France, or does whatever is necessary to obtain the fullest possible clearance.

Since the Secretary of State for Defence would not have disclosed the contents of the letter, who would have done so? We are left with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry or No. 10 Downing street. Only those two parties would have an interest in disclosing the letter and, in all probability, the necessary material on which the letter was based. The Secretary of State agrees that he saw the letter after it was sent. I believe that a couple of hours elapsed before it was leaked from somewhere. Since the Prime Minister has agreed that an internal inquiry procedure has been set up, if evidence is forthcoming during that inquiry — we have had important although not always successful prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act during the past few years—what will happen to the perpetrator of the leak if he is discovered?

On Monday I asked the Solicitor-General whether, in this context, he considered equality under the law as an important principle. I found some difficulty in phrasing my question and Mr. Speaker in his wisdom eventually agreed to my asking whether other inquiries had been inhibited because of the handling of that matter. In the

[Mr. Morris]

course of his reply, the Solicitor-General assured me that in the discharge of all their functions, Law Officers exercise an independent and impartial judgment. The assurance I want tonight is whether that independent and impartial judgment will be given if, in the course of the internal inquiries, sufficient material is obtained to refer the matter to those who are responsible for prosecuting. I trust that whoever is responsible for the leak will be dealt with in the normal way—equality under the law—and that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry can claim tonight that the leak did not come either from him or from his Department. Such an assurance would lift that cloud from his head.

7.11 pm

Sir Adam Butler (Bosworth): I will not follow the points made by the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris), although I agree that he has made an important point that needs to be answered. That point, however, is a fairly narrow aspect of the problem.

I had hoped that my right hon. and hon. Friends would approach the debate with some slight trepidation as to the outcome. Any anxiety that we might have had on that score frankly disappeared when we heard the very weak attack mounted by the Leader of the Opposition. The right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) claimed that he intended to talk about the substantive aspects, the importance of high technology, procurement policy and the relationship within NATO. Instead, he dealt solely in innuendo and allegation that were unsubstantiated.

I would not be surprised if the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) is making a comeback. The right hon. Gentleman entertained us with his considerable wit on matters in which, as I shall show, he is somewhat out of date, not least concerning the factual matters about the two-way street.

I should like to refer to the exchange of letters and in particular to the recollections of what took place at that now famous meeting between the chief executive of British Aerospace and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. It does not do individual hon. Members, or the House as a whole, any good to imply, because one accepts completely what one party to the meeting says took place, that the other side is lying. I confess that frequently my recollections of meetings can, although made in good faith, be quite different in detail from those of other people who attended those meetings. In the case of the British Aerospace meeting we have the recollections of four or five people against the recollections of Sir Raymond Lygo.

I know Sir Raymond Lygo well. He is an honourable man, and he is also a wilful man. Sometimes in such circumstances people hear what they wish to hear. The leader of the Liberal party opened our eyes to that fact and drew the attention of the House to the letter from Sir Austin Pearce that used the phrase:

> "Whatever the words used were meant to convey, the message was perfectly clear."

In other words, it was not the meaning of the words that was important, but the interpretation that was put upon them. I prefer to accept that there was a misunderstanding on this matter which occurred in good faith and that in no way has my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry misled or sought to mislead the House on that issue.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) in his comments about my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), the former Secretary of State for Defence, and his departure from the Cabinet. It is a great pity that my right hon. Friend cannot continue in Government. The Cabinet and the Government need a range of views and men of different experience and outlook and one feature of the Conservative party is that we have accommodated such views. Equally, I believe that it was largely my right hon. Friend's own fault that he was forced to resign.

We do not yet know the full story and we may never know what actually happened in my right hon. Friend's mind, though we have a better understanding now than we had before. My right hon. Friend's espousal of the European consortium bid, his organising of that bid and his paternalistic approach to that matter — he talked about "my deal that should have been considered by Cabinet" — were factors in his resignation. I told my right hon. Friend that I intended to be critical of him tonight and I am sorry that he is not present. I believe that it was his over-association with that bid that caused him finally to take the step that he did. That was a great pity.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): At some stage in his speech did not my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) say that what he wanted was for the Cabinet to give a strong recommendation to the shareholders and management of Westland that they should go for a particular deal? Is that not a peculiar thing for a Conservative Cabinet to do?

Sir Adam Butler: Does my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) mean peculiar for the Cabinet or peculiar for an individual Minister? I believe that in either case that would be completely wrong.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley was piqued because the consortium's deal was not discussed after Friday 13 December by the Cabinet. Surely the party that should have discussed that was the Westland board and it did so. In the event, it would have been wiser politically, if not better, if the board had been prepared to put both options to the shareholders with a full explanation. It may be that the time pressures about which we have heard were such as to make that impossible.

My right hon. Friend has earned credit in ensuring that the European consortium bid was firmly on the table. One must ask whether his intervention was necessary. He believes that Governments must be involved when defence collaborative deals are being formulated. I have had some experience of that. My hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer) drew attention to the long time scale during which bids could have been forthcoming. Bids could have come from GEC which could have bought Westland out of its petty cash. Bids could have been forthcoming from British Aerospace and I believe that the European bid could have been put together earlier. That did not happen, and Westland was under enormous financial pressure and up against its legal responsibilities in regard to continuing trading. Faced with that reality, Westland had to press on with the one genuine possibility that presented itself.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley deserves great credit for his work in connection with defence

collaboration in Europe and I gave my right hon. Friend my full support in that matter. The European defence industry will become fully competitive only if it collaborates and will be able to compete with the Americans only if it works together and produces long production runs and if the European NATO allies work to that end.

The trading position with America is not, as the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth described it, a shambles and a virtual one-way street. A few years ago the ratio would have been 4 : 1. The proportion may have improved since I left the Government, but the position then was of the order 2 : 1. However, the position in Europe as a whole was 6 : 1 against Europe.

My first point with regard to collaboration is a qualification of the need for and importance of such collaboration within European NATO. The Americans must accept that it is in the interests of the Western Alliance that the European pillar of NATO should be strengthened. That will require considerable maturity of response and resistance to the easy pressures for protectionism which may result. That view has friends in Congress and people such as Senator Nunn have chided Europe for its weakness in that respect, but the Americans cannot have it both ways. The Alliance as a whole and the Americans' interest as a whole, internationally and in security terms, will benefit from a stronger Europe.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Following the points made by the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), does my hon. Friend agree that a successful arrangement with Sikorsky does not mean that it will automatically take over and effectively destroy the entire Westland exercise but that, on the contrary, a proper engagement with Westland through Sikorsky may enhance rather than damage the European pillar?

Sir Adam Butler: I decided to avoid, if possible, advising Westland shareholders which way to vote, so I hesitate to answer that question. As I read what Sir John Cuckney has said in print and through advertisements, I believe that he sees the consequences of the Sikorsky deal as a stronger Westland than otherwise would be the case, and there is some support for the view that a stronger Westland will make for a stronger European helicopter industry than if the collaborative arrangement on the production side had taken place.

Secondly, although the object of defence collaboration in Europe is excellent, it cannot and must not be exclusive. We have heard how much co-operation already takes place between ourselves and the Americans. That will and should continue, but it should not be exclusive. The same applies to Anglo-Canadian, Anglo-Australian and Anglo-New Zealand co-operation. European defence collaboration is perfect as an ideal, but it must not become an obsession.

Thirdly, and highly relevant to the decision by the Westland board and shareholders, collaboration will be strongest if it is based on partnerships initiated by industry and on links seen to be of mutual advantage by the companies involved and where there is industrial compatability. Partnerships imposed by Ministers and politicians run the risk of suffering the same fate as the house that was built on sand.

In response to the question half put by my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), I believe not only that Westland may be stronger in the hands of Sikorsky but that collaboration on important projects such as the EH101 and the A129 light attack helicopter will not be prejudiced if Agusta faces the situation, a matter on which there have been varying reports in the press. I believe that that collaboration will continue as planned.

With regard to criticism of the Government's handling of the case, although with hindsight certain slips would not have been made, I believe that in general the Government have behaved very properly. Having decided against the nationalisation route—it is interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition never even suggested that and had to be reminded of it as an option by one of his Left-wing friends—and having rejected the NEB approach of the Liberal party, the solution had to come from the private sector. As I have said before, as a Minister I considered very carefully the possibility of placing orders with the company, what we should buy if we were to rescue the company in that way and whether we could fill the two to four years' gap in production and thus produce the necessary cash flow to finance the new projects, but the models available to us were either not wanted or wholly unsuitable. As has been pointed out, the Army did not want the W30 even as a gift. However, we supported the company strongly in relation to overseas sales at all levels and especially in relation to India.

The role of Government as sponsor and purchaser is extremely important and extremely delicate. Government must be even handed and I believe that in this case the Government must state clearly what their procurement policy is likely to be and their views with regard to international relationships. The letter from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to Sir John Cuckney spelled that out. In my view, however, the Government cannot say to shareholders, "The national interest is this, so we want you to forgo what is in your best interests." Government cannot do that in a takeover situation and they cannot do it in this situation. It is for the board to fulfil its legal responsibility to run the company having regard to the interests of the shareholders and of the employees. My private Member's Bill imposing the obligation to have regard to the interests of employees was thrown out by the Labour Government but that requirement is now law. Boards have to run companies with that in mind and that is what the Westland board has been doing.

I cannot say whether the Westland board is right or wrong, but I believe that it has a better chance of being right than the large number of people who sit on the sidelines and comment from partial knowledge. It is paramount that the shareholders make the right decision when they eventually vote and one must be concerned that their judgment should not be clouded by the political smokescreen that has arisen about certain very important matters. One must be concerned, too, that the Opposition, especially, have regarded this as an opportunity to damage the Government but may well merely damage the prospects of the company.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Can the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry confirm or deny the report on the 7 o'clock news that it was a senior official from the Department of Trade and Industry who leaked the letter from the Law Officers' Department?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman will seek to catch my eye later in the evening.

7.29 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I commence by declaring an interest—I have shares in Westland plc. For fear that people may think that I hold such a large amount that it will sway my judgment, may I explain that, even at their present elevated price, they are worth less than £10. I bought the shares in 1976 in order to attend the annual general meetings of the company and I will be there on Friday.

If the Government are reaping the whirlwind over the Westland affair, that, frankly, is no more than they deserve. Over the past 15 months, I and other hon. Members from all parties have repeatedly warned the Government of the impending crisis at Westland helicopters. We were joined in this by the trade unions, to which I pay tribute, and the members of the work force. My right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) mentioned that in detail in his speech.

On 8 July 1985, I initiated an Adjournment debate in which I was supported by Conservative and Labour Members. We received scant reply from the Minister for Information Technology, and indeed the Prime Minister referred to this in her speech. This is not the first time that the Government have totally failed to see a major crisis in the making, despite ample warning. I understand that the Prime Minister is reported—contrary to the tone of her speech from which one would assume that Westland has occupied her every waking moment for the past five or six months—in last Sunday's newspapers as complaining at a recent Cabinet meeting that members of the Cabinet had spent three hours discussing an

"insignificant little company in the South West".

The Prime Minis .. is reported as saying:

"What is the world coming to".

The world has swiftly descended around her ears.

It will be remembered that the Prime Minister showed an equivalent disregard for warnings she had received over the apparently insignificant little islands in the south Atlantic some years ago. The word being leaked by the Government is that the judgment of the former Secretary of State for Defence can no longer be trusted. I think we are entitled to be concerned about the judgment of the Prime Minister in failing to identify the importance of these matters and to take action to prevent them from damaging British interests.

I listened with great care and with admiration to the speech of the former Secretary of State for Defence. Everyone present will remember that speech as a parliamentary occasion until their dying day. The speech was delivered with great sincerity and with considerable ability. I believe that the reasons given by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) for resignation were powerfully expressed and could not fail to find sympathy with every hon. Member who heard them. Those matters will go on rumbling.

The point at which I part company with the right hon. Member for Henley is over some of the details that he provided of his part in the Westland affair. I must say that I was disappointed that, throughout his speech, although I made interventions to him on three occasions——

Mr. Gerald Howarth: And I did.

Mr. Ashdown —and although he accepted interventions from all other places in the House, he refused, for reasons of time. I note now that he is not in his place to hear what I have to say as the constituency Member. I find that quite remarkable. One or two people will draw the conclusion from this that some of the facts which the right hon. Gentleman related concerning Westland are shaky, to say the least.

May I put the record straight concerning the view of Yeovil on the Westland affair? Westland first approached the former Secretary of State for Defence in October 1984 — not, as the right hon. Gentleman said, last year. Westland mentioned the possibility of collaboration with the Europeans, but the right hon. Gentleman declined to show any interest. After Sir John Cuckney took over the company in July, he also approached the right hon. Gentleman about the company's problems. He was told that Westland was a private firm which should seek a private solution to its problems.

I compare this to the noble sentiments that were stated by the right hon. Gentleman in his speech. There was no suggestion at that time of a desire to intervene to help the company. In fact, the right hon. Gentleman candidly admitted in his speech that one of his suggestions was that the company should not survive at all but pass into receivership. Westland also approached members of the consortium which the former Secretary of State for Defence claims to have set up — in his speech he referred to "my deal"—all of whom, in the summer and autumn of last year, turned their backs on Westland.

GEC and British Aerospace said that they were not interested and privately suggested that they would welcome the company going into receivership so that they could pick up the pieces. The chairman of British Aerospace is even reported to have said that the production line for the new Anglo-Italian helicopter, the EH101, the world-beater that Westland was relying on, should be removed from Yeovil and taken to Brough. How is that for asset stripping? Then the role of those who now seem so eager to join Westland was that of undertaker, not partner. The right hon. Gentleman did absolutely nothing to stop them.

Mr. Stephen Ross: Will my hon. Friend consider what would have happened to Westland's work force of 1,500 on the Isle of Wight if the company had gone into receivership? Would any European or British company be willing to pick up the pieces of Westland Aerospace in the Isle of Wight?

Mr. Ashdown: Indeed not. My hon. Friend has made this point powerfully and capably, and I respect him for having done so.

Westland then approached European aerospace firms for assistance. Again, in every case, they were shown the door. With over-capacity in Europe, all the continental manufacturers, each of which would have been in a similar position to Westland were it not for nationalisation, considered that the easiest way to solve over-capacity was to see Westland go under. This has privately been the primary commercial aim of Aerospatiale for many years. The House is entitled to know, now that European collaboration is so important, why they were not interested six months ago.

Mr. Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman explain whether he has been entirely consistent — he has berated

everyone else in Europe and in this House—in his own attitude to Westland, its shareholders and its employees from the beginning?

Mr. Ashdown: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention, but for reasons of time this is the last one that I shall accept. I shall come to his point later.

It was only when Westland had been shown the door by everyone else that it turned to Sikorsky. Let me disabuse the House of some of the propaganda that has been put about concerning Sikorsky. Sikorsky is not, as it has been carefully portrayed, an American bloodsucker waiting to feed off a British firm. That may suit Labour party mythology, but it is at varience with the facts. Sikorsky has been Westland's old and reliable partner for more than 38 years. People in Yeovil trust Sikorsky. The relationship which has stretched over a generation has been warm, even-handed and profitable for both sides. That is why, at a recent meeting, when the two offers were put to the work force, Westland workers voted 1,500 to one in favour of Sikorsky.

I find it odd to hear from the Labour party that somehow or other the workers are being hoodwinked and duped. What a demeaning view of the work force!

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Who said that?

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby) *rose*——

Mr. Ashdown: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman, but for reasons of time I will not give way. He may study the record tomorrow and he will see that the record backs me up.

The vast majority of the small shareholders, in common with the work force, support this deal. It is only the large financial institutions of the City of London which are opposed. It is interesting to note that it is an opinion which the Labour party supports. The shareholders and the work force support this deal because they know that every successful helicopter that Westland has built since the war, with the exception of the Lynx helicopter, has been built under licence from a Sikorsky design. That is precisely what is proposed.

Far from merely resembling a United States kit, Westland has added its expertise to Sikorsky aircraft to make them world beaters. We have used the aircraft and even Sikorsky admits that they are better than its own. They can sell in places where Sikorsky cannot sell.

I am sorry to say that, by contrast, Westland's relationship with Aerospatiale has been very different. It has been strained, difficult and infected with perfidy. Only when it became apparent that, because of interest shown by Sikorsky, Westland would not go to the receiver, as many hoped, the ex-Secretary of State for Defence and his present partners decided to act.

A report in today's *Financial Times* shows that the ex-Secretary of State's chief official, Sir Clive Whitmore, did not even approach British Aerospace or GEC until a mere seven weeks ago in late November. It is no surprise that we believe that the ex-Secretary of State's consortium is hastily cobbled together and ill-founded. Nor is it without significance that each member of the consortium, which the ex-Secretary of State is lobbying so hard to force down Westland's throat, a few short months ago expressed their preference that the company should go into receivership. Is it any wonder that a constituent recently told me that they feel that they are being offered a poisoned cup from the hand of the poisoner himself?

The right hon. Member for Henley expressed the view, which also is supported by the Labour party, that Sikorsky is about to own Westlands. Quite the contrary—it will own less than 20 per cent. In terms of finance and work, there is little to chose between the two offers. A recent parliamentary answer to me revealed that the six Sea Kings which are so tantalisingly dangled before Westland's eyes by the ex-Secretary of State if his consortium's proposals are accepted will come to Westland whichever offer it chooses. That offer reduces by 300,000 hours the work offered by the European consortium.

Even if the offers were equal in quantity, they are not equal in quality. Contrary to the propaganda that is being put about, the Sikorsky-Fiat offer gives more high technology, not less, and provides work in the late 1980s when Westland needs it, not in the early 1990s when it does not. It offers as a partner a firm that Westland has worked with for 37 years, not those who so recently said that they would like the firm to go into the hands of the receiver.

Perhaps most important of all is the fact that the offer gives Westland two firms to deal with rather than five and one new director on the board, not four. The ex-Secretary of State's proposals would mean Westland having three representatives of foreign Governments because every other European manufacturer is nationalised. It would put on Westland's board directors who represent its chief competitors. Westland is competing against the French in India. It is not difficult to imagine what the role of the Aerospatiale director on the Westland board would be.

I am a fervent supporter of European collaboration, especially in defence matters. I have long said that, all other things being equal, I would prefer a European deal. I hope that that answers the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash). Throughout, I have said that I would keep an open mind, that I thought that Sikorsky had the edge but that I would wait and see what happened. Only last week when matters were finalised did I come down in favour of Sikorsky. All other things being equal, I should have preferred a European deal, but all other things were not equal.

It would be ludicrous to ask Westland to accept any deal simply because it has "Europe" stamped on the outside. Europe is a good thing, but not if the price is increasing the risk to a great firm that has served Britain's defence interests magnificently and to thousands of jobs. The paradox is that the ex-Secretary of State for Defence has hastily cobbled together an inadequately founded deal and has thus damaged the very cause that he would espouse — European collaboration. The ex-Secretary of State claims to have espoused that cause as a matter of principle. He told us that all that he has done has been done as a matter of principle. I have to tell him that we in Yeovil see things somewhat differently. We cannot understand how he can make a principle out of a firm that he was prepared to see go into the hands of the receiver only a few months ago. We do not understand how the man who insists on giving £10 billion to the United States for Trident without British industry getting so much as a look-in should now be concerned about the continuation of a 38-year-old liaison that has profited Britain considerably. We are bewildered that the person who brought cruise missiles to Britain without giving the British people a say in their

[Mr. Ashdown]

firing should now be worried about the United States taking over the country. We cannot see how the person who signed a star wars deal with the American President only a few weeks ago to act as a siphon for Britain's real high technology should now be worried about technology leakage from Westland. The ex-Secretary of State might claim all this as a matter of principle, but we see things differently.

It is essential that Westland's problems be resolved as quickly as possible. Further delay must mean greater risk to it. The management must be allowed to get back to running the company in these delicate circumstances and those who work there must be able to get back to their jobs. The Government must ultimately recognise that, because of their ineptitude — the ex-Secretary of State plays a part in this — the future of a great company that has served Britain magnificently and the security of thousands of jobs and the prosperity of my area is now in the hands of manipulators in the City of London and politicians whose concerns include their reputations rather than exclusively what is good for Westland.

When this ridiculous farrago, this circus, has moved on, and Westland is merely a mark in the political history books, we shall have to get on with the job of earning our living and serving Britain's defence interests by making the best helicopters. We will expect the Government to provide the support that they have so signally failed to provide throughout this sorry saga.

7.47 pm

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): The House knows that I share a deep interest in the employees of Westland helicopters — 1,400 of them work in my constituency. The next biggest employer employs half that number. The company's future is therefore a matter of great concern to me and my constituents. The wealth that Westland puts into Weston-super-Mare is crucial to its economy.

I also want to express the anxiety that is felt by my constituents and those of the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). I am not convinced that some of that anxiety is as serious as is made out by some union leaders for their own purposes. In July, it looked as though the company was going into receivership, but it now has a good hand with two bids on the table.

The hon. Member for Yeovil is right to draw attention to why the management and work force feel comfortable with Sikorsky. As engineers, they have had a very good relationship with the company. They have found its designs good, although improvable, for a long time. With Aerospatiale, however, Westland has experienced the difficulties that were also experienced in the joint project to build Concorde, with three helicopters. The French are not easy people to deal with and their method of doing business is alien to our people. In both cases, however, substantial——

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): Concorde.

Mr. Wiggin: I remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman that I came to the House when Concorde was being built. There was a daily flight of engineers and technicians between Filton and Toulouse to deal with that project. The stories about differences of opinion were multitude. I do not want to exaggerate that; I simply make the point to explain the lack of enthusiasm within Westland for a European consortium.

In every conversation that I have with my constituents on the subject, the importance of urgency is raised. They believe that for peace of mind, for the credibility of the company and, very importantly, for the planning of the future work promised by both consortia there should be an urgent decision to resolve uncertainty. Nothing is as unsettling as uncertainty.

How did we get into this mess? As early as 1982, it was clear that there was a gap in the military procurement of helicopters by the Ministry of Defence from Westland. In an open and discussed manoeuvre, Westland went into the civilian market just before the over-capacity of helicopter production worldwide and the collapse in the oil price led to a catastrophic diminution in the market. I do not exempt the unions from blame. The productivity of Westland factories has not been as good as it should have been. Indeed, in Weston-super-Mare there was a disastrous strike not so many months ago.

Everyone, including the Government, has to accept some of the blame. The Government made a serious misjudgment in not appreciating the deep national interest that people have in the country's single helicopter manufacturer. Small though the company may be, it has managed to run up large liabilities. The concept that receivership would in some way solve the problems of Westland is mind-boggling. I was sorry to hear my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State say that he seriously considered that option. It would have been damaging to the name of Westland. It took Rolls-Royce years to recover from what happened in 1972. It was ridiculous to contemplate that option for Westland.

Sir John Cuckney was told by the Government to solve his own problems. When he came back with Sikorsky in tow, the European helicopter manufacturers took fright. It was that more than anything else that enabled the European consortium to be put together.

I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) resigned from the Ministry of Defence. I had the privilege of working for him for a few weeks. I believe that he started to breach many of the impenetrable barriers that had been left by Secretary of State after Secretary of State. The creation of a central staff, which I considered to be one of the greatest achievements of his period of office, will be to the benefit of that Department for many years.

The industrial might of the United States leads one inevitably to the conclusion that any item of armaments can be bought more cheaply across the Atlantic. I remember seeing more Chinooks on one airfield than we have in the whole Royal Air Force. I remember seeing on one airfield a line-up of fighters that contained twice as many as we have in our Air Force. It is such capacity that makes every item, from a simple bullet to the most sophisticated aircraft, cheaper across the Atlantic. That is what the Ministry of Defence must resist. I hope my hon. Friend the Minister of State is listening, because he and I have recently fallen out on the very point of price and whether it is better to buy cheaply across the Atlantic or to support our own industry.

On the other hand, one has to accept that, if the united states of Europe, which is what I believed I was voting for when I supported our entry into the EEC, is to mean anything, it must be able to produce helicopters. So the

concept of an international consortium based within Europe to manufacture helicopters must be right. The Falklands war taught us many lessons. We must have within the shores of the United Kingdom basic indigenous suppliers of armaments materials. Could we have obtained the very quick assistance that was given at Yeovil and Weston-super-Mare during the Falklands war if parts had had to come from the United States? Would the United States have felt able politically to assist us in that unforeseen circumstance? Whatever happens, and in whatever partnership, we must maintain our capacity within the United Kingdom.

The basic problem is that we do not have enough helicopters in our armed forces. The sooner we tackle that serious problem the sooner we will get over the difficulty that is facing us today. The United States has 14 helicopters per 1,000 men in the armed services; the United Kingdom has 2·7. The United States has 800 helicopters per division; we have 180.

When I was in the Ministry of Defence, I found it difficult as a layman to persuade the military to consider the movement of men and materials by helicopter. There are 100 good reasons why it cannot be done and the military knew them all. There are 1,000 reasons why it can be done, and they did not know one of them. If a senior military officer is hung up on the movement of infantry in armoured vehicles, he will not allow his staff to argue to the contrary. I should remind the House that the Ministry of Defence is spending just under £500 million on the MCV80. I have long held the view that at least half that money should have gone into helicopters, not for constituency reasons, but because that is how modern battles will be fought. That is what the Americans found in Vietnam and what we found in the Falklands. It will be the same if we are unfortunate enough to be engaged in a war in future.

I am sad that the affairs of Westland have caused such division within the ranks of the Cabinet. One of the greatest evils that affect Government today is the propensity for leakage of documents. How many documents have been leaked already in this unfortunate saga? It is impossible to run a Government or a business unless proper secrecy and confidentiality are observed. When documents are leaked indiscriminately or deliberately there is blood on the carpet and damage all round.

I hope that within the next few days the Government will put their mind to drawing this unhappy affair to a conclusion. If the European consortium means business, it can for a modest sum make a bid for the company and buy out existing interests. If it does not mean business, let is say so and let the Americans get on with it. Between them, let the matter be resolved as soon as possible.

7.58 pm

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton (Fife, Central): Anyone who attended the early part of the debate must have noticed the striking contrast between the narrow, low-key speech of the Prime Minister and the statesmanlike speeches of the ex-Secretary of State for Defence and of my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan). They both saw the great danger which exists not only for this country but for Europe if there is American domination in defence and in the commercial sphere. It is not anti-American, as the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asserted, to say that we are entitled to defend our national interests as we see them as strongly as the Americans defend theirs.

By any standards, this has been a devastating week in parliamentary politics. It has been strewn with nuggets of gold for students of the British constitution. It has echoed with accusations from all sides of bad faith, retractions, character assassination, half-truths and downright lies. As if that were not enough, there has been, as the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) reminded us, a veritable flood of infringements of that sick joke, the Official Secrets Act 1911, by a succession of Ministers, ex-Ministers and others.

In all this furore it seems that the least important matter at issue is the future of Westland. I have no reason for going into that and, indeed, I am not capable of making an educated assessment of the company's position. However, that is rather disturbing, or should be, for a Government who claim to be patriotic. A decision is being made by the unseemly scramble of unknown and faceless men and women for shares in the City. Does anyone really think that that scramble is being motivated by a defence of the national interest? Is it merely an example of squalid greed that is motivating those concerned?

A Conservative Member said yesterday that, if a vital defence concern is implicated, the Government cannot stand back and say, "Leave this to a group of shareholders of whatever size the company might be." Whatever the future of Westland, and long after that is decided, the political and constitutional consequences will be enduring and dramatic, not least for the future of the Prime Minister.

The right hon. Lady's speech this afternoon was deliberately low-key and irrelevant to the issues that we are debating. She, above all Ministers and ex-Ministers, comes out of the shambles with the most egg on her face. From the outset, her fumbling and deviousness have allowed a relatively minor pimple to grow into an angry and ugly boil, which finally burst with the Cabinet walkout last Thursday of her Secretary of State for Defence.

The former Secretary of State for Defence was clearly fed up. The Cabinet meeting last Thursday was the climax of a general disillusionment with the way in which the Prime Minister runs the Government. Since 1979, the right hon. Lady has shown a ruthless penchant for kicking out of office a gaggle of Ministers who have dared to disagree with her. Never until now has she had one who has had the guts and the courage to walk out on her. That is the crux of the constitutional issue that is now before the House.

Unlike the rest, the right hon. Gentleman does not intend to go quietly. We shall encourage him to follow the course on which he has embarked. The right hon. Gentleman has gone with an extremely big bang. My right hon. and hon. Friends and I do not regard him as any sort of martyr, but having listened to him this afternoon and to the Prime Minister, any objective observer and listener must be convinced that he was telling the truth rather than the Prime Minister.

Almost immediately after the right hon. Gentleman had walked out of the Cabinet meeting, he became the villain of the piece. He had been the favourite of Tory party conferences and the favourite within the Cabinet. He was the favourite at the 1983 general election to attack the CND. Immediately after he walked out, there was initiated a carefully orchestrated process of character assassination by No. 10. That was not initiated by the Prime Minister.

[Mr. Willie W. Hamilton]

The right hon. Lady delegated the task to other Ministers who are prepared to tow the line, not least her mincing lackey, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. By God, what a pathetic figure he is! Most of the charges that he made have been renounced by successive Ministers, including the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary, the chairman of the Tory party, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Law Officers and various loud-trumpeting Tory Back Benchers. Over the past week liars and dissemblers have been strewn around like dossers at midnight underneath Waterloo bridge.

The Government, who presume to be an Administration of law and order, have engaged in more infringements of the Official Secrets Act in the past week than have taken place previously over the past decade. The former Secretary of State for Defence may be included. There is the Solicitor-General and a person un-named, and my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) probably has the name of that person by now. The list includes the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. I wonder how many prosecutions will result as a direct consequence of the infringements.

We know that Mr. Ponting and Sarah Tisdall were prosecuted, but we shall see whether that is the fate of the Solicitor-General, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and of the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). I forecast that there will not be one prosecution as a direct result of the revelations. The unvarnished truth of this squalid story must be exposed in the national interest. I hope that the Government will give unequivocal undertakings that all papers will be available to any committee which seeks to investigate this matter and that all Ministers will give an unequivocal undertaking that they will give oral evidence to any such committee. If they are searchers after the truth, as they try to convince us they are, nothing less will suffice.

When the future of Westland is decided, whichever way it goes—I hope that it goes the European way—the constitutional issues will remain. They will plague the Government until the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, is disclosed.

8.7 pm

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): After today's debate, there may be as many different views on why my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), the former Secretary of State for Defence, resigned as there are Members who heard him speak this afternoon. I have my own opinion, for what it is worth, and I shall share it with the House. To be candid, I think that my right hon. Friend was rumbled. I found his stewardship of the Ministry of Defence deficient in terms of a helicopter strategy. Many of us were warning the Ministry for many a long month of that deficiency. The aviation committee, of which I was the then chairman, visited Westland at Yeovil in November 1984, and ever since that date it was warning the Ministry, and especially my right hon. Friend, that something urgent had to be done about Westland if the company was to be saved.

My right hon. Friend rationalised his resignation. He did so with the invocation of grandiose ideas about the European-American relationship, the two-way, or, as he would describe it, the one-way street, and the difficulty which our manufacturers face in selling their products into the American market. As so often with my right hon. Friend, he overstated his case. He suggested, for example, that it was virtually impossible to sell into the American market and yet Normalair Garrett, which is an important part of Westland, has a significant system in the Rockwell B1 supersonic bomber. It has another system on the F18 fighter aircraft. Normalair Garrett is a 50-50 company, half Garrett and half Westland, half American and half British. So the fact that that section of Westland has been in part American has in no way detracted—rather the contrary—from its ability to sell into the American market.

Furthermore, one of the great difficulties that Aerospatiale, the big white hope of my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence, has faced in selling its products into the United States has been its lack of an American partner to assist it in that process. One of the causes of the substantial losses incurred by Aerospatiale in its helicopter division has been its failure to sell helicopters, particularly the Dauphin, into the United States of America.

It is my belief that the relationship with Sikorsky, if endorsed by the shareholders on Friday, will enable the Westland company to sell the EH101 into the United States market. It would not have such a good chance of doing so were the Sikorsky-Fiat rescue package to be turned down. I say that because Sikorsky does not have an aeroplane in the 15-tonne class, the EH101 class, so it looks to the acquisition of the possibility of helping to sell the EH101 in the USA as something significant.

My right hon. Friend also adduced all sorts of grandiose arguments about burden-sharing. Here, too, his arguments were deficient because if burden-sharing means anything to me—and I wrote a paper for the Western European Union on this subject only two years ago—it means an equitable sharing of the financial burdens of defence.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): The hon. Member is quite right to remind the House that he wrote a report for the WEU two years ago, but he will recall that on 5 December he presented a report on the European fighter aircraft. It seems to me—and the hon. Member will recall that I spoke in the debate and supported his paper, which also had the support of Opposition Members—that the basis of his argument as recently as last month was that we had to co-operate in Europe, as with the European fighter aircraft that he has so consistently supported.

Mr. Wilkinson: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who leads the Labour delegation with distinction, but I shall show him that there is no mutual incompatability between these two propositions. If burden-sharing is to mean anything, we have to put our money behind our strong sentiments in favour of the Alliance, and this my right hon. Friend was signally unable to do. If he had been able to put money forward for some short-term helicopter procurement, while a longer-term rescue package was put into place, the position of the Westland company would not have become so critical.

In particular, he could have ordered some more commando versions of Sea King for the Royal Marines to replace their existing Wessex; he could have ordered more Sea Kings to replace the existing Wessex for the Royal Air Force for air-sea rescue; he could have retained the Wessex thus freed for service with the Royal Auxiliary Air Force in the light support role; he could have given a clear

confirmation that the Royal Navy would actually order the EH101—an order has not yet been placed for that aeroplane. To have done so would perhaps have facilitated borrowing from the banks for Westland.

He could also have concerted a requirement with the Italian army for the mark 2 version of the Agusta 129. This he failed to do. Last, but not least, the Royal Navy could have procured the hovercraft, if only in an experimental role, for mine-hunting. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) laughs, but it has considerable merit for minesweeping in inshore waters.

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): I do not dispute what my hon. Friend says because he speaks from a knowledge of these things, but I would like to ask him whether finance might not have been a difficulty for the Ministry of Defence when it came to ordering a large increase in its hardware at a time when the Treasury was bearing down heavily on its budget.

Mr. Wilkinson: It certainly was a difficulty but the difficulty at that stage was not a lack of funding because of the Treasury. That will happen. The former Secretary of State for Defence continues to insist that there will be no need for a defence review when we know that there will have to be a defence review because of the relative-price effect, whereby the cost of weapons goes up faster than inflation.

The point that I would like to make is that the overspending on the Nimrod mark 3 programme was so severe that it impinged adversely on the budget for the procurement of aircraft. This was the main reason for the inability of the services to acquire helicopters and, above all, the inability of the services to fulfil air staff target 404 for a light support helicopter to be flown by the Royal Air Force in support of the Army.

The Army has identified the need for such an aeroplane since the early 1970s. The actual air staff target was not written until 1978. The target for a 13-seat aeroplane was written round the Black Hawk because at that time it was the only aeroplane that could fulfil the role because the military version of, the W30, was not developed. Yet, because of the funding problems that I have mentioned, AST 404 fell by the wayside—and more is the pity as far as Westland is concerned.

I believe that this judgment is inherently correct, that there will be a need for such an aeroplane and that this need of our armed forces will have to be fulfilled.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Wilkinson: No, I am trying to reply to the hon. Gentleman. He referred to my report on the European fighter aircraft. I was going on to say that the former Secretary of State for Defence, was wrong to suggest that Government should always lead the collaborative process and that, unless that happened, collaboration was bound to fail. There are many instances where successful collaboration is industry-led. The hon. Gentleman will remember the 1981 seminar in Lancaster house, under the auspices of the WEU, on aeronautical consortia in Europe, for which I was general rapporteur. There was the STAR communications satellite consortium, the MESH consortium in space business, the Euromissile Dynamics Group. These consortia, industry-based, prove that in many instances there are good industrial grounds for collaboration. As my right hon. Friend the former Minister of State for Defence Procurement, the Member for Bosworth (Sir A. Butler), said in an excellent speech, from all his experience that, in his judgment of Government, is the case.

Dr. Hampson *rose*——

Mr. Wilkinson: May I please finish the argument? I think that my hon. Friend has only just come in and I am trying to make an important point.

My right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence tried throughout the summer to reconcile the irreconcilable by trying to get the French into the European fighter aircraft project. That we all knew to be impossible because there were essentially two requirements. The French air force requirement, which is optimised for air-to-ground, is different from that of the other four air forces, which is essentially optimised for the air-to-air role. Nevertheless, my right hon. Friend insisted on spending time and nervous energy on this problem. Eventually the Germans called the French bluff, the Luftwaffe insisted that its operational requirements must be met in full. To his credit, the German Defence Minister, Manfred Wörner, who is a good friend of mine, stuck by the German air staff's decision and the former Secretary of State for Defence had to accept the reality.

Dr. Hampson: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Wilkinson: No. Please let me finish my sentence.

The other side to this was that so much time had been expended over EFA on the part of the former Secretary of State for Defence, when it was quite clear that the PANAVIA structure was the right one and should be built upon, that he failed to spend sufficient time on the problems of Westland.

Dr. Hampson: Will my hon. Friend give way, because this is a monstrous, grotesque distortion of the truth?

Mr. Wilkinson: I give way.

Dr. Hampson: My hon. Friend well knows that my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence spent all that time convincing all the Europeans of his and this country's total commitment to European collaboration. That was fundamental to having the Germans on our side so that they would not go with the French. I was a party to the lobbying efforts by officers of the Committee. As my hon. Friend well knows, we were trying to get the Ministry of Defence to buy the W30 rather than this extraordinary package, which my hon. Friend has now conceived out of his own expertise. He knows full well that the problems faced in getting the air staff target accepted had nothing to do with my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence. There were long-standing problems concerning the financing of, for example, Nimrod and the Army's attitude which preceded the period in office of my right hon. Friend, for whom my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) used to work.

Mr. Wilkinson: I regret allowing that intemperate intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West. I worked with the project management team on the prototype of the Jaguar. I have been associated with the Tornado. I believe that European industries have

[Mr. Wilkinson]

worked well together for a much longer period than my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West has had experience in these matters. I shall leave it at that.

The trouble is that my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence did not put concrete proposals on how work would be provided to fill the hole in Westland's order book. All the projects in the so-called European package are paper aeroplanes for the 1990s. My right hon. Friend said that somehow we shall "merge" —whatever that means—the PAH2 of the French and Germans with the Agusta 129 of the Italians. The general staffs of the French and Germans have found it hard enough to concert their requirements around that single aeroplane. The British and the Italian armies have not agreed the specification of the joint aeroplane, so I do not know how that merger will take place. It does not provide work for Westland. The NH90 is also a paper aeroplane, in which five partners are involved. It is a nine-tonne aircraft with a configuration similar to that of the Black Hawk. It will come into service in the late 1990s. The Black Hawk is available and, with the new Franco-British RTM322 engine, which will operate shortly, its lift capability will be augmented by 25 per cent. That cost-effective option for our armed forces will sell exceedingly well on export markets, for which Westland's sale territories have already been designated. The EH101 is not incompatible with the existing Sikorsky programmes.

I regret to admit that I think that my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence was rumbled. It was only when Sir John Cuckney had a rescue package in place that Mr. Levene, the national armaments director, was told to meet his European counterparts——

Dr. Hampson: It was not Levene. My hon. Friend has an obsession with Levene.

Mr. Wilkinson: I do not have an obsession with Mr. Levene. That was when Mr. Levene was told to come up with an alternative strategy. That strategy does not provide the work needed. If implemented, it will be detrimental to the competition needed in the defence procurement business to secure the most cost-effective equipment for our armed forces.

8.23 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Clearly, if there had been no interest in the two groups that have bid for Westland, the Government would have been quite willing to let Westland go to the wall. The Prime Minister made that position clear this afternoon. That point should not be overlooked by the work force in Yeovil or those employed by other firms dependent upon Westland. Many other firms—not least in the west midlands—have collapsed because of Government policy during the past six years.

Like my colleagues, I listened with much interest to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) when he spoke of the need for a substantial industrial base in Britain. How right he was. That industrial base has been constantly undermined and eroded by the policies of the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman was a member. He must take some responsibility for what has been happening in industry since 1979.

As for the exchange of letters between the chairman of British Aerospace and the Prime Minister, one can see that there is a considerable difference between the accounts of the meeting held on 8 January. The only point on which the two sides seem to have agreed was that there was a meeting on that date. This matter must be pursued.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 are the crucial points in the chairman's letter to the Prime Minister referring to the meeting on Wednesday with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. On 13 January the Press Association's news agency quoted a source close to the board, who said:

"I was astonished to receive a phone call on Wednesday night from an equally astonished and somewhat shaken chief executive saying that he had been subjected to a naked threat in Mr. Brittan's office."

He said that he

"felt so strongly about the manner in which the threat had been made that he felt he had to report it to his board that night."

I wish to ask this question, especially because the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is in his place—why should the chief executive of British Aerospace say that he was told by the Secretary of State that the company's actions were not in the national interest and that it should withdraw from the European consortium unless that were true? What would be the chief executive's motives in going to his chairman and making up a story? Does the chief executive bear a grudge, or is he conducting a vendetta against the Secretary of State? Is it suggested that the chief executive is in the pocket or the pay of the right hon. Member for Henley?

If the chief executive of BAe has told the truth, as outlined in the letter from the chairman to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has clearly not been doing so. One thing is certain—both cannot be right. The accounts differ substantially. We must therefore conclude that, if the chief executive is right, the Secretary of State has not been telling the House the truth.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry must realise that this matter will not go away. Despite the forthcoming vote, which obviously will show a substantial Government majority, most of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's colleagues believe that he should go.

The London Standard tonight quotes the hon. Member for Shipley (Mr. Fox), stating:

"Mr. Marcus Fox, the deputy chairman of the powerful 1922 Committee . . . declared: 'The skids are under Leon.'"

The article continued:

"Mr. Fox said that Mr. Brittan's job was now in serious jeopardy. And he added: 'What we have to get clear is that there are not two standards, one for one Cabinet Minister and another for another.'"

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Norman Lamont): Where is the relevance in this?

Mr. Winnick: The hon. Gentleman should know the relevance of this—we do not believe the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. We believe, as do the majority of Tory Members, that the right hon. and learned Gentleman should, in duty and honour, resign from his position.

I also want to comment about the way in which the Prime Minister goes about her job. In an effective speech my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) spoke about that. What has emerged from all that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Henley said when he resigned from his position confirms the strong impression of what *The Economist* last week described as the Prime Minister's "increasingly catankerous leadership". That journal also said,

"Her treatment of senior colleagues has landed her with a needless load of trouble."

It is interesting to note that since the Prime Minister first formed her Administration in 1979, 14 members of the Cabinet have been dismissed, and now the right hon. Member for Henley has resigned. We should not be surprised at that style, because before she went to Downing street the right hon. Lady publicly and frankly stated that if she became Prime Minister she would have no time in the Cabinet for arguments. That is one election promise she has undoubtedly kept.

Cabinet Ministers who hold or have held different views from hers—and there were quite a number of them—were simply removed from office. In the main what the right hon. Lady wanted was a Cabinet of people who were not willing to stand up to her or to argue with her. What we now have is a Cabinet of such people, with the exception of the Secretary of State for Energy who once a year is allowed to make a speech, usually out of London, showing how wet he remains. On the basis that he makes such a speech only once a year, he is allowed to remain in the Cabinet. I am afraid that the rest of the members of the Cabinet know well that if they were to speak out or argue with the right hon. Lady or insist on matters in the way that the right hon. Member for Henley has done, they would be dismissed.

An increasing number of people realise the right hon. Lady's domineering and intolerant attitude and deeply resent it. What we have learnt from the right hon. Member for Henley confirms our strong impression about what has been going on in the Cabinet in the past six years. The attitude of the British people in resenting the Prime Minister's style, attitude and domineering ways will shortly be shown in Fulham and certainly at the next general election.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the next speaker, I should say that I understand that the Front Benches would like to commence the winding-up speeches at 9 o'clock. A large number of hon. Members still wish to take part in the debate.

8.33 pm

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): Before this debate began, I nursed the fear that there was a danger that Westland might become almost incidental to the debate. Fortunately, that has not generally been the case. The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) rather fanned the flames of my suspicion once again. At the heart of this debate is the survival of Westland and that must be our first priority. We are concerned with Westland, its expertise and its skilled work force because we should have a helicopter manufacturing capability in this country.

A long-term interest has to be faced as well. The short-term survival of Westland is not the only issue, but surely it is one of the dominant thoughts in our minds at present. As my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) reminded us, it has been a worry for some time. I do not wish to go back into the past as he chose to do, because almost a whole evening could be devoted to what happened in the past. We should address ourselves to the present situation and look at it from the point where the Government became sufficiently worried about what was happening to Westland that they galvanised themselves and decided that they were going to try to ensure that a choice was placed before the shareholders.

It would be churlish of the House not to recognise the efforts of the Government in that respect. I hope that I am not delving into controversy if I say that the Government appeared united in their view that the shareholders should be the final determiners of what was to happen. In my mind, it follows that if the shareholders were to be placed in that situation, some of them at least might find it relevant to think about exactly what view the Government might have about the future of our helicopter capability. The shareholders might have wanted some guidance on the national interest. I do not believe that they could have been left to guess what the national interest might be and they could only look to the Government for some clue about that.

The national interest is not an easy thing to determine. As Sir Raymond Lygo made clear in his conversation with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry—I am reading from the authorised version—that point was discussed between them. It seems mildly surprising that the Government did not have a more positive view which looked beyond the mere immediate survival of Westland, vital though that is. It seems that there was a defence aspect as to whether or not Westland survived, and in partnership with whom it survived. There might be an aerospace aspect to the matter, bearing in mind our commitment and involvement in developing collaborative ventures in Europe with fixed-wing aeroplanes. We might have a parallel interest in helicopters.

It is certainly inconceivable that the Government do not have a view about whether what happened to Westland would have an effect upon our aerospace dealings, because it is clear from the Civil Service accounts of my right hon. Friend's meeting with Sir Raymond Lygo that the Government are greatly concerned about what our aerospace export potential should be.

Then there is the European aspect. I make no apology to the House for expressing my enthusiasm for collaborative deals with Europe. Where possible, this is a right and necessary priority for the United Kingdom. I do not want to say anything which will impede the rescue of Westland and I am certainly not in any sense anti-American. There is a great deal of aerospace trade traffic between the United States and Europe and that is right and proper.

The British aerospace industry should not have just one single pattern of involvement. It is healthy for customers, be they Governments or private companies throughout the world, that there should be more than one major supplier in the aerospace business. It is healthier for the competitive environment if there can be at least two major players in the aerospace game. I hope that we can get within Europe some counterweight to the American aerospace industry. That hope falls a long way short of obsession, the term used by my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Sir A. Butler).

It is a heavy responsibility for anyone speaking in the debate to try to guess what the Westland board in this anxious time will decide to do. It is easy to point the finger of scorn at either of the deals on offer. One can make fun of what Sikorsky might wish to do in future when it has its grip tightened upon Westland. It is equally possible to make fun of Aerospatiale and say that it too is hoping that in the end there will be damage to Britain. We are trying to pursue collaborative deals in Europe in the aerospace

[Mr. Alan Haselhurst]

business with fixed-wing aircraft, and when we are doing that it does not sit too easily to make snide remarks about our partners in those enterprises.

The vehemence of the Westland board against the European consortium has to be taken as significant, even if at the same time it constitutes a most singular aspect of this whole affair. I am worried that there is now a tainted atmosphere which might yet have a damaging effect on Britain's overall position in future aerospace business. I hope that that is not so. At the end of the day we can only try to determine what we believe Britain's national interest to be. Each of us in this House can only make his own interpretation of that, but blending short and long-term considerations it seems to be a pity that the opportunity to try to take one closer step towards integration of the European aerospace interests has not yet been grasped. I hope that we shall not rue that day.

8.39 pm

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): The hon. Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) said that at the heart of this debate was the future of Westland. Opposition Members are truly committed to the future of Westland, but at the heart of this debate is the motion and the amendment. The motion speaks about the need to secure a truthful record of what has transpired. To some extent, the debate has been inevitably dominated by the speech of the Prime Minister in attempting to answer the serious allegations made by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) in his resignation statement and also the further serious allegations made by the right hon. Gentleman.

I wish to concentrate on the role of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, because he is still a member of the Government. There are two matters to which I wish to refer. The first is what he said, on behalf of the Government, to British Aerospace. When that point was raised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), the Secretary of State replied:

> "Let me make it clear that it is untrue to say that in the course of the meeting I made any suggestion that British Aerospace should withdraw from the European consortium or that its participation was contrary to the national interest."

When I put it to him that the House was not satisfied with his reply, he said:

> "The account that I have given of the meeting is accurate. I do not think that to warn people of the consequences of pursuing matters in a particular way, which they had accepted, and of which they had had word from their subsidiary—I am not accusing a particular person, but certain things had been said involving anti-Americanism which were likely to damage their interests—is the same as expressing a preference for the deal." —*[Official Report,* 13 January 1986; Vol. 89, c. 782-5.]

The Secretary of State is directly refuted by the letter which Sir Austin Pearce sent to the Prime Minister on behalf of British Aerospace. Sir Austin Pearce says that the Secretary of State said

"that the decision should be left to the shareholders alone".

He also said

"that what we were doing was not in the National Interest"

and

"that we should withdraw".

I trust that, even if the Opposition's motion is not carried tonight, the Government's amendment means that the Select Committee on Defence at least — that is not what the Opposition want—will be enabled—no pressure will be put on Conservative members of the Committee to prevent it—to secure a full and open record of what happened.

My second point is more damning. It is that the right hon. and learned Gentleman deliberately misled the House as to whether——

Mr. Speaker: Order. No right hon. Member, or even hon. Member, deliberately misleads the House.

Mr. Strang: The right hon. and learned Gentleman misled the House about the letter. He knew that the Government had received a letter. If we read the *Hansard* report of Monday's exchanges — which is a most damning document—it is clear that he was anxious to conceal that fact. It is one thing to refuse to answer a question. We are all at liberty to do that. We can say, "I am not prepared to answer that on behalf of the Government". There may be uproar, but at least we know where we stand. One can also give a truthful answer which evades the point. But what one cannot do is deliberately —I withdraw that, Mr. Speaker—to do what he did.

When the right hon. and learned Gentleman was asked by the former Secretary of State for Defence about the letter, the right hon. and learned Gentleman said:

> "I have not received any such letter."

Later, when he was challenged by his hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), he said:

> "I can only speak for myself."

He was then asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)

> "whether the Government had received a letter from"
> (See columns 1215 and 1241.)

Sir Austin Pearce. The right hon. and learned Gentleman replied:

> "If it helps the hon. Gentleman, I am not aware of any letter from Sir Raymond Lygo to anyone else either." —*[Official Report,* 13 January 1986; Vol. 89, c. 782-6.]

He ducked the question. If that is not deliberate evasion, I do not know what is. We can then see what he said to my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Brown). Having done that, can the right hon. and learned Gentleman then come here at 10 pm and apologise? Is that acceptable? I say that it is unacceptable.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman perhaps did not know what was going to happen at Downing street. No one knows that. Downing street let it be known that a letter had been received, I presume, at about 3.30 pm that Monday afternoon. If that had not been done by Downing street, did the right hon. and learned Gentleman think that it might be possible to keep the matter concealed and for it not to leak from British Aerospace? Did he think that the existence of the letter would not be discovered?

The suspicion is such that the right hon. and learned Gentleman must go. I feel no malice towards him. No one suggests that what he has done is such that his career should be damned for ever more, but if parliamentary democracy means anything, it means that right hon. Gentlemen do not give such answers when they have the type of information that we know he had. The Government must be prepared to face up to this matter. The Secretary of State has to be sacrificed to maintain a principle that is fundamental to parliamentary democracy.

8.44 pm

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): I declare an interest as an aeronautical engineer, but I have no part

in the present Westland negotiations. I am Chairman of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry. That Committee today decided that next Wednesday it would consider whether it was right and proper for it to examine the Westland problem.

May I draw the attention of the House to the fact that this is a debate about Westland plc. I am worried that the turmoil and trouble at Westland has been diverted into a political issue which prejudices the working lives of many hundreds of Westland's workers, and the tens of thousands of workers in other parts of the aerospace and aero-engine industries which support that company. Westland is not up for grabs. It is not up for sale. It is trying to stay in business. Both sides of the House should try to place Westland once again in the forefront of helicopter design and manufacture, which is where it should be.

Westland is a vital United Kingdom engineering resource. It contains a helicopter technology which is unequalled in western Europe. I am worried that in the discussions which have taken place with Her Majesty's Government no consultations appear to have taken place with those who supply Westland. For every one person working at Westland two others work in the aerospace industry supporting Westland—the Racals, the Ferrantis, the Smiths, the Lucases, the Dowtys and the GECs. None of those people has been consulted. It has been suggested that the company should go up for auction to the highest bidder.

I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) is not here, because I am extremely worried by the fact that the man who had some part and interest in the activities of Mr. Clive Ponting clearly breached the Official Secrets Act when he stated what were in Cabinet minutes and what had taken place in Cabinet discussions. I speak as a former chairman of the parliamentary campaign for freedom of information. It is unfair that there should be two standards of official secrets.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): As Chairman of the Select Committee, the hon. Gentleman should not be intervening in the debate.

Mr. Warren: I wish to return to the letters—

Mr. Douglas: I have a great respect for the hon. Gentleman. I am a member of the Select Committee on Defence. If his Committee is to undertake or consider an investigation, he is on thin ice when he intervenes in the way that he is doing. That is my considered view.

Mr. Warren: So much for the hon. Gentleman's considered view. I am speaking as a Back Bencher. I believe that the House has freedom of speech and that it is the prerogative of hon. Members on both sides.

I shall continue to speak about freedom of information. I am worried about the letter from the Prime Minister which has today been sent to Sir Austin Pearce, the second paragraph of which states that she understands that Sir Austin Pearce, the chairman of British Aerospace, is not prepared to release a copy of Sir Raymond Lygo's account of the proceedings. That is ridiculous. When the whole of the correspondence has been published, there can be nothing wrong in allowing Sir Raymond to publish his account of the proceedings.

I have known Sir Raymond well for a number of years and I believe that there was a misunderstanding about what was said between him and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. I recommend that those two gentlemen should get together tonight or at least tomorrow morning to try to resolve the differences in what each thinks the other said. Westland is surely more important than who is right or who is wrong in a political issue.

The next matter about which I should like to talk is anti-Americanism. I am worried that my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley should talk about anti-Americanism, because he negotiated the SDI agreement a little while ago. British Aerospace is using United Technologies to promote its activities in the United States. Good luck to it. Let us consider the other partners in the so-called European consortium. Aerospatiale is under contract to Sikorsky for helicopter work. Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm is part owned by Boeing, which is a competitor of Sikorsky, Aerospatiale and Westland. The simplicity with which people are classified as Europeans or anti-Europeans is unacceptable. Fiat is all right when it is supplying engines for the Tornado but apparently it is not all right when it is trying to help our helicopter industry. Last year, Agusta—a nationalised Italian company—tried to put up money to save Westland. Now it is no longer acceptable because it is on the European side. I am trying to be fair. The over-simplification of the issues that have been put before us has left in doubt the credibility with which my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Helsetine) tackled this problem. I am sorry that I have to say that.

Ten days ago I was invited by Westland to meet its directors and those of Sikorsky and Fiat. I explored with them what is meant by man-hours. I adopted a technical approach because it is not the man-hours that matter but who is the design authority: who gives design leadership in helicopter manufacture and who decides what engines and what systems should be used. The information that I obtained on both that and other occasions when this issue was discussed was that the design authority option is not available to Westland in the case of the European bid but that this option remains available to Westland if it follows the Sikorsky-Fiat route. I hope that they will choose Sikorsky as their partners.

I have received information that there is a bid before the Ministry of Defence for a new sighting system for the Army's helicopters. British Aerospace has put in a commendable bid to update the equipment that they are currently supplying. A Swedish-American-British group called Heliton has also put in a bid. It amounts to approximately the same value, on a fixed price basis, as that which has been put up by British Aerospace—£70 million. For reasons that nobody understands, the Ministry of Defence has said that although it may be a fixed price it will make the price £100 million, thereby wiping out that bid. The only problem is that the Royal Swedish Air Board has said that it is willing to buy between 20 and 30 Westland W30 helicopters and some Sea King helicopters.

In the cause of freedom of information, why has that information not been put before the House? Why has the House not been told the facts about defence contracts and of their value to Westland's resurgence? It is time that the attention of this House was turned to the restoration of Westland as a leading aerospace company and to the maintenance of the technology of its supporting companies. We must not waste the skills of the men and women at Westland. It is time that we looked after these people.

8.53 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The House will acquit me of being uninterested in Westland per se. I went to Yeovil in mid-November. I was taken round the plant by unions and management. I was also a member of an ASTMS delegation that was most courteously received by the Minister for Trade on the Indian order.

I wish to use the time available to me to return to the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). Since my right hon. and learned Friend made his speech a senior civil servant in the Department of Trade and Industry has been identified, according to the news on Channel 4, by the inquiry as the source of the leak of the Law Officer's letter. This is the letter that I made such a fuss about at 3.30 this afternoon.

If the news report is true—and apparently it is—upon whose instructions was a senior civil servant at the DTI asked to leak a letter from the Law Officers? Are we to believe that an over-zealous senior civil servant took it upon himself to do this? — [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] I have some experience of the Old Bailey. I know what civil servants can go through. If anybody looks at what Clive Ponting went through and how he was treated by some of the Ministers who have spoken today, any civil servant would by very careful not to leak anything without ministerial authority.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) asked a key question. He said:

"Was the correcting letter from the Law Officers to the Secretary of State for Defence seen by the right hon. and learned Gentleman or his Department before it was sent to the Ministry of Defence?"

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry replied:

"I saw the letter after it was sent."—[*Official Report*, 13 January 1986; Vol 89, c. 783.]

The question was whether he had been consulted, whether he had been told about the letter and whether he had been given any idea of its contents. Was the answer that was given to my right hon. Friend the whole truth?

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): That is a matter for the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. My hon. Friend and I got involved with Mr. Ponting because our view was that he should have been dealt with not under the Official Secrets Act 1911 but by the disciplinary procedures of the Civil Service. I hope that this case will not be dealt with under the Official Secrets Act.

Mr. Dalyell: We need to know whether the answers given to my right hon. Friends the Members for Morley and Leeds, South and for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), who went back on Monday to this exact point, are the whole truth. Having read that Law Officer's letter, I now understand how reluctant Her Majesty's Government were to place it in the Library of the House of Commons. For a careful lawyer's letter, it contains an extraordinary paragraph. The penultimate paragraph says:

"On the basis of the information contained in the documents to which I have referred, which I emphasise are all that I have seen, the sentence in your letter to Mr. Horne does, in my opinion, contain material inaccuracies in the respects I have mentioned, and I therefore must advise you that you should write again to Mr. Horne correcting the inaccuracies."

What are we to think? Are we to think that on that Saturday the Solicitor-General was suddenly reading *The Times* and, equally suddenly, without any prompting, he said, "I must write a most serious and damaging letter against one of my senior colleagues"? Is that how the Government work? Is it a likely scenario? I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to consider whether this bears any relationship to reality.

The paragraph is really saying, "If what you are reported as saying is accurate, then it seems to me that it might not be legal. Are you sure?" It seems to me that the Legal Officers were asking the Secretary of State for Defence whether what he had said was accurate.

There is a great contrast between the full letter and what Mr. Anthony Bevins quite properly, from the point of view of a journalist, wrote in *The Times*. Mr. Bevins referred to the trumped-up earlier leaks with a partial text of the Solicitor-General's letter. Who was it, and for what reason, who leaked a partial text? That is the question that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will have to address when he winds up the debate.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) raised many questions. I wish to repeat just one of them. I refer to the notes of the meeting on 13 December. Are they as the Prime Minister would have them, or are they as the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) would have them? If we are told that the notes are difficult to find, I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends whether they have gone the way of the log book of the Conqueror. Is that what has happened to them? In such a situation notes taken by civil servants are sacrosanct. Is there not some condition that notes of Ministers' contributions taken by civil servants may not record things that are against Government policy? Is that not in the guidelines?

Mr. Merlyn Rees: I do not think that civil servants are enjoined not to make a note of things that are against Government policy.

Mr. Dalyell: I have the permission of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon to repeat two of his questions that should be answered tonight. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon asks the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his reply to the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South on 13 January, whether he or anyone in his Department saw the Solicitor-General's letter in draft or material upon which the letter was based before it was sent and whether he was consulted about the contents of the letter or its sending before it was sent. My right hon. and learned Friend asks the Attorney-General whether he will refer any apparent breach of security involved in the disclosure of the contents of the recent letter from the Solicitor-General to the right hon. Member for Henley to the Director of Public Prosecutions for his consideration and advice as to whether a decision to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 is to be taken. Those questions should be answered between 9.30 and 10 o'clock tonight.

9 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): The Prime Minister must now be wishing that she had responded to the call by the Leader of the Opposition on Monday to come to the House and make a statement on behalf of the Administration that she heads to answer the serious questions of public concern that were revealed during the recess and have doubled since Parliament reassembled.

One of the reasons why the right hon. Lady would have been wiser to make a statement is that it would have

reinforced her reputation for forthrightness and boldness, which are said to be her leading characteristics. In addition, it would have had the tactical advantage that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry would not have had to respond on Monday on behalf of the Government. That is where the really damaging series of events start from. When the Leader of the Opposition put the case for an inquiry he reminded us of the considerable history of the matter. The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) also reminded us of that in his capable account of the way in which the Cabinet and Ministers addressed themselves to those issues.

There are two clear periods in this event. There is the warring period, when the Secretaries of State fought each other not just in the Cabinet Committees but in the columns of the press to the extent, as Sir Austin Pearce pointed out, that Sir Raymond Lygo was told by one Secretary of State what the national interest was and was given an opposite explanation of the nation's interest by another Secretary of State.

Since the resignation of the right hon. Member for Henley, there has been a period of post-resignation depth charges. Those depth charges let loose underneath the ship of Government have shaken the whole fabric to its foundations. It has been a most revealing time because it is not often that the veil of Government is parted and we are privileged to see what happens behind that curtain. It has long been the suspicion, well be[illegible]d the view of the Opposition, that many funny things happen behind the curtains that conceal the inner activities of the Thatcher Government from the nation. That suspicion has been amply justified.

There is a wider concern than the affairs of Westland, although we must be careful not to forget that that is at the heart of the debate.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East) *rose*——

Mr. Smith: There is concern about the way in which the Government have sought to manipulate some aspects of the matter. We know what the previous Secretary of State for Defence has had to put up with. We know how he has been cut down from behind, that he has had to face stories and gossip, and we know the way in which he has been prevented from putting his case. He mentioned a matter today which is of serious public concern, although it is not directly related to the details of the Westland story. He referred to a telephone call made from 10 Downing street to the BBC about a programme in which he was involved.

My next comment is a responsible one and I should like the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to give a specific answer to it in his reply. I also hope that the Prime Minister will feel obliged to reply to it.

On Sunday 5 January the radio programme "The World this Weekend" set out to cover these matters. In the morning of Sunday 5 January the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry recorded an interview for "The World this Weekend". Later in that morning a telephone call was made from No. 10 Downing street to the producers of the BBC programme informing them that No. 10 was withdrawing permission for the interview to be used. The BBC informed No. 10, greatly to its credit, that it would not co-operate in such—I will start again for the benefit of the Prime Minister who has just arrived because it is important that she hears what I have to say.

On Sunday 5 January, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry recorded an interview. Later that morning No. 10 called the BBC withdrawing the so-called permission for the interview to be used. The BBC refused to co-operate, but offered the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry a chance to do the interview all over again —one might think an act of considerable generosity in the circumstances.

Meanwhile, down in Oxford, the former Secretary of State for Defence had left his garden for long enough to go into the local studio of the BBC in Oxford, no doubt fitting it carefully in between pre-arranged photocalls with half the world's press who went to visit his garden. Sitting in the studio in Oxford, the Secretary of State for Defence was ready to take part live in that very edition of "The World this Weekend".

I am informed that while the former Secretary of State for Defence was in the studio waiting to start the interview, another telephone call came from No. 10 to the BBC saying that he had no permission to give any interview. I suppose that the very best that can be said about that is that it is even-handed in some respects — both are to be gagged. Neither Secretary of State can be trusted to appear on the same programme.

However, that is not all about manipulation. It is fortunate that the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has arrived in the Chamber because he may be able to tell us whether it was on his instructions or those of the Prime Minister that the British ambassador in Rome was asked to go to the Italian Government and tell them to stop sending any telegrams to the Secretary of State for Defence for the United Kingdom. If that is true, and there has been no denial of it— the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is not directly responsible for the Foreign Office but he is replying to the debate on behalf of the Government—we need to know why.

What a curious Government when a British ambassador is sent to tell a foreign Government not to communicate with a member of that very Government. What kind of impression do we create upon our allies? It is bad enough when they do not know which Secretary of State to communicate with because they both have different conceptions of the national interest, but how much worse when our foreign and diplomatic service is used for purposes of personal manipulation by the Prime Minister against her own Government.

Then there is the affair of the Solicitor-General's letter. Those of us who have had the opportunity in the past hour or two of reading that letter will wonder why it was sent at all. A more cavilling document it is hard to find. But, as my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) and my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) said, one of the crucial questions here is how the Solicitor-General came to write the letter in the first place. He starts off:

> "Dear Michael, I saw in the 'The Times' on Saturday the text of a letter you are reported to have sent to the Managing Director of Lloyd's Merchant Bank."

I suppose that there are a number of explanations. He could have been sitting down on Saturday and picked up *The Times* and said, "Oh my goodness"—remembering all the telegrams that were passing and are all detailed here —"I had better write to my old friend Michael and tell him that he has got things slightly wrong." That would be a very innocent view of the whole matter. As my right hon.

[Mr. Smith]

and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon said, Law Officers usually do not disturb themselves to write letters to anybody unless there is a special inducement or instruction to do so. It has crossed some of our minds that someone in the Government spoke to the Solicitor-General—

Mr. Brittan *indicated assent.*——

Mr. Smith: Now we know the answer to that point. One mystery has been resolved after only 11 minutes of my speech—the Secretary of State put the Solicitor-General up to it. I quite accept that the Secretary of State might want to consult a Law Officer during these matters. The point is: who asked the Solicitor-General to send that letter to the Secretary of State for Defence? No doubt the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will tell us precisely what his role was in that matter and how the letter came to be written.

Another matter is the leak of that letter. While the first matter is important, the second is sinister. If it is the case that one Department of this Government deliberately organised a leak to frustrate a Minister in the same Government, that is not only dirty tricks but a habit that is inimical to the practice of good government in this country. An investigation was called for by Opposition Members as soon as the information was revealed, and I understand that that has now taken place.

The rumour is—and I do not know whether it is true—that an official in the Department of Trade and Industry has been identified as the culprit. I hope that the Secretary of State will tell us whether it was on the instruction of any senior official or Minister in his Department that that leak took place. Secondly, if it is true that the leak came from an official in the Department of Trade and Industry, has he or will he recommend to the Law Officers that that person be prosecuted, as has happened previously?

I move directly to some of the more central events of the drama. We have watched, almost as astonished bystanders, as the former Secretary of State for Defence, beginning with his very careful resignation statement, revealed each chapter of this affair. He has spoken in a way that no one has been able to speak for years because he has been at the heart of the Thatcher Government for six and a half years. He speaks as a witness of knowledge and credit because he was entrusted with very high responsibility in a number of different offices of state.

To some extent, Opposition Members have had to watch the drama because we have not been possessors of information. In our system of government, information is uniquely locked within the people who run the Administration at the time. It is only accidentally and by a series of curious events that the veil has been parted.

Those charges will have to be answered by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on behalf of the Government. I propose to say little or no more about them other than that the Prime Minister—who must have known what the charges were, although she spoke before the former Secretary of State for Defence—chose to ignore them. The Prime Minister's hope is that this will all go away and that she can turn her back on this affair and get on to something else. I have to tell the Prime Minister that it will not go away. The tactic of refusing to make a statement on Monday led to a full-scale debate on Wednesday. The failure to give answers on Wednesday means that the debate will continue in the House and throughout the country.

I want to discuss the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's involvement. It is fair that before he replies he knows what the Opposition expect him to answer. I begin with one of the minor matters but on which the former Secretary of State for Defence laid importance. Why does he not agree to publish the documents of 4 and 18 October which, it is said, show that he had a strong preference for the European solution? If he is prohibited from publishing by instruction from the Prime Minister, will he tell us whether it is true that the former Secretary of State is correct in saying that he supported the pro-European solution?

The most important question that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry must answer is about the so-called British Aerospace affair—the meeting in his Department the day before the Secretary of State for Defence resigned. The right hon. Gentleman knows—he must have known since Monday—the importance of that letter. Looking back, most of us did not realise how truly significant it was. It figures in our deliberations as a result of a question by the former Secretary of State for Defence. I have thought ever since then that if the former Secretary of State for Defence had not asked that question we should still be in ignorance about the existence and content of that letter.

The important question, as the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry knows, is about what transpired at that meeting in two important respects. The Secretary of State was asked on Monday about what he said to Sir Raymond Lygo. The Secretary of State said that there was no truth in the suggestion that he said that British Aerospace was acting against the national interest or that it should withdraw from the European consortium.

There are two pieces of evidence before us. The Prime Minister has chosen to reveal the departmental minute and we have a letter from Sir Austin Pearce. The information is not yet complete because Sir Austin Pearce in his letter says that a full transcript of Sir Raymond's account of proceedings is available. I understand that that was attached to the letter to the Prime Minister. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry must have read it.

The line is that Sir Austin Pearce objects to that being published. I regret that but I understand that the Government have no objection to it being published because otherwise it would be foolish to refer to it in that way. The sooner that we have the full text of that memorandum the better, in the interests of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and of everyone else. It should be published at an early date.

The Secretary of State relies upon the minute to bolster his account of the meeting. The minute is called the official record. In fact, it is the note taken by the Secretary of State's private secretary, to be sent to the private secretary of the Minister of State responsible for the aerospace industry. The deficiencies in the document are serious. First, the minutes are not meant to be a verbatim account of what happens at a meeting. They are meant to be an official record for future action.

Mr. Alfred Dubs (Battersea): Many years ago I was in the Civil Service. I remember being told that notes taken at meetings were to be a creative process. It would be most

unusual, if not unheard of, for a civil servant making a note of a meeting to put into his Minister's mouth words which were at variance with the Minister's stated policy.

Mr. Smith: I wondered what instructions had been given to civil servants when I was a Minister. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) is right and I take account of his experience.

The important point is that the record was not meant to be verbatim. However, the most important difficulty about relying on the record arises from the sequence of events. The controversial meeting took place at 5 o'clock on Thursday 8 January in the office of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The allegation that the Secretary of State said that British Aerospace was acting against the national interest and that it should withdraw from the consortium was contained in the resignation statement on 9 January of the former Secretary of State for Defence, the right hon. Member for Henley. The so-called minute is dated 10 January. It was prepared long after the controversiality of the conversation was known and when the sensitivity of the conversation was well understood.

The letter from Sir Austin Pearce is most important. It is highly relevant and it is fortunate that it has become available. I shall mention some matters that are slightly at the margin, but just as important. Sir Austin Pearce's letter states:

"The meeting took place immediately following a discussion Sir Raymond was having with Mr. Pattie on Airbus Industrie's proposals for a new programme."

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said that it would have been "wholly artificial" if he did not see Sir Raymond Lygo, but apparently a message was sent to the meeting that the Secretary of State wished to see him and the Minister of State took Sir Raymond to the Secretary of State's presence.

One aspect that Sir Austin Pearce is worried about is the connection with the Airbus proposals. He states:

"The connection is worrying to say the least."

The chairman of British Aerospace is worried that a connection is being made between Airbus—the future of his company—and the Westland affair. That must cause the Prime Minister deep concern. That is not a matter of credibility, but a matter about the way in which the Government behave and project themselves.

In his letter, Sir Austin Pearce states that,

"Sir Raymond returned directly,"

after the meeting with the Secretary of State,

"to a special Board meeting of British Aerospace which was in progress and made a full report of his conversation to the Board. He also wrote down all the salient points that had been made to him. His report stated that the following points were specifically covered by the Secretary of State."

I shall refer to some of the points. He said that the Secretary of State

"1. expressed a view that as the DTI were our sponsoring Dept we should have consulted with his Dept before we entered the Consortium.

2. . . . whether we had fully considered the effect our actions might have on our American business.

3. his concern at the Consortium leadership role we appeared to be adopting."

The following point is fair to the Secretary of State:

"4. that the decision should be left to the shareholders alone".

Sir Raymond Lygo makes that claim also. The report continues:

"5. That the agreement of the National Armaments Directors had never been endorsed by Government."

The Secretary of State was correct on that point, as history has shown.

"6. that what we were doing was not in the National Interest.

7. that we should withdraw."

That matter could hardly be more clear from the testimony of Sir Raymond Lygo. The Secretary of State muttered that it is not true. If it is not true, what is the Secretary of State's position on Sir Raymond Lygo? He must tell us in his reply. Is he telling us that Sir Raymond Lygo invented the conversation or that he had a brainstorm? Is he telling us that Sir Raymond repeated the conversation in front of the board of British Aerospace and wrote it down at the time because his brains had deserted him suddenly and his imagination had taken over? We know perfectly well that neither Sir Raymond Lygo nor Sir Austin Pearce had the faintest idea that this would be a matter of public argument or that it would figure in debates on the Floor of the House.

If there is any doubt about Sir Raymond Lygo, let me draw attention to the fourth paragraph on page 3 of the letter to the Prime Minister, where Sir Austin Pearce says:

"I have no doubt that Sir Raymond's account of the events so fresh in his memory and recounted to the Board so soon after the event with the assistance of notes made immediately after that meeting was substantially correct and"—

this is significant—

"are borne out by much other information that is coming to light. So far we have refused to make any public comment."

That speaks volumes.

I should tell the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that if anyone would benefit from a committee of inquiry into the matter it is him, because if he is telling the truth, he has nothing to fear from an inquiry that would consider the matter fully and at which he would be given a full opportunity to exonerate himself. He must decide what to do. I make no calls for action by him before an inquiry is constituted, because I do not wish to prejudice the outcome of an inquiry. The Secretary of State should submit himself to the verdict of that inquiry.

The debate is not simply about the political fate of one Secretary of State for Defence or the political future of a Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, let alone a Prime Minister. It is not simply about the contents of this letter, although circumstances force us to consider it carefully. It is not just about the relationship between Government and private industry, although that gives some cause for concern. It is not just about the ultimate destination of the control and ownership of one of Britain's important defence contractors, important though that is. The importance of this debate is that the Westland affair provides us with the clearest possible, most graphically illustrated, most thoroughly documented demonstration of how the Government have sacrificed, and continue to sacrifice, public interest to their ideological obsession with market forces.

In addition, when the Government know that their obsession with market forces collides with the public interest and would be revealed, they engage in a course of deception to keep it concealed from the public eye. That is why, throughout the affair, the Government have shown a public face of even-handedness and of leaving it to the shareholders and the market to decide, but, as each step in the process has revealed, all the while, Ministers—especially the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry—have been working to achieve one solution. They have worked to obstruct one solution being put and have promoted another, but they knew that they could not be caught doing that, so they kept up the facade that they were even-handed.

[Mr. Smith]

That is what has led them into this difficulty. That is what puts Ministers into the awkward position of having to decide between observing confidentiality and giving honest answers to the House of Commons. That is why we have had so many meetings of the Cabinet and the Government. Although Governments have many controversial and difficult things to do, the open and clear course is to call a meeting of the Cabinet, allow the two protagonists to put their cases, reach a decision, say that that is Government policy and get on with it. But that has not happened yet. There have been selective meetings of Ministers and manipulation of Cabinet minutes. No. 10 Downing street has practised a course of deception on one of the principal members of the Government. The former Secretary of State for Defence has many genuine complaints about the way in which he was personally treated by the head of the Government.

However, the Government are obsessed with market forces, even when £750 million worth of Ministry of Defence work has gone to that company during the years, and only recently another £40 million was committed. The cost of the public sector orders far exceeds the past or future value of the company. Its share capital is insignificant compared with the size of the public sector orders that are given. Therefore, it is a legitimate matter of public concern and should, from the beginning, have engaged the full attention of Government from the top down. Cases should have been argued — no doubt passionately and carefully—in the national interest and, decisions having been taken, they should have been implemented openly and fearlessly. The opposite has happened and this discreditable Government with their discreditable Prime Minister and discreditable Ministers have finally been found out.

9.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Leon Brittan): I would like to start by referring once again to the statement that I made on Monday in which I sought to apologise to the House for any misleading impression that I may have given in my statement that afternoon. From some of the comments made during the course of today's debate, it has been suggested that I view the charge of misleading the House as being something less than of the utmost gravity. I assure the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) that that is most certainly not the case. I welcome the opportunity of reiterating the apology I made on Monday.

Since Monday, permission has been given for the letter from Sir Austin Pearce to be published. That account of the meeting which took place between myself and Sir Raymond Lygo is, of course, substantially different from that given by the minutes taken by my officials and confirmed by my recollection and the recollection of others.

Although a close scrutiny of the document will show that there is great similarity in the accounts, there are material points which are different. *[Interruption.]* On the two material points in Sir Austin Pearce's letter to which exception has been taken, points 6 and 7 — the suggestion that I told Sir Raymond Lygo that what British Aerospace was doing was not in the national interest and the suggestion that British Aerospace should withdraw from the consortium—I made it quite clear to the House on Monday that I said no such thing.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Brittan: No, I shall not give way. A number of accusations have been made against me and I think that the House would wish me to have the opportunity to reply.

I said no such thing at that meeting and I have made that absolutely clear. Since Monday's debate, I have looked at the records supplied by Sir Austin Pearce and I repeat once again that at no time during that meeting did I say that what British Aerospace was doing was not in the national interest. Nor did I say that British Aerospace should withdraw from the European consortium. I would be perfectly happy to give an account of that meeting to a Select Committee of the House and I have no objections to doing that.

I would tell those hon. Members who would challenge my account of that meeting that fortunately I was not alone at the meeting. There were six people present in that room. Apart from myself, there were three civil servants, including my private secretary. Of course, Sir Raymond Lygo was present, as was my hon. Friend the Minister of State. It is useless for the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) to say, in his attempt to deal with these matters, that the practice of the Civil Service is not to record the whole of what we say. We all know perfectly well that that is the practice. Quite apart from what was said in the note which corroborates my account to the House on Monday of what I said, all persons present at that meeting other than Sir Raymond Lygo—that is to say, three senior civil servants who have served Governments of different political persuasions, my hon. Friend the Minister of State and myself — have all confirmed our recollection as well as the note. I repeat that at no stage did I say that what British Aerospace was doing was not in the national interest. Nor did I say that British Aerospace should withdraw from the consortium.

Mr. Winnick: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Brittan: No, I will give way as often as the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East gave way. It is I who am under attack, and I am entitled to defend myself.

Anyone who challenges what I have given as an accurate account of what occurred on that occasion and suggests that I am telling a lie, not to put too fine a point on it, is saying the same about not one but five people, including three distinguished public servants.

With regard to the conflict of recollection, on the matter of the national interest I can understand how Sir Raymond Lygo could have misunderstood what I said. The record of the meeting, which accords with the recollection of all those present other than Sir Raymond Lygo, shows that I said that I believed that it was not in the national interest that the uncertainty about Westland should carry on much longer. I should have thought that that view would commend itself to the House.

If we are talking about probabilities—I do not rest my case on probabilities because I was there and I know what I said, as the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East well knows — it would have been absurd for me to say that the participation of British

Aerospace was against the national interest and even more absurd for me to say it at that meeting. Sir Austin Pearce correctly recalls that I had a meeting with him on 13 December — a day on which, to put it mildly, the controversy was running pretty hotly because by then the Government's endorsement of the national armaments director's recommendation was due to expire unless an offer was received from the European consortium which was acceptable to the Westland board. Had I believed that the participation of British Aerospace was against the national interest, I had ample opportunity to say so on that occasion. I did not say it then and I did not say it on 8 January. I very much regret that Sir Raymond Lygo had a different understanding, although I note that he is not prepared to have his own account made public. I have no objection to saying to a Select Committee what I have said to the House. Similarly, I have no objection to Sir Raymond Lygo disclosing whatever record he took at the time.

Mr. Dykes: Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Brittan: I would rather not give way, as I wish to deal with some of the more general matters that have been raised, particularly some of the serious questions about industrial, commercial, economic and European policy.

The Prime Minister has already set out in her speech the policy of the Government and the reasons behind that policy. On occasions such as this, it is natural for opinion between parties and within parties to polarise, and to polarise in opposite directions. The matter is presented as a controversy between a European solution to problems and a transatlantic solution to problems. There is a tendency to polarise the issue as a belief either in an interventionist policy in industry or a hands-off policy in industry. I do not see the issue in such a simple way.

With regard to the contrast between the European and transatlantic solution to problems, I recognise that there is a great deal to be said for an independent European source of industrial activity not only in defence but in other areas. It does not follow, however, that its advantage is supreme in every case. It is a gross over-simplification of a serious issue to pretend to present such a clear-cut choice. With regard to the aircraft industry, and especially fighter aircraft, there is a powerful case for European co-operation. I am happy to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence for the work that he did in helping to bring that about. I part company with my right hon. Friend, as I suspect others will, because, although it is right to have European co-operation on fighter aircraft, it does not necessarily follow that that must be the only solution at which the Government should arrive with regard to helicopters.

There are of course advantages in European co-operation even in the case of helicopters. I am not denigrating that solution. There are disadvantages, however, and one is entitled to draw attention to them —disadvantages from the point of view of competition policy, value for money and choice. One of the more unconvincing passages of my right hon. Friend's speech was where he tried to say that in the European defence arrangements it was still possible—even when there was only one source of defence procurement — to prevent monopolistic pressures and the country paying more than necessary for its defence.

Dr. Hampson *rose*——

Mr. Brittan: There are advantages and disadvantages in European co-operation over helicopters. It is unrealistic to present, as some uninformed people have done, a caricature of the choice facing a British company which has fallen on hard times as between a European or American solution. It is unrealistic and an over-simplification, because reference has been made by those hon. Gentlemen who have constituency or other personal connections with Westland, such as the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer), to the fact that Westland has had, for 38 years, the closest possible connection with Sikorsky. Sikorsky is not a newcomer to Westland. In the successful days of Westland, that success was achieved by building planes initially designed in the United States— such as the Sea King and the Wessex — and then developing them with their expertise for other and specialist markets.

That is the experience of Westland. It is not conclusive —it does not follow from that or from the fact that the work force virtually unanimously favours one solution— *[Interruption.]* It does not follow that that is the solution or the only solution, but it follows from the account that I have given of the advantages and disadvantages of the European route and of the American route that it is entirely reasonable for the central policy of the Government to be to leave the choice to the company through its shareholders.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Brittan: No.

That will always be the right policy. When it comes to Government intervention, I am not taking an absolutist stance. I am not taking a stance that there are no circumstances in which it would be right for Government to have a policy or a view about which route was the preferred one. Nor am I saying that there are no circumstances in which it would be right for the Government to intervene financially as well as by expressing a preference.

My view in these matters is that it is perfectly legitimate for a Government to sponsor and assist British industry in certain cases by, for example, giving launch aid of some £250 million for the Airbus, the protection of which launch aid was a perfectly legitimate reason for me to warn Sir Raymond Lygo — [HON. MEMBERS: "Warn?"] — not against being a member of a consortium but of the danger presented to the consortium by talking about the issue in a way which stimulated protectionist attitudes in the United States.

Let me remind the House——

Mr. Dykes: Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Brittan: No, I shall not give way.

Mr. Dykes *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has seen that the Secretary of State is not giving way.

Mr. Brittan: I remind the House that, on this important point, the record of the meeting which, as I understand it, the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East

[Mr. Brittan]

was at least good enough not to dispute as being inaccurate but rather challenged as being incomplete makes it quite clear that Sir Raymond Lygo understood——

Mr. John Smith: I did not say that.

Mr. Brittan: Sir Raymond Lygo——

Mr. Smith: Can I make this clear?

Mr. Brittan: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Smith: The Secretary of State's recollection is incomplete. I made no such distinction. I drew attention to considerable differences between the two documents. I said that there were deficiencies in it because it was done after the issue became controversial. I am not to be taken as assenting to the proposition that the Secretary of State has pronounced.

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. and learned Gentleman is perfectly well aware that, although indeed the minute was written up on 10 January, the notes from which it was taken were made——

Mr. Fisher *rose*——

Mr. Straw *rose*——

Mr. Brittan: I shall not give way. The notes from which it was taken were made contemporaneously and accord fully with the minute of the meeting. The right hon. and learned Gentleman may not find it comfortable to be reminded——

Mr. Dykes: Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Brittan: No.

Mr. Dykes *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has been here long enough to know that if the Secretary of State does not give way he must sit down.

Mr. Brittan: The right hon. and learned Gentleman may find it uncomfortable to be reminded of the point, but it is indeed the case that Sir Raymond returned to the question of anti-American sentiment.

In case anyone thinks that that is a pretext or excuse, let me remind hon. Members of what Sir Raymond Lygo himself said about it. He said that British Aerospace Incorporated, the United States subsidiary of British Aerospace, had expressed great concern about its United States business being harmed. So that was not a fantasy in my mind but a subject of serious concern. The right hon. and learned Gentleman might also like to know that the record of the meeting showed that I responded by saying that I was ready in that case to act immediately in defending British Aerospace's interest.

Those who regard as unreal the prospect of America taking action against British Aerospace should know that it is only within a very recent period that I had to write to the United States trade representative, Mr. Clayton Yeutter, about that very matter. The position of the United States Government is that they do not like the success of the Airbus. *[Interruption.]* These are serious matters and they are highly material to what was said and done in relation to Westland. The United States Government do not like the fact that the Airbus is doing increasingly well. It is not just that they do not like it; they are actually threatening to take action against it. That action is on the basis of protectionism in the United States. What they say is that the support that we are giving to the Airbus in Europe entitles them to take protectionist action against it.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough) *rose*——

Mr. Brittan: I am not giving way.

It is to that sort of pressure that one is responding. The anxieties that Sir Raymond Lygo and I share are very real. It is for that reason that I say that we were not as a Government, and I was not as an individual, taking any kind of absolutist position either in relation to Britain and Europe or Britain and America, nor were we taking any absolutist position with regard to intervention in industry.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Tell us about Rome and the ambassador.

Mr. Brittan: My right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence suggested that on 4 October I indicated that I had a preference for a European solution. Why that should be regarded in the eyes of my right hon. Friend as such a devilish thing to have escapes me, but it so happens that that is not the case. On 4 October I stated that the prospect of a European solution being developed within the time scale did not seem to be good, but I wanted to get a better assessment of those prospects before responding to Westland's proposals for Government underwriting of W30 sales. At that stage the proposition being put forward by Westland in concert with Sikorsky was that, if the reconstruction went through, the Government should underwrite W30 sales. So I recommended that Westland should be encouraged to pursue discussions urgently with European partners. However, I did not express a preference on that occasion for any particular solution that might be developed by Westland. *[Interruption.]* I believe that I am entitled to deal with the matters which were raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley. I shall not have the agenda for my defence dictated by Opposition Members.

Mr. Fisher *rose*——

Mr. Brittan: I shall not accept interventions.

Mr. Fisher *rose*——

Mr. Brittan: The hon. Gentleman cannot seek to intervene all the time on the one hand and expect me to deal with all the matters which have been raised on the other. [HON. MEMBERS: "Give way."] Are Opposition Members being honest in saying that they want to hear my answers or do they want merely to shout me down? The other matter—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The debate has proceeded in good order so far. Other right hon. and hon. Members have been given a fair and quiet hearing and the House should afford that also to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Brittan: Opposition Members are muttering from a sedentary position that I am not answering the debate. I am answering a point which was made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley, the ex-Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Fisher *rose*——

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, when Ministers reply,

they are presumed, as Front Bench spokesmen, to take up the issues which have been raised during the debate. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether there is any procedural manner in which you can ask the Secretary of State to respond to the charges made by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine).

Mr. Speaker: I think that that is exactly what the Secretary of State is doing.

Mr. Brittan: For the convenience of the House, I shall explain what matters I am proposing to deal with in the time left available to me. They are exactly the ones that I had in mind to respond to if I was allowed to proceed uninterrupted. I was going to deal with the meeting of 17 October, with the Foreign Office telegram and with the Law Officer's letter.

I shall deal first with the meeting of 17 October, to which my right hon. Friend the ex-Secretary of State for Defence has drawn attention. At that meeting, Sir John Cuckney referred to what he described as the Government's preference for a European minority shareholder in Westland. I said that a European minority shareholder was in both the commercial and political interests of the Government. However, that was against the background that in the board's view at that time a reconstruction involving Sikorsky seemed likely to require an element of Government underwriting. I therefore urged Sir John, as I had done previously, to explore thoroughly the possibility of a European minority shareholder. What I did not do, and have never done, was to suggest that the Government would make any attempt to influence the eventual decisions of the board or the company's shareholders. I remind the House that at that time Fiat had not joined Sikorsky.

Mr. Heseltine: I think that I heard my right hon. and learned Friend say for the first time that at the meeting of 17 October he indicated that a European minority shareholding was in the commercial and industrial interests of Westland. That, I think, is a preference.

Mr. Brittan: What I said was perfectly simple and straightforward. I said that a European minority shareholder was in both the commercial and political interests of the Government—I shall move on quickly because I know that the House wants to hear about other matters. I said that in the context of a Sikorsky bid, which at that stage seemed likely to require an element of Government underwriting. A European minority shareholder emerged later, and that was Fiat.

When my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley wrote to Lloyds bank on 3 January, the House will recall that he wrote in answer to Mr. Horne, who had written to him that day. The Westland directors noticed that the terms of his letter were in certain respects different from the terms used in the Prime Minister's letter, and raised the matter with the DTI as the sponsoring Department, and there has been no doubt about that. I, in turn, consulted the Law Officer, as I said in an intervention earlier in the debate, who had not been sent a copy of my right hon. Friend's letter of 3 January. The Law Officer subsequently wrote the letter which has been the subject of controversy. I did not see it before it was written and I did not ask him in any way to write the letter to my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State.

Finally, let me deal with the other matter that has been raised.

Mr. Derek Foster (Bishop Auckland) *rose in his place and claimed to move*, That the Question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to*.

Question accordingly put, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

The House divided: Ayes 217, Noes 370.

Division No. 37 **10 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S.)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Concannon, Rt Hon J. D.
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'll)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Ellis, Raymond
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, John
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kilroy-Silk, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert

McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, M.
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ryman, John
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds e)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Torney, Tom
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Fisher and
Mr. Ron Davies.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter, *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger

Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Parris, Matthew
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spence, John
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Carol Mather and
Mr. Robert Boscawen.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 33 (Questions on amendments):—*

The House divided: Ayes 367, Noes 217

Division No. 38] **10.14 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*

Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter, *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Meilor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Parris, Matthew
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abdgn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spence, John
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Carol Mather and
Mr. Robert Boscawen.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S.)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Concannon, Rt Hon J. D.
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Ellis, Raymond
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, John
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Mr. Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*

Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kilroy-Silk, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E'Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, M.
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ryman, John
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds e)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Torney, Tom
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Fisher and
Mr. Ron Davies.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Speaker *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

That this House endorses the Government's consistent objective of supporting Westland plc in its efforts to achieve a financial reconstruction, of supporting United Kingdom participation in collaboration with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies and of safeguarding the interests of the company, its employees and its shareholders, recognises the efforts of the Government to ensure that the Westland Board had more than one option to secure that objective; affirms that it will be for the company to determine its future course of action; and further recognises the competence of departmental Select Committees of the House of Commons to consider the issues raised by these developments.

Statutory Sick Pay

10.28 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. John Major): I beg to move,

That the draft Statutory Sick Pay Up-rating Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 17th December, be approved.

The purpose of the order is to increase the rates of statutory sick pay and the bands of earnings which determine the rate payable. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has carried out his annual review of those amounts as he is required to do by the Social Security and Housing Benefits Acts 1982. The uprating of the bands, and consequently the rates, is reviewed in relation to changes in the general level of prices which, in the 12 months to October 1985, rose by 5·4 per cent. as measured by the index of retail prices. The draft order accordingly provides for an equivalent increase in the SSP rates and earnings levels to apply from 6 April 1986.

As hon. Members will know, there are three rates of SSP. As usual, in working out the new rates we have followed established practice and rounded them to the nearest 5p. The new upper and middle thresholds have been rounded down to the next 50p. Rounding down in that fashion is beneficial to employees as it enables more to qualify for the higher and middle rates of SSP than would otherwise be the case. The lower earnings threshold —below which no SSP is payable—is not subject to uprating by the order. That is set automatically by the Act at the lower earnings limit for class 1 contributions, which will be £38 from 6 April 1986.

The result of these calculations is that from next April employees with average earnings of £74·50 or more per week will qualify for SSP at the new standard weekly rate of £46·75. Those who earn between £55·50 and £74·49 will be entitled to the new middle rate of £39·20. And those who earn between £38 and £55·49 will receive the new lower rate of £31·60. These new rates represent increases of £2·40, £2 and £1·60 per week respectively.

The draft order makes the usual transitional provision for those employees who have current entitlement to SSP at the time the uprating takes effect. Whichever level of SSP an employee is receiving at the time the uprating takes place, whether standard, middle or lower, he will, from 6 April receive the new amount of SSP relevant to that level for as long as his period of entitlement lasts. This is so even if his average earnings—which are, of course, calculated at the start of his sickness—would put him in a different earnings band. Without this beneficial provision some employees could face a significant reduction in the SSP payable to them at the uprating date and I am sure hon. Members will welcome the fact that this will not occur. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I acknowledge support from whatever quarter it comes.

April 1986, will, of course, see other changes in SSP that lie outside the main provisions of the order. The House will recall that under legislation passed in the Social Security Act 1985, an employer's maximum liability for paying his employees SSP when sick will increase from eight weeks to 28 weeks. Full reimbursement of the costs of this extended period will continue to be available with employers deducting their costs from their national insurance liability. Some other changes in the present rules and procedures will also take place consequent on the increased maximum duration. These were developed following consultation and discussion with employers and others earlier last year. I am pleased to say that a completely revised employer's guide to statutory sick pay, incorporating these changes, was issued to all employers last October to enable them to make the necessary preparation for these changes. The new rates covered in the order before us will thus be the first ones to apply to the extended scheme.

It remains the Government's intention to review SSP rates and earnings bands annually, with increases taking effect from the following April. By 1987 social security benefits will also have moved to an April uprating date, We intend, therefore, that in future the Secretary of State will review SSP rates at the same time as other social security benefit rates.

Details of the new SSP rates and earnings bands will be notified to employers shortly in a leaflet issued with the new national insurance contribution rate tables, which will also come into operation in April. The new SSP rates will also be publicised in leaflets available generally from the Department of Health and Social Security.

Finally, I should perhaps remind the House that the rates of SSP are statutory minima. Many employees—in fact, the great majority—receive occupational sick pay from their employers and a number continue to get full pay when sick. We have no evidence to suggest that the current rates of SSP have resulted in hardship or difficulties for employees. Indeed there are clear indications that most employees prefer SSP to the sickness benefit it replaces because it is so much simpler for them to receive their money when sick from the same source as when working. Neither is there evidence to suggest that the rates have affected employers' and employees' flexibility for negotiating levels of occupational sick pay.

The draft order provides for the SSP rates to keep pace with the rise in the general level of prices. I commend it to the House.

10.33 pm

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): First let me make it clear that the uprating principle underlying the order is not in contention, but I wish briefly to use the debate to highlight two main issues where the Opposition remain distinctly critical. One is the experience of statutory sick pay as it has developed, especially in the light of its extension to 28 weeks from 6 April next, and the other is the proposed privatisation of other benefits where the example of statutory sick pay is being used as a model.

Our main objection is that the extension of statutory sick pay represents not only the abolition of state sickness benefit but the prolongation over a much longer period of all the disadvantages clearly manifest in this act of privatisation.

First, unlike sickness benefit—and we take a view of it different from the over-generous picture for employees given by the Minister—statutory sick pay is taxable and subject to deductions for national insurance contributions. Therefore, for many employees, especially those on low earnings, SSP means less money when they are unable to work because of sickness or disability. Indeed, for those on very low incomes, about £50 a week, the loss can be as hefty as £14 or £15 a week.

Nor is it any defence to say, as Ministers do—although the Minister did not do so tonight—that the low level of SSP is compensated for by supplementary benefit. Recent figures show that one third of sick or disabled people do not claim the supplementary benefit to which they are entitled. Perhaps that is the best indication of the inadequacy of SSP. Means-tested supplementary benefit should never be regarded as a satisfactory substitute for an adequate benefit as of right when people cannot work.

Ministers also like to evade the unsatisfactory nature of SSP by referring—as the Minister did tonight—to the number of occupational sick pay schemes. Of course, a few do exist, but many employees are not covered by them because they are generally run on a discretionary basis. In particular, part-time workers and others in low-paid jobs are frequently excluded.

A sign of the amount of loss of benefit from the extension of SSP is provided by the Government's estimate of the so-called savings that will accrue in the next financial year—of the order of £200 million. Those savings are being made purely at the expense of the sick and disabled who are already having to cope with the extra costs of disability. It is surely wrong and unfair that employees will be paying out more in tax and national insurance contributions because of the extension of SSP, while employers will not be expected to pay any national insurance contribution for SSP payments.

Another matter for concern is that—

The Minister for Social Security (Mr. Tony Newton): The hon. Gentleman plainly has not understood the financial basis of SSP. The saving of £200 million is a saving to public expenditure, but it is almost precisely counterbalanced by the revenue forgone from the national insurance fund in compensation for the payments by employers to employees. The notion that either the original introduction of SSP or its extension entail losses to beneficiaries of the sort suggested by the hon. Gentleman is, quite simply, wrong.

Mr. Meacher: The figures are not so very different from what I have suggested. The Minister is right to say that there is an offset, and I wholly accept that. But there are substantial disadvantages to employees. The figure that I am quoting is the public expenditure figure that appears in the Government's public expenditure papers.

Does the Minister deny that, if employees are to pay substantially more in tax and national insurance contributions, there will be a significant disadvantage for them? Does he deny that as a result of the scheme, many on the lowest levels of income—about £40, £50 or £60 a week—are suffering substantial losses that can be as much as £14 or £15 a week?

Another matter for concern is that the rate of unemployment is already higher among the disabled than among the work force as a whole. An extension of SSP, with the additional administrative burden on employers, is all too likely to lead to discrimination against workers with poor health records.

Indeed, there are other disadvantages to SSP. It has involved a much harsher linking than that applying to sickness benefit, although that is now to be changed.

Moreover, because it is administered by employers—that is not to be changed—and not by the DHSS, there are no powers, short of taking the employer to court, to enforce payment of statutory sick pay by employers. If an adjudication officer, social security appeal tribunal or a social security commissioner issues a formal decision that a person is entitled to statutory sick pay, the DHSS cannot force a recalcitrant employer to pay the correct amount to the employee. Employees in unorganised workplaces, particularly part-time workers or those in low-paid jobs, are vulnerable to harassment by employers in relation to absence through sickness, given the leeway that the DHSS has now given to employers.

There is no protection for employees who are dismissed by their employers so that the latter can avoid paying them statutory sick pay. Extending statutory sick pay in April will increase the employee's exposure to unscrupulous manoeuvres by some employers.

For those reasons, we contend that statutory sick pay, which was introduced almost without warning and with perfunctory consultation, has worked to the detriment of employees in a variety of ways.

There are good grounds for the fear that the introduction of statutory sick pay will be used as a wedge in the door of further moves to hive off state responsibility for social security benefits. Evidence of further intended privatisation by the Government emerged on 19 December when the DHSS issued a consultation paper on statutory maternity allowance. That proposed that responsibility for paying maternity allowance——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman is straying wide of the order. I have given him a lot of rope, but he must not discuss maternity pay.

Mr. Meacher: I am not seeking to introduce a debate on maternity allowance, but I am making the valid point that the introduction of statutory sick pay is being used as a model for further extending the privatisation of social security benefits. I wish to make one or two other brief comments related to that, but I do not seek to discuss that argument in depth because it is to be discussed in another place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That can be left to another place because the order is about uprating statutory sick pay, not the principle, which the House has already decided.

Mr. Meacher: I accept that, but it is important that this is being used as a model for further privatisation. It suggests that statutory maternity allowance should be paid at the lowest rate of statutory sick pay—£31·60 a week in April 1986 terms—regardless of earnings. Statutory maternity allowance and statutory sick pay should not in general link to the same period of interruption in work. A further act of privatisation is now to be carried out on the model of statutory sick pay, despite all its drawbacks, but in this case it will be on even meaner terms with only one level of benefit instead of three, and that will be the lowest statutory sick pay level.

We do not dispute the uprating basis in the order, but we want to place firmly on record our strong condemnation, not only of the principle of the privatisation of social security benefits, but of the manifest disadvantages for the employee that this has been shown to involve. We oppose the extension of the principle, with its disadvantages to other benefits such as statutory maternity allowance.

[Mr. Meacher]

If the Government do not take note of our objections, I give notice that when we come to power we shall deal with them rapidly.

10.44 pm

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): The speech of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) was reasonably credible, and I agreed with much of what he said until his closing sentiments—perhaps that does not surprise him. It will certainly not surprise those sitting on the Treasury Bench. A return of the Labour party to power would greatly surprise the British people.

My hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) and I welcome the fact that, on this occasion, the DHSS is staying within and upholding the law of the land, and will uprate accordingly. We have no argument with that. It was sensible of the DHSS to bring the uprating procedure into line as from 1987. My noble Friend Lord Banks and others have argued for that, and we welcome it.

My basic point on the uprating order relates to the impact that statutory sick pay has on small businesses. The Minister will recall that my hon. Friend and I have moved amendments and made speeches, in Committee and in the House, on the effect of the statutory sick pay scheme in this respect. That is why we welcome the reference in the explanatory details that accompanied the order to the DHSS consultation paper on the reduction of burdens on business. It would be helpful if the Minister would say briefly how matters are progressing in that respect—by which I mean the suggestion that employers should be allowed to opt out of SSP, provided that they pay wages to their sick employees at least as good as their SSP entitlement.

The Government will recall that the announcement of an extension of the SSP scheme was met with horror by, among others, the National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses. I agree with the hon. Member for Oldham, West that the bureaucracy of the SSP scheme and the extension which has been announced would discriminate against the employment potential of small businesses, and encourage more part-time employment rather than full-time employment. The Government said during SSP debates that they were conscious of the difficulty, and made some concessions in terms of bridging the gap.

You have been tolerant of my similarly lateral interpretation of the order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. May I end by saying that we welcome the fact that the uprating will go ahead, and especially the fact that the SSP uprating will be brought into line with other benefits. Any comments which the Minister can make on these broader points, based on the principle that we are debating this evening, would be helpful to my hon. Friend and myself.

10.48 pm

Mr. Major: This has been a modest debate — *[Interruption.]* I make no complaint about that. As is often the case on such occasions, the debate has ranged rather more widely than the strict terms of the order. The hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) went substantially more widely, and the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) greatly tested your traditional good nature and patience, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Being a more timorous soul, I have no intention of tempting your good nature to that extent.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Oldham, West for welcoming the principle of the uprating, although I was a little alarmed that he seemed to see plots and difficulties where none exists.

The hon. Gentleman also spoke a little scornfully of what he described as the privatisation of social security benefits. That seems an odd way to put it. The introduction and subsequent extension of the SSP principle leads to a closer and better relationship between employers and employees. I believe that the ability to make SSP payments in the way that now obtains makes for a sound basis for relationships between employers and employees. It has generally been welcomed, it has proved fairly successful and I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman made that rather ideological point.

The hon. Gentleman also touched in passing on occupational sick pay schemes. The two issues are not unrelated. A very substantial number of employees now benefit from such schemes. Precise up-to-date figures are not available, but the latest firm information is that about 80 per cent. of employees are covered. That figure is based on a survey in 1977 and, although I cannot state this as a firm fact, there is every reason to believe that the number of employees so covered has continued to grow since then. In my view, that makes out the case for the rationalisation of SSP in the way in which it has been introduced in recent years. I hope that in due course the hon. Member for Oldham, West will entirely welcome the changes that have been made.

The hon. Gentleman referred also to the forthcoming extension of SSP liability from eight to 28 weeks. In terms of the number of weeks that is a considerable extension, but on further examination it proves not to be so great a change as it might appear at first glance. Under the existing eight week scheme employers already deal with the bulk of short sickness spells. Only about 10 per cent. of sickness spells last longer than eight weeks and of those about half last no longer than 13 weeks. We estimate, therefore, that under the current eight-week scheme employers deal with about 5 million spells of sickness per year. The extension will mean that 700,000 of those cases will not be transferred to state sickness benefit but will continue to be paid SSP by employers until the sickness ends or there is a transfer to invalidity benefit at the commencement of the 29th week.

We all know that my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security is one of the most tolerant Members to represent any party in the House in recent years, but even his traditional tolerance started to snap—I felt him quiver at my side like a greyhound ready to leave the trap—when the hon. Member for Oldham, West referred to the saving of £200 million on the extension of SSP as a loss to sick employees. My hon. Friend intervened to make it quite clear that that is not so. The £200 million saving in public expenditure certainly represents sickness benefit that is not paid out, but it is replaced by £285 million paid out in statutory sick pay and recovered by the employer from the national insurance fund through deductions from the national insurance contributions that would otherwise be paid into the fund. Therefore, although I understand the hon. Gentleman's point, I think that it had no substance and that in view of the clear comments of my hon. Friend the Minister I need not labour the matter any further.

Mr. Meacher: Perhaps I may press the matter a little further. It is true that contribution income to the national insurance fund will be reduced by £285 million in a full year as a result of the Government's decision to relieve employers of paying national insurance contributions on employees' SSP, but that is offset to some extent by increases in revenue from tax and national insurance contributions from employees on their statutory sick pay. There is a reversal in the burden of payment which is very much in favour of employers and against employees. The Minister must take that firmly on board.

Mr. Major: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point. He should bear in mind, in the context of the state's capacity to pay, the fact that this change has meant a substantial saving as so few sickness benefit claims are now made through the normal social security system. I do not have the figures here, but that substantial administrative cost saving has meant funds are available for other uses in the social security system. We must consider the broad principle. The scheme has been successful and, with the exception of some of the unharmonious comments of the hon. Member for Oldham, West, it has been broadly welcomed.

Mr. Meacher: The Minister tries to make something out of the savings on administrative costs. He says that he does not have the figures, but I understood the savings to be only £3 million to £4 million. It in no way derogates from my main point.

Mr. Major: I did not find the hon. Gentleman's main point very attractive. Nor do I think that it weighs heavily in the scales against the convenience, principally to the employee, of receiving statutory sick pay in lieu of state sickness benefit from the same source as he receives his salary. It is an administrative convenience of some significance to him, too. I know that the hon. Gentleman is anxious about the beneficiaries of any type of social security benefit. I should have thought that he would regard this as a significant advance. That is our view and I believe that it would be shared by most beneficiaries.

In the midst of his other comments, the hon. Member gave the impression that the extension of statutory sick pay would lead to discrimination against the chronically sick and disabled. I hope that he does not believe that. We have no evidence to that effect. There is no reason to suppose that the scheme will have that effect. In general, disabled people do not have bad attendance records. Indeed, they tend to be very good. Successive Governments have tried to increase awareness that a disabled employee is a good employee whose attendance record, on the evidence available to us, is likely to be better than average.

Some employers might try to avoid employing people likely to have poor attendance records, but I do not believe that statutory sick pay has aggravated that. Employers are more likely to be worried about problems with production and with the employment of temporary staff which frequent absences of their regular employees can result in. As employers are fully compensated for the statutory sick pay that they pay out and, as the hon. Gentleman said, the cost of making that payment, there is no realistic reason for fearing that the extension of the scheme will mean additional discrimination against the chronically sick and disabled. That is the thrust of much that we have tried to do and will do in the Bill that will shortly be presented to the House to ensure that the sick and disabled are treated as well as possible. That is an important priority.

The hon. Gentleman considered other matters beyond the scope of the order. I hope that he will understand that, in your presence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no intention of pursuing them. The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye made several interesting points. I am grateful to him for welcoming the alignment of uprating and the support that he offered. It is a logical extension and, in the absence of the hon. Member for Oldham, West mentioning it, we can conclude that we have his support on that count.

The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye asked about the "Burden on Business" consultation document issued by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security. The consultation period has ended. We are considering the responses. I hope that we shall soon be in a position to reach conclusions on that matter. It was a useful exercise to have the consultation. We have had a number of worthwhile responses.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West welcomed the general principle. Despite some of his comments, the statutory sick pay scheme has been running smoothly and successfully. I should like to take the opportunity to congratulate employers on the way in which they have taken the scheme on board. When it was mooted I think they had reason to be concerned, and many of them expressed concern. Their experience in running the scheme has shown that their concerns were largely unrealised. I am confident that they will equally take in their stride the extension of the period from eight to 28 weeks, not least because it will not lead to anything like a proportionate increase in payments, as might be supposed.

The order proposes an increase in the rates of statutory sick pay so as to keep them in line with the general rise in prices since the rates were last reviewed. Despite some equivocation, I detect no opposition to the order. I hope that the House will feel inclined to approve it without dissent.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Statutory Sick Pay Up-rating Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 17th December, be approved.

Southend Hospital (Radiotherapy Unit)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Mather.]*

11.1 pm

Dr. Michael Clark (Rochford): I wish to discuss an issue of great importance to south-east Essex. I start by expressing appreciation to the local press, which has shown a great interest in the matter, and to the senior surgeon of Southend hospital, who has done the same.

Southend health authority includes Rochford in my constituency and is under North-East Thames regional health authority, as is Oldchurch, the hospital that my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) talked about on Monday evening. So far during 1986 two thirds of the Adjournment debates have been on this one subject. It is significant that North-East Thames regional health authority has come under so much criticism.

At the beginning of my speech I should like to thank my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) for his support this evening. I know I speak for him in many of the things I have to say. Southend health authority is gravely underfunded to the tune of about £6 million a year. Yet it is in a region that is overfunded. That is causing much concern in Southend. How can we manage when we are £6 million short per annum?

To give a little background to the North-East Thames regional health authority, it has five medical schools, more than any other region. Because of boundary changes in 1974 and 1982, the Middlesex hospital, University College hospital and the Royal Free came into that health region. As a result, we have nine radiotherapy units and we have had many staffing problems with senior registrars. It is the London end of the region, not the Essex end and not Southend in particular, that needs sorting out. It is totally wrong that, through an accident of history and boundary changes, Essex should suffer and London should not be sorted out. Essex comprises half the population of the North-East Thames health authority and south-east Essex comprises half the population of Essex.

I referred earlier to the underfunding at Southend. That is due to the region's inability to tackle the problems in London. It is now ironic in the extreme that the region, in trying to rationalise, rather than closing hospitals in London, is proposing to remove the radiotherapy unit from Southend. I know that my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), the Minister for Trade, will agree with my comments. I am delighted that he is present this evening. I realise fully that his ministerial office precludes him from speaking on the issue this evening. However, I believe that I shall be saying many of the things that he would wish to say.

With nine centres for radiotherapy treatment, six of them lie in a four-mile radius on the western edge of the region. The two that lie to the east are Southend and Colchester. It is clear that these locations are not ideal, but the North-East Thames regional health authority proposes to keep four out of six of the London radiotherapy centres and to close both the Essex centres. It is proposed to open a new one at Broomfield near Chelmsford. Perhaps we need to have a radiotherapy centre in the middle of Essex, and perhaps at Broomfield, but not at the expense of Southend.

The four units that will be left in London provide treatment for patients in the North-East Thames region and for patients in the three other Thames regions that join with it. I understand that 75 per cent. of the Middlesex hospital's patients come from outside the region. Perhaps it would be fair to conclude that the underfunding that the Southend health authority has to endure is caused to a large extent by the fact that on the western edge of the region we are treating patients from other regions and not receiving any recompense for so doing.

What is the solution to the problem? I believe that it is to have a full cancer treatment unit at Southend. However, it appears from the report that the Southend option has not been evaluated fully, despite the fact that the team points out that the least expensive option would be to maintain and improve a centre outside London.

The centres that it is recommended should remain open are the ones which involve patients having to travel a long way to receive their treatment. Patients have to travel 61 minutes on average to receive treatment at the Middlesex hospital. The average travelling times for patients receiving treatment at the London hospital, St. Bartholomew's and the Royal Free are 55 minutes, 47 minutes and 37 minutes respectively. Yet the North Middlesex hospital, where the patients in the catchment area have to travel only 33 minutes, will be closed. At the Southend hospital, with patient travelling time of only 35 minutes, the radiotherapy centre is also proposed for closure.

It is proposed in the report that the patients from Southend should be transferred to Broomfield or to London. It is acknowledged that such transfers will involve long journeys because it is proposed in the report that hostels should be provided for those who have to travel these long distances.

It is also mentioned in the report that if the centre were at Southend it would be difficult for half the people in the catchment area to reach the hospital. The converse is that half of those in the catchment area find it very convenient to travel to the Southend hospital. The proposals will merely reverse the two halves of the catchment area.

The report has been described by the medical consultants at the Southend hospital as a waste of £80,000 of public money. It is riddled with errors. There are pages of errata and I can still find some factual and numerical errors that are not listed. It is said that the exercise is not a cost-saving one. If it is not, goodness only knows what its advantages are.

When the team set about reviewing therapy treatment in the North-East Thames region, no consultant surgeons were on the review team, nor a consultant haematologist, despite the fact that both groups of medical experts provide a considerable proportion of the cancer treatment in Southend and elsewhere. It is not surprising that the report was rejected unanimously by the medical staff at Southend hospital.

There has been no consideration given, as it appears in the report, to cancer treatment overall in London. As I have said, in London four regional health authorities come together. It would surely be sensible to consider the London provision in total rather than a quarter at a time. Yet we learn that the same team from Coopers and Lybrand will be undertaking another survey for North-West Thames, again in grand isolation. One performance index that is used in the report is the number of radiotherapy courses that each hospital provides, and conclusions are drawn from that. However, no account is taken of the fact that each hospital has a different number

of linear accelerators. If we consider the number of courses per linear accelerator, we find that Colchester, which is to be closed, is top of the list. Southend is third or fourth. St. Bartholomew's and Middlesex, which are to be kept open, are at the very bottom. St. Bartholomew's has a usage of its linear accelerator of only 37 per cent. of the usage of all the other hospitals, when averaged out. It is clearly the wrong decision to keep these four London units open and to close Southend.

It is also assumed that we can have a regional cancer unit only where there is a CT scanner and so Broomfield is chosen, but that CT scanner is fully loaded and a new one will be needed soon. By the time the transfer takes place in 1991, it is thought that the CT scanner will be obsolete and that nuclearmagnetic resonance scanners will be used instead. So why can Southend not make a bid for one of those and keep the unit at Southend?

The report also assumes that 97 per cent. of Southend's patients will go to Broomfield and that 3 per cent. will travel to London, and yet all the communications in Essex are east-west, or from mid-Essex are radial into London. It is not practical to have communications between Chelmsford and Southend. For example, at present only 4·5 per cent. of patients from mid-Essex come into the Southend area for treatment.

The report ignores the fact that withdrawal of radiotherapy from Southend will have a detrimental effect on acute services at Southend hospital, indeed rendering some of them non-viable. Those of us who take an interest in Southend hospital are very worried that a loss of centres of excellence will mean that Southend hospital will no longer attract top consultants, not only in radiotherapy but in other medical specialties too.

There are no plans in this report to have gynaecology or ear, nose and throat units at Broomfield, but the report does say that the impetus which the regional cancer unit will provide should lead to fresh evaluation of these plans, meaning, presumably, that gynaecology and ear, nose and throat units will be provided at Broomfield in due course, again, perhaps, at the expense of Southend.

The report also says that the unit to be established at Broomfield will be of such a size that it will be twice as big as the units established in London. The Broomfield unit will, in fact, be as large as St. Bartholomew's and the Royal Free put together—far too large and impersonal.

So what conclusions do we reach? What should we do? I am certain that we should have a unit at Southend. We should obtain this by perhaps closing the radiotherapy unit at St. Bartholomew's or at the Middlesex hospital. By all means let us have a radiotherapy unit at Broomfield, but let it be the same size as the units that will exist in London: in other words, half the size proposed in the report. We can then retain the radiotherapy unit at Southend where we already have ear, nose and throat, gynaecology and haematology specialties.

Paragraph 33 of the report draws together criteria on which the location of the cancer treatment unit should be based. It says that there should be

"sufficient patient throughput";
"an adequate range of services including radiotherapy and medical oncology";
"modern machinery";

it should be on the site of a district general hospital; it should

"avoid excessive travel for patients";

it should be on a site where clinical trials, teaching and training go on. Southend meets every one of these criteria. The report is not acceptable, and should not be accepted.

I would like to read a few extracts from a letter that I received only yesterday. I have received many letters on this subject, as have, I am sure, my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East and my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West. Many have come from old people; many have come from those who have assisted others to travel for radiotherapy treatment but this letter is from a young mother of 31. I shall quote extracts from the letter of this cancer sufferer who attends Southend general hospital. She says:

"I am 31 years old and have two children . . . The proposed move of the Southend Radiotherapy Department to Broomfield has just added to the stress and anxiety that I and fellow patients have had to endure. I live five miles from the hospital and am fortunate to be able to drive myself to and from daily treatment. The total travel time is approximately thirty minutes which is endurable. I could never have coped with the ninety minute journey to Broomfield each day. I also have to arrange for my children to be cared for in my absence. I can only manage this with the kindness and goodwill of friends, as I have no relations living nearby."

She implies that, if she were away from home longer, she might not be able to find people to look after her children. She says:

"I have received excellent service at Southend General from a very caring team of professionals . . . To have to stay in a hostel, as is proposed for Broomfield, away from those I needed most, would have considerably increased the anguish and distress I suffered . . . The travelling time for already very ill and distressed patients would be increased, bringing misery and hardship. I feel that the level of patient care would fall dramatically due to the size of the new unit. This will surely outweigh any financial benefits that a centralised unit would offset . . . I have not read one press report or spoken to any individual to date who is in favour of the scheme of moving cancer treatment miles away from the most heavily populated area of Essex."

Neither have I. I have not come across a constituent, medical specialist, Member of Parliament, press reporter or anyone else who thinks that this is a good idea. I call upon my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State to reject the report, to think again, to leave the unit at Southend and to boost it.

11.16 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Member needs the consent of the hon. Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark) and the Under-Secretary of State to intervene. If it is given, the hon. Member may proceed.

Mr. Taylor: I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark) on raising this important issue. I assure the House that all hon. Members who are covered by the Southend health authority agree absolutely with everthing said by my hon. Friend.

I appreciate that this is a matter for the region. I am sure, however, that the region will bear very much in mind the views of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State. I hope that he will confirm that the Government believe that health care is an exercise not just in accountancy but in the care of people. I hope also that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State is aware of the profound resentment over many years about underfunding. That resentment will increase if this proposal is accepted.

I thank my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for giving me a minute to say those words.

11.17 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Ray Whitney): I am happy to have the opportunity to reply to the powerful points put by my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark) and the effective points graciously and briefly put by my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor). I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) for being here tonight. I recognise the vows of silence and virtues that his position requires of him.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rochford pointed out that two thirds of the Adjournment debates so far this year have focused on the backwash of the review of cancer treatment services that has been commissioned by the north-east Thames region. Had I not been aware of that concern before, I certainly would be by now. I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to pass on my assurance to their constituents that their concern is recognised and to pass on also my points about the situation, as I understand it, on the basis of a review called for by the region. I should like to correct a number of misconceptions.

It is important to understand why this review was put in hand. My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East in his succinct remarks made reference to the financial issues. I hope it is accepted that the idea that the review was instigated simply to save money is not correct. The basis for the review was to look at the way in which the services, including radiotherapy, for people suffering from cancer are currently provided within the region's area, and to see whether those services could be improved. I take the point made by both my hon. Friends about the quality of service to their constituents being the point at issue. This is why the review was launched, and the review and then the region must achieve the best solution.

At this stage it is not for me to say whether the report has got it right. I am well aware that some people hold the view that the report has not got it right. I am bound to say I am not too impressed by the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford suggested that one or one or two press reporters said the review had got it wrong. I am not impressed by their opinion, but I am impressed by the worries expressed by my hon. Friends and their constituents and it is important for that to be taken into account.

Dr. Michael Clark: And the medical profession.

Mr. Whitney: I will certainly come to that: that must be taken into account. I have no doubt that our proceedings tonight and on Monday will be taken into account by the regional health authority. The need for a review of the service was clearly set out in the regional strategic plan published in July 1984. I hope my hon. Friends will agree that this approach as a principle must be right.

We are looking for a continually improving Health Service and that is why we continue, in real terms, to put more of the nation's resources into the Health Service. Since 1979, 20 per cent. more in real terms has been devoted to the Health Service, and the projection for the next financial year is that our increase will probably be 2 per cent. above the rate of inflation. Our commitment to devoting an increasing amount of resources to the Health Service is clear, but we must also look at the way those resources are used, or the service will stagnate. This often means that changes are required and, of course, changes are unsettling and sometimes difficult. I hope that none of us will feel that the Health Service has no right to debate such issues. That must be what a sensible service is about. This review was to look at exactly the sort of service that is needed.

The report argues the medical case for concentrating the specialised cancer services. I suggest to my hon. Friends that it is important to accept that concentration of specialised services, including radiotherapy, into specialised centres. The report believes that would improve the quality of care and the service to patients. That is the first issue to be debated: is the report right about that?

It may be that some of my hon. Friend's medical consultants and specialists in Southend did not agree with the conclusions. I would certainly not say they are wrong, but it is fair to recognise that the medical chairman of the review team, Professor Whitehouse, is a distinguished specialist in the field. He is the professor of medical oncology at Southampton university. His conclusion and the conclusion of his team was that there should be five specialised centres, compared with the existing nine radiotherapy units. Should there be five? I am not saying whether there should be or not, but if so, where should they be?

That leads us to yet another difficult issue. There are special cases which have the problems of accessibility to which my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford referred tonight and to which my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) referred on Monday night. That matter will be taken into account when the regional health authority considers the results of its working party.

Many of the services needed by cancer patients can and should be provided in every district. The report is clear about that. My hon. Friend the Member for Rochford read a letter from his lady constituent. I do not know the details of her case, but to reassure her I ask him to tell her that this is not a matter of the elimination of a service.

We are talking about specialised services, and by definition, they cannot be everywhere. It is not a matter of resources. It makes no more medical than economic sense to provide the degree of specialisation about which we are talking. Services such as radiotherapy must be established to serve a relatively large population to attract sufficient patients to enable clinicians to sustain and develop their expertise. Too wide a dispersal of facilities and staff, and such expertise is not developed and the increasingly high standard of patient care for which we are looking is not achieved. That is one of the problems that must be tackled by the RHA. It is one with which the review team sought to deal, but clearly not to everyone's satisfaction.

I hope that my hon. Friends accept that a valid exercise was conducted. A balance must be struck between poorer access with greater travel problems and a better service. This is not merely a matter of finance.

It is not for me or my right hon. Friend to make a judgment on this case. My hon. Friends will recognise the process. The report was put out to public consultation in September 1985 and the period for comments finished at the end of the year. The health authority's working party has been established and the health authority will consider its findings in the spring.

If the RHA agrees to changes—those recommended or others arising from the full consultation and the debate, of which this is part—then in the usual way there will

be local consultation on any changes to local services or closures. Again, in the usual way, if any of the proposals are opposed by any of the relevant community health councils then the matter will be referred, via the RHA, to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for a decision. In those circumstances, I am sure that my hon. Friends understand that it would not be appropriate for me to comment in detail on the proposals at this stage.

It must be right that regions can launch reviews and examine better ways of producing a higher standard of specialised patient care in any faculty.

My hon. Friends the Members for Rochford and for Southend, East referred specifically to Southend's financial position. In resource allocation working party terms, Southend is an underfunded district in an overfunded region. My hon. Friend the Member for Rochford referred to £6 million. I understand that that figure is the amount by which it is estimated that Southend is below its target. In other words, it is 17 per cent. below its target. The latest revision shows that Southend is about 5 per cent. below its target, or £2 million below it on an allocation of £40 million. Be that as it may, the region is firmly committed to the policy of securing a fairer distribution of resources between its districts. I understand that in the financial year 1985-86 the region has allocated extra funds—about £500,000—to Southend. I hope that that is accepted.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rochford referred to London needing to be sorted out. Perhaps it does need that. The movement of RAWP towards ensuring that there will be greater equality in terms of services and provision is recognised and accepted, but it has to be brought about at a measured and tolerable pace, otherwise the consequences, even within an expanding budget, given the increase in the number of doctors and nurses and the increase in pay levels, in real terms, that we are achieving——

The Question having been proposed after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at twenty-nine minutes to Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 16 January 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

POOLE BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL *[Lords]*
Considered; to be read the Third time.

PETERHEAD HABOURS (SOUTH BAY DEVELOPMENT) ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL *(By Order)*
Order for consideration read.
To be considered upon Thursday 23 January.

Oral Answers to Questions

NATIONAL FINANCE

City of London

1. **Mr. Hoyle** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to meet the Governor of the Bank of England to discuss affairs relating to the regulation of the City of London.

15. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next expects to meet the Governor of the Bank of England.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): I have frequent discussions with the Governor of the Bank of England on a variety of matters.

Mr. Hoyle: Has the Chancellor held any discussions with the chairman of Lloyd's? Will he also have discussions with Mr. Ian Hay Davison, who was the chief executive of the Lloyd's Council? Does he believe that the inquiry into Lloyd's set up by his right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will restore confidence in a tainted City? If the inquiry produces an adverse report, what steps will be taken to implement its proposals as quickly as possible to put matters right?

Mr. Lawson: The hon. Gentleman is a day late. Trade and Industry Question Time was yesterday, and Lloyd's is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend. I do have responsibilities in the City, and I object strongly to the hon. Gentleman's reference to a tainted City. Certain parts of the City are tainted, but to suggest that the City as a whole is tainted is wrong. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will withdraw that remark.

Mr. Bruce: As this week the Government have yet again been forced to raise interest rates, and as the highest real level in interest rates ever has come about during their period in office, when the Chancellor next meets the Governor of the Bank of England will he accede to his request to join the European monetary system and so help to stabilise the pound without having to impose such high and penal rates of interest?

Mr. Lawson: There are arguments both for and against joining the EMS. However, if the hon. Gentleman imagines that joining will mean that it will never again be necessary to raise interest rates, he is misinformed.

Mr. McCrindle: Next time my right hon. Friend speaks to the Governor of the Bank of England about the City of London, will he, on behalf of the thousands of my constituents who earn an honest living in the square mile, tell him that there is a considerable amount of irritation at the imputations by Opposition Members and others that the reputation of the City has been hopelessly besmirched? Will my right hon. Friend take that opportunity to underline the fact that that is not the case over a very wide area of activity? Will he remind the Governor, if any reminding is necessary, of the major contributions to the economy of this country made by invisible exports from the City?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend is right. The City is pre-eminent among the financial markets of the world and makes a substantial contribution to the British economy in many different respects. Whatever may be said by Opposition Members below the Gangway, I am sure that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) would not wish to denigrate the City in the way that many of his hon. Friend's have done.

Mr. Skinner: Does not the Chancellor have a cheek to suggest that my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) was wrong to criticise the City and say that it is tainted? Did not the Attorney-General, some nine or 10 months ago, in reply to a letter from a Tory Member, say that he found the level of City fraud unacceptable? Why did he say that? It was simply because at that time the PCW syndicate, whose two principals were Peter Cameron-Webb and Peter Dixon, had managed to get rid of about £130 million from Lloyd's—money that they had pocketed themselves. They have never been brought to book by the fraud squad. Why are the Government not doing something about it? Of course there is a scandal in the City, but this Government are not doing anything because most of them——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is not an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Lawson: That accusation, which you may not have been able to hear Mr. Speaker, was a particularly scandalous one.

The Government have long been concerned about the problem and growth of financial fraud. One of the first tasks that I peformed on becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1983—long before Opposition Members were talking about the problem — was to chair an interministerial group, out of which arose the setting up of the fraud investigation group which came into being on 1 January 1985. In 1983, long before the Opposition were alive to the problems, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, when he was Home Secretary, set up the Roskill committee with the Lord Chancellor to look into the legal aspects. That

committee has just published a powerful report. As the House knows, we shall be legislating on that matter in the next Session.

Mr. Hickmet: Is my right hon. Friend concerned at the level of investment and penetration of our markets by Japanese banks and financial institutions in the City, especially as they are not subject to the Bank of England prudential lending limits? Has he discussed that matter with the Governor of the Bank of England, bearing in mind the steps taken by the Japanese to prevent our banks from competing in their markets on similar terms? What steps does he propose to take?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend has raised an important matter. In general terms I think that the City of London and the United Kingdom have benefited from the existence of overseas banks and financial institutions in the City and the country. However, there has been a lack of reciprocity. We are increasingly making it clear that reciprocity is the name of the game. If Japanese financial institutions want to have an increasing presence in the City of London, then what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I am glad to say that there have been many recent instances of British financial institutions obtaining licences to operate in Japan as a result of the strong line that the Government have taken.

Mr. Hattersley: When does the Chancellor propose to announce the membership of the new board of banking supervision? Can we be assured that it will include members from outside the self-protected charmed circle of the City itself?

Mr. Lawson: The membership will be chosen on the basis of the ability and experience of the individuals concerned. I shall bear the comments of the right hon. Gentleman in mind. I deprecate his implication that anybody who comes from what he calls the "charmed circle of the City" must be in some way tainted.

Mr. Speaker: May I ask for brief questions, and that will lead to brief answers.

Shares, Savings and Investments

2. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of people holding shares, savings or any other kind of investment in 1978 and 1984; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Treasury (Mr. Peter Brooke): The number who own shares directly has at least doubled since 1978 to over 3 million people, and recent market research suggests that the figure may now be much higher.

Mr. Greenway: I welcome that magnificent spread of wealth in the country. May I ask how many people who have been saving for old age with pension and insurance companies would lose if privatised companies were renationalised on the discriminatory basis so rashly announced by the Leader of the Labour party in his new year interview? What would those people do?

Mr. Brooke: The number involved would be affected according to which shares were held by which institutions. However, 13 million electors hold occupational pensions, and if there were privatised shares in those institutions they would all be mulcted of the improvements in the price since they were served.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: Will the Minister admit that in the case of all the privatised companies, shortly after privatisation the number of small shareholders has decreased dramatically? In the case of British Aerospace, recently in the news, within 12 months the number of shareholders holding fewer than 500 shares went down to almost 10 per cent. of those who had bought them at the point of privatisation. Will the Minister tell the House the truth — that privatisation is not about wider share ownership, but is about the hands of some of his hon. Friends going into the jam pots to make money for themselves and their backers?

Mr. Brooke: Individual decisions about individual shares will be taken differently, according to the company, by individual investors. The fact remains that 80 per cent. of the new shareholders in British Telecom still hold those shares.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: Does my hon. Friend's Department look favourably at ways, such as minor tax changes, that might encourage people to invest not only in equities but in debentures and other forms of investment?

Mr. Brooke: The Government are supportive of sales of debentures in the same way as they are of equities.

Income Tax

3. **Mr. Chope** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the effective marginal tax rate on earnings of those in the lowest tax band; and how this compares with other major industriai countries.

6. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the effective marginal tax rate on earnings of those in the lowest tax band; and how this compares with other major industrial countries.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John Moore): The marginal income tax rate on earnings for those in the lowest tax band in this country is 30 per cent. This is the second highest national rate among the OECD countries.

Mr. Chope: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. Does he agree that our marginal tax rate is far too high, particularly for those on low earnings, when compared with 10 per cent. in France and 11 per cent. in the United States? Does he also agree that the high marginal rate is contributing to the increase in the black economy?

Mr. Moore: There is no question but that the high marginal rate, as well as the problem of regulation, has an impact on the black economy. That is one of the factors in the burden of taxation. I concur with my hon. Friend's two specific points: the United States rate is 11 per cent. and the French initial rate is 10 per cent.

Dr. Twinn: Does my right hon. Friend agree that these are startling comparisons? Does he know of any of our competitors with such a high rate?

Mr. Moore: The only nation with a rate above us in the OECD is Ireland. To give some illustrations, the United States rate is 11 per cent., Japan 11 per cent., West Germany 22 per cent. and France 10 per cent. All our industrial competitors have an initial rate substantially below ours.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is it correct that other countries have a different starting level at which one begins to pay tax, that virtually every PAYE taxpayer pays only the standard rate, and that therefore the tax system is hardly progressive for higher earners?

Mr. Moore: It is right that the initial rate starts at a different point. In the United States, for example, the average production worker has a threshold that starts at about 17 per cent. of his overall initial wage against the United Kingdom comparison of 27 per cent. The hon. Gentleman is right to say that on thresholds we are approximately in the middle of the OECD ranking.

Mr. Terry Davis: Has the Financial Secretary noticed that the question refers to the effective marginal tax rate, which is usually taken to include national insurance and other surcharges? Will he confirm that the new family credit scheme and the proposed changes in housing benefit suggested in the Fowler review mean that the number of people facing an effective marginal tax rate of more than 70 per cent. will be doubled from 250,000 to 500,000?

Mr. Moore: I reconfirm that the question relates to the effective marginal tax rate as opposed to the national insurance rate. I draw to the attention of the House the fact that the proposals of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services reduce below 100 per cent. for the first time all the effective marginal rates.

Mr. Alan Howarth: If my right hon. Friend has occasion, with his colleagues, to reflect on the respective merits of lowering the basic rate of income tax or increasing the threshold at which it is paid, will he bear in mind that there are important economic and indeed constitutional arguments in favour of making the Government, in their public expenditure, accountable to a larger rather than a smaller number of taxpayers?

Mr. Moore: That point has beeen made in public debate. I shall draw it to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer if there is scope to reduce taxes—one cannot say at this time—when he considers his Budget.

Northern Region

4. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the amount of new finance available for the northern region as a consequence of his autumn statement.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John MacGregor): It is not practicable to estimate the incidence of new finance over the whole range of Government expenditure on a regional basis.

Mr. Dormand: Is the Minister aware that I have asked a similar question on every Budget statement made since the Government came to office in 1979 and that each time I have received a similar reply? I expected something different for a change — that there will be an improvement in the northern region. What is different about this answer? If the Minister and the Government genuinely wish to make an impact upon the 230,000 unemployed people in the northern region, may I suggest that he takes the initiative and seeks to establish a northern development agency and—this is important—makes the same sums of money and resources available to it as are available to the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies.

Mr. MacGregor: I do not know whether the reply that I shall give is the same as the one that the hon. Gentleman has received in the past.

Mr. Dormand: I hope not.

Mr. MacGregor: It is not possible to estimate the amount of new finance, because a great deal of public expenditure is demanded or comes from procurement policies which depend upon decisions about competitive tenders by firms in different parts of the country. There are many good reasons why it is not possible to estimate the range of new finance.

On the hon. Gentleman's second question, he will be aware that substantial sums—over £2 billion—have been spent in the northern region on many activities of the kind in which the SDA becomes involved — regional, development, industrial and urban grants, and so on. There has been substantial expenditure. I am well aware of the northern region's problems, which are long-term. To pour taxpayers' money on them is not the sole answer.

Mr. Forth: I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the consistency of his approach to this matter, as illustrated by his answer to the last question. Does he recognise that if there are to be any bids from regions for assistance, the west midlands region must also be considered because, regrettably, unemployment is still distressingly high there? He should not be allowed to get away with the idea that the problems exist only in the north or in the other fringe areas of the United Kingdom. The heart of England equally needs recognition of its problems.

Mr. MacGregor: I well understand that the problems of restructuring regional industrial areas, many of which are dependent upon traditional industries, are not confined to the northern region.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Is the Minister aware that there has been a 57 per cent. cut in regional aid to the northern region since the Government came to office and that further cuts are forecast in the public expenditure White Paper published yesterday? In addition, a £2·6 billion cut in public capital expenditure is forecast in the White Paper. Will that not be further devastating to the northern region? Is not the truth of the matter that the Government have given up hope of ever helping the northern region?

Mr. MacGregor: Not at all, because substantial sums have been poured into the northern region. One of the key elements is the new jobs in the new industries coming to the northern region—some 21,000 in the electronics and pharmaceutical industries. It takes a long time to restructure an economy, but those things are happening. We have altered the course of regional development aid because there was no clear evidence that some of the money being spent was cost-effective. Since the northern region still has a high proportion of its area covered by assisted area status, proportionately it will benefit a good deal more from the new policy.

Mr. Bell: Is the Minister aware that the consistency to which he referred means that the north-east is continually going downhill? Whereas the Government say that 55,000 people are unemployed in the county of Cleveland, the figures released by the county council planning department show that there are 71,300 people unemployed. Is he aware of the study last year which found that

£350 million needs to be invested in the northern region to cover the revamping of houses, roads and schools? Where is there provision for that?

Mr. MacGregor: If we are to maintain the downward pressure on inflation, which is important for northern region industries and those everywhere else, and if we are to contain the cost of public expenditure as a proportion of GNP, which is also important for those industries, there are inevitably constraints on the total level of public spending. In this White Paper we have increased public expenditure on housing renovation and roads compared with last year's White Paper.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is it not true that the Government intend to make a further 40 per cent. cut in environmental and industrial expenditure in the northern region by the time of the next general election? Is it not equally true that at a time when those cuts are taking place in the northern region, Northern Ireland, for some reason, is being insulated from public expenditure cuts? Why is Northern Ireland insulated in this way? Why is it intended that Northern Ireland should get an increase by 1988? Is it that violence in Ulster is paying? Is it that the Government are refusing to admit that the higher the level of violence in Northern Ireland, the more money the Government are willing to sink in? Is that not a disgrace?

Mr. Macgregor: The way in which public expenditure in Northern Ireland is calculated in the areas to which the hon. Gentleman refers is the same under this Government as it was under the Labour Government. It is done by a block formula arrangement which reflects the same trends in expenditure and income.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim: Is my right hon. Friend aware that any money spent on trying to create jobs in the northern region almost invariably means fewer jobs in other hard-hit areas like the east midlands, which have received virtually no Government aid?

Mr. MacGregor: It is important that we can at least say that any regional aid has some possibility of being cost effective in creating jobs. That is what we have done in our regional policy.

Mortgage Interest (Tax Relief)

5. **Mr. Jessel** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on tax relief on mortgage interest.

Mr. MacGregor: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on the subject.

Mr. Jessel: Do the Government accept that mortgage interest relief, especially to young home buyers, is vital and must continue? Is not the £30,000 mortgage limit now rather on the low side in areas where an ordinary family house now costs £50,000 to £80,000?

Mr. MacGregor: The £30,000 limit is a matter for decision in each Finance Bill. My hon. Friend would not expect me to make a statement about that today. The Government have made it clear on many occasions that they have no intention of abolishing mortgage interest relief, for the very reason given by my hon. Friend. We are still awaiting similar clear and categorical assurances from the Opposition.

Dr. Bray: Is the Chief Secretary aware that if Government policy to preserve broadly the present level of exchange rate remains, the prospect in the medium term is of increasing, not falling, interest rates?

Mr. MacGregor: I shall not make any comments about interest rates. The hon. Gentleman will have noticed that the question is about tax relief.

Mr. Gow: Will my right hon. Friend remind the House what the level for tax relief on mortgage interest would be if the initial figure of £25,000 were to be updated to take account both of inflation and of the increase in house prices?

Mr. MacGregor: Off the cuff, I cannot recall the answer to that question, although I used to take a close interest in the matter. I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Hattersley: On the rhetorical question which the Chief Secretary so carefully prepared, may I offer him a spontaneous but categorical answer? There is no question of the next Labour Government, whom he clearly anticipates, abolishing mortgage interest tax relief. May I ask the Chief Secretary, on the subject of the question rather than on the subject of his slightly inappropriate question to me, how many representations he has received from owner-occupiers about the hardship they are now suffering through having to endure the highest real mortgage interest rate in the history of this country?

Mr. MacGregor: We have received no such representations. It is interesting to note that over the period of this Government the number of people who have moved into home-ownership has expanded enormously. That trend is continuing, and there remains a high demand for mortgage funds and owner-occupied housing.

Mr. Penhaligon: I am sure that there will be general pleasure at hearing that mortgage interest relief will be retained, regardless of the colour of the Government. However, whatever the logic of the current situation, can the Minister explain why, if somebody succeeds in increasing his income, while he is in possession of a mortgage, from £10,000 to £100,000 a year, that great increase in his personal income should be accommodated by a double subsidy from the Government towards his interest payments?

Mr. MacGregor: I did not fully catch the hon. Gentleman's question, but if he is referring to the range of income and mortgage interest relief he will know that the fact that mortgage interest relief applies to the tax rates reflects the fact that some people are paying much higher rates of tax.

Car Tax

7. **Mr. Pawsey** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received advocating the abolition of car tax.

Mr. Brooke: A number of such representations have been received.

Mr. Pawsey: Is my hon. Friend aware that only the motor industry is discriminated against by having imposed upon it a separate and additional tax? Does he agree that if it were abolished it would benefit both the consumer and the motor industry and would lead to a substantial number of additional jobs?

Mr. Brooke: My hon. Friend knows that the car tax was introduced in 1973 mainly to compensate for the revenue lost from cars when the purchase tax rate of 25 per cent. was replaced by the standard rate of VAT. If car tax were abolished, a significant proportion of any increased demand would probably be met by imports, which currently represent about 58 per cent. of new car sales.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Having regard to the number of industries which serve the British motor industry, would not the abolition of the car tax have a significant effect upon employment in the motor industry?

Mr. Brooke: Taxation is only one of the factors that affects the demand for cars. Per capita income, manufacturers' unit production costs and pricing policies also affect demand. However, I take my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Park: I appreciate the Minister's explanation of how the tax came to be introduced in the first place. Is he aware that if he were to remove this unique tax it would be more than compensated for by the increase in car sales? Austin-Rover, having been asked, is confident that it would be able to gain a full proportion of the increase in sales if the tax were abolished.

Mr. Brooke: A useful rationalisation has taken place within the United Kingdom motor industry, but excess capacity in western Europe and elsewhere remains. Imports, therefore, remain a considerable risk. However, I am delighted to say that the optimistic climate created by the Government has led to expansion at Vauxhall, Lotus, Jaguar and Peugeot.

Mr. Snape: Does the Minister accept that this tax is a unique imposition upon the British volume car manufacturer and that it is yet another example of this Government shooting British industry in the foot, to the benefit of its foreign competitors?

Mr. Brooke: This car tax applies to all manufacturers, whether they are foreign or British manufacturers.

Mr. Nicholls: Should not any mitigation of the car tax take second place to doing something about the fact that a constituent of mine can earn £91 a week as a nurse and then find that she has a take-home pay of only £68? Is not that the kind of thing that ought to take pride of place as regards any mitigation of tax?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is ingenious, but it is a bit wide of the question.

Mr. Brooke: That seems to me to be a Budget question and it would be inappropriate for me to anticipate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Economic Growth

8. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is satisfied with the progress of the United Kingdom's real economy in terms of manufacturing output and overall growth since the beginning of 1985.

Mr. Lawson: Manufacturing output and GDP are expected to have grown by 2½ and 3½ per cent. respectively.

Mr. Dykes: Both the real and the money figures since 1984 and 1981—the low point—look quite good in certain manufacturing sectors, but the real, ominous truth remains that in the leading manufacturing sectors the figures in unit, quantity or volume terms are well down both on 1979 and on 1973. Can my right hon. Friend say, to reassure all of us, that there are other manufacturing sectors—in volume, quantity and unit of output terms, not in money terms—where there has been a big growth since 1984 and 1981? Can he reassure us once again about the miracle of the monetarist counter-revolution?

Mr. Lawson: If my hon. Friend is looking for miracles he will not find them anywhere, least of all in the policy changes that he would like to see.

As regards manufacturing, he is quite right. There are some industries that have not done so well and others that have done very much better. Taking manufacturing output as a whole during the lifetime of this Parliament, and up to the third quarter of last year, which is the latest figure that we have, the output of manufacturing industry as a whole is up by more than 7½ per cent. in real terms.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: We can discount the Minister's optimism, because he is so desperate for signs of good cheer that he would greet the quickening of rigor mortis as a healthy symptom. If he really wants to get the economy going, why does he not bring the pound down from its artifically high level and stop subsidising imports and penalising exports? He could do that by reducing interest rates, which crucify everyone?

Mr. Lawson: The hon. Member imagines that devaluation is a cure for everything. No doubt he would also recommend it as a cure for rigor mortis.

Mr. Higgins: Does my right hon. Friend agree that as regards manufacturing industry there are two important points? One is the improvement in productivity by a reduction of overmanning, as many companies now find that they can produce the same amount with two thirds of the original labour force. Secondly, profitability in manufacturing industry is probably higher now than in the past decade.

Mr. Lawson: My right hon. Friend is right. One of the most encouraging signs has been the increase in productivity to which he referred, both in the whole economy and in manufacturing in particular. Manufacturing productivity, for example, during the life of this Parliament—taking the same period as I took earlier—is up by almost 10 per cent. It is necessary, however, as the CBI fully recognises, if we want to see more of our people in work, for industry to have a tighter grip of wage increases.

Dr. McDonald: Could the Chancellor tell the House his current thinking about the impact on British manufacturing output of the highest interest rates ever, higher than those of all the other major industrial countries?

Mr. Lawson: I indicated at the time of the autumn statement that the outlook was promising for output, and it has not changed since then. It is striking that, unlike the recovery under the Labour Government, in the recovery during the lifetime of this Government we have seen a rate of growth of capital investment, including investment in manufacturing, of 4 per cent. a year compared with 1¼ per cent. a year for investment under Labour.

I do not wish to see interest rates higher than necessary, any more that anyone else does, but I would much rather

have them at this level than have the negative real interest rates that we had under the Labour Government, which were cheating every saver in the land.

Revenue (Oil Prices)

9. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make a statement on the consequences for United Kingdom revenue of the change in oil prices.

Mr. Lawson: I have nothing to add to what I said in the debate on the autumn statement.

Mr. Kirkwood: In what circumstances would changes in the sterling price of oil justify changes in the Government's borrowing requirement targets?

Mr. Lawson: Changes in the sterling price of oil, if there were such changes—which would have an effect on oil revenues—would certainly be one of the things that I would take into account in deciding the appropriate PSBR at the time of the Budget. But it would be only one of a number of factors.

Mr. David Howell: Will my right hon. Friend tell us whether it is correct that Ministers are proposing to talk, or are already talking, to Saudi Arabia about oil prices? Whilst, in the interest of world stability, it would be better to prevent a huge collapse in oil prices, will my right hon. Friend assure us that it remains the policy of the Government to let oil prices settle themselves in the market? Will he accept that, providing there is no large collapse, it should not over-influence him in his decisions about tax cuts in the forthcoming Budget?

Mr. Lawson: I am happy to reassure my right hon. Friend that policy in these matters is exactly the same as it was when he was at the Department of Energy and when I was at that same Department.

Income Tax

10. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what increase in take-home pay would be received by a person earning £140 per week if the basic rate of income tax was reduced from 30 to 28 per cent.

Mr. Moore: The increase would be £1·90 per week for a single person or working wife, and £1·39 for a married man in 1986-87, based on the illustrative allowances shown in the autumn statement.

Mr. MacKay: Is my right hon. Friend aware that if we are really serious about trying to help the lower paid by means of any tax cuts that we make in the forthcoming Budget, the best way of going about it would be to raise thresholds and reduce national insurance contributions for those on lower pay, when the take-home pay would be much greater than that which he has just announced?

Mr. Moore: I know that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be interested in the views of my hon. Friend and others. I know that my hon. Friend wrote to my right hon. Friend on 10 December expressing some of those views in detail. Regarding the reductions in the basic rate of £1·90 a week for a single person, if the same amount were applied on thresholds for a single person, the amount would be £1·44, or 50p less.

Group of Five Nations (Finance Ministers)

11. **Mr. Freeman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next plans to meet Finance Ministers of the Group of Five nations to discuss international monetary affairs.

Mr. Lawson: The Finance Ministers of the Group of Five nations meet from time to time for this purpose.

Mr. Freeman: Does my right hon. Friend agree that since the Finance Ministers of the Group of Five last met in New York four months ago, their plan to reduce the value of the dollar has worked, the dollar has weakened against sterling by about 5 per cent., and the rate with the deutschmark has changed by about 10 per cent. to a rate of approximately DM 3·50 to the pound? Does that give him confidence for his forthcoming meeting with the Group of Five Ministers?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend makes a good point. Certainly before the G5 meeting the general view of those in industry was that, whereas the dollar was too high and could well come down, the mark could go up a little against sterling. Since the Plaza meeting sterling has risen 5 per cent. against the dollar and fallen by 9 per cent. against the deutschmark.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: Is it not clear that Western countries depend on the present buoyant economy of the United States? Should not Germany and Japan, let alone ourselves, do more to stimulate our economies, and so play our part in a continued resurgence of activity in western Europe, America and Japan?

Mr. Lawson: It is possible to exaggerate considerably both the extent to which growth in the world economy is dependent on growth in the United States, and the extent to which that has slowed down. That growth has slowed down from an unsustainable rate, but it is continuing in the United States and quickening in the Federal Republic of Germany. One would certainly like to see the Japanese pursue a more generous policy than at present.

Mr. John Browne: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the international economy is being severely hurt by an international trade war, which this time is being carried on by competitive devaluations of currencies? Does he further accept that such a trade war could be stopped if we were to move towards fixed exchange rates and honest international money, that is, if there were some restoration of gold convertibility on a gold exhange standard? When he meets his G5 friends, will he please undertake to consider the restoration of stability in world monetary and financial affairs, in the hope that that will reflect on the world economy in terms of genuine trade growth?

Mr. Lawson: I certainly take note of what my hon. Friend said. He will not expect me to answer all his points. I am sure that the strength and durability of the world recovery since the world recession in the early 1980s, and the growth of world trade that has accompanied it, depend on the fact that all the countries involved are pursuing anti-inflationary, sound money policies.

Mr. Blair: Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer agree that now is the last time to be complacent about the international economy? Does he not realise that it still faces the terrible, pressing problems of world debt and a potential decline in economic growth? Will he assure us

that when he meets the Group of Five he will be at the forefront of calls for a co-ordinated cut in interest rates and policies of expansion, and will not indulge in absurd notions of leaving those matters to market forces?

Mr. Lawson: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the Finance Ministers of the Group of Five are fully seized of the problem of international debt and of the need to maintain sound anti-inflationary polices, both for their own sake and to ensure a continuation of world recovery.

Wage Increases

12. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next intends to meet the National Economic Development Council to discuss the level of wage increases.

Mr. MacGregor: The impact of wage increases on jobs was discussed at a meeting of the council on 8 January.

Mr. Haynes: When the Chancellor of the Exchequer next meets the NEDC to discuss the question of wages, will he bear in mind that many lower paid workers do not even pay income tax because of their circumstances? If he reduces income tax in the coming Budget, he will not help them very much. While he is having a go at the workers, will he have a go at his hon. Friends in the very high income bracket who have been receiving massive increases every year since he came into office?

Mr. MacGregor: May I make it absolutely clear that it would be wrong for me to say anything about what the Chancellor might do in the forthcoming Budget.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Butterfill** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be giving a dinner for his Majesty King Hussein of Jordan.

Mr. Butterfill: Will my right hon. Friend join me in welcoming the initiative taken by ACAS in securing a meeting next Tuesday between the employers and the majority—one hopes all—of the teachers' unions to discuss negotiations on their pay claim? Will she share with me the hope that the National Union of Teachers will at last recognise that, if we are to have discussions about the amount that teachers should be paid, we should also have discussions about what they are supposed to do for the money?

The Prime Minister: We hope that ACAS is able to help the two sides to reach a satisfactory conclusion. The Government, like parents, want to see an early end to this damaging dispute, but I agree with my hon. Friend that it is our objective to have a statement that clearly defines teachers' duties and to have a pay structure that gives better pay to better teachers. That remains our objective.

Q2. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Haynes: When did the Prime Minister first learn of the letter sent by the Solicitor-General to the former Secretary of State for Defence?

The Prime Minister: I do not have the precise dates with me—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member will repeat the question, I will see whether from my recollection I can give him an answer. Will he repeat his question? I am sorry, but I did not quite get it.

Mr. Haynes: Will the Prime Minister tell the House when she first learnt of the letter sent by the Solicitor-General to the former Secretary of State for Defence? That is the second time.

The Prime Minister: Fairly soon after it was written, when it was sent to the Department—*[Interruption.]* I cannot give the hon. Gentleman the precise time or day, for obvious reasons.

Mr. Heseltine: May I ask my right hon. Friend, in between her other meetings, whether she can answer for me a question arising out of yesterday's debate, at column 1167, where the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry quoted from the records of the meetings that took place on 4 and 17 October? Would it now be in order, as he has quoted from those documents, for me to add a few words to the quotations?

The Prime Minister: As my right hon. Friend knows, matters of order are not for me. I am not quite certain whether my right hon. and learned Friend quoted direct from the documents. As I heard him, he was giving the gist of the information. I am not sure whether he quoted direct. The precise point of order my right hon. Friend would clear with other people.

Q3. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Nellist: Is the Prime Minister aware of how appalled the country is at the succession of half-truths and naked, political ambition of recent days alongside the total disregard for the future of the jobs of Westland workers? Is she not appalled at the sharks of the City picking over the bones of Westland shares—the same people whose hands are bloody over recent redundancies in Coventry, South-East? Is the Prime Minister further aware that neither bid guarantees jobs at Westland, and that the only way to a secure, long-term future for the helicopter industry is public ownership and an expanded civilian programme?

The Prime Minister: I do not believe that the future for Westland lies in public ownership. We have great regard for the people who work there and for their future. I hope that for that reason the matter will be speedily resolved.

Mr. Michael Marshall: My right hon. Friend will be aware of my interest in British Aerospace, as declared in the Members' Register. Specifically on the question of the meeting between my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Sir Raymond Lygo on Wednesday 8 January, does my right hon. Friend accept that a close reading of the documents now

available, together with other evidence, suggests a case of genuine misunderstanding, which I hope will help us to understand some of the problems?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I think that that is correct. I am glad that those accounts have been fully published.

Mr. Kinnock: Given the extent, the closeness and the frequency of the contract between Sir Raymond Lygo and United States Government aerospace interests, does the Prime Minister agree that he is the last man who would need to be advised by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry? Does that not make the excuse offered by the Secretary of State for the meeting on 8 January somewhat thin? Was not the real purpose of that meeting, not to advise, but to menace?

The Prime Minister: No one would ever accuse Sir Raymond Lygo of being anti-American in any way whatsoever. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State gave his own account of the meeting and why he thought it was advisable to have it at the time. I have nothing to add to that.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister then answer the question, which she evaded yesterday and which her right hon. and learned Friend did not answer? Can she think of any plausible reason whatsoever why Sir Raymond Lygo should falsify either the words or the meaning of the meeting on 8 January? Is there any feasible reason why Sir Raymond should say that the Secretary of State had said to him

"what you are doing could be extremely damaging to you and your business."

Is that not more Mafia than ministerial?

The Prime Minister: No. No one on this side of the House is accusing anyone of falsifying any document—*[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Arundel (Mr. Marshall), who asked me a question a moment ago, has the right explanation.

Mr. Kinnock: I know that the Government's stock in trade is to suggest that there has been a misunderstanding. May I suggest that the quotations from Sir Raymond are so extensive, so detailed and so particular as to forbid the idea that any of the difficulty arises from misunderstanding? Sir Raymond was within minutes of his departure from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he retold the story in full detail.

The Prime Minister: The accounts are out. I fully accept that my right hon. and learned Friend's account is the correct version of the meeting—*[Interruption.]* It is not impossible for there to be different, genuine recollections, genuinely held.

Mr. Ashby: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the serious fire raging underground in a coal seam in a village in my constituency? Is she prepared to give an undertaking to assist the local authority financially in putting that fire out?

The Prime Minister: We shall obviously do all that we can, because the matter is serious.

Mr. Cartwright: In view of the widely publicised Libyan involvement in the affairs of Fiat, has the Prime Minister been given clear assurances that President Reagan's ban on economic and business links with Libya will not apply to Westland if the Fiat-Sikorsky rescue bid succeeds? Can she guarantee that the President's sanctions against Libya will not affect technology transfer from the United States to Westland?

The Prime Minister: I can guarantee none of those things without looking into them a good deal further.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: Does my right hon. Friend agree that what happened yesterday, when we saw the Opposition querying the veracity of notes taken by civil servants, is unprecedented? Does she perhaps feel that those who started saying that are basically those who have never held office and never should?

The Prime Minister: I thought that they were unwarranted attacks on civil servants, who serve all Governments supremely well.

Mr. Foot: As the notorious letter sent by the Solicitor-General to the former Defence Secretary seems to involve the pursuit of a most vicious vendetta, will the right hon. Lady give an absolute undertaking that she will make the report to the House herself when she discovers the culprit?

The Prime Minister: The inquiry announced in my reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 14 January is still in progress. The right hon. Gentleman knows the custom with regard to leak inquiries—their outcome is not announced. That has been the traditional custom.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: In the light of the serious terrorist attacks on Rome and Vienna international airports during the recess, which left many innocent people murdered or maimed, and as it was quite clear that the godfather of terrorism, Colonel Gaddafi, was behind the attacks, will my right hon. Friend say what action the Government intend to take against Libya?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is aware that we took action against Libya after Yvonne Fletcher was murdered by guns fired through windows in the Libyan embassy. We cut off diplomatic relations, cut any defence equipment and severely restricted immigration and ECGD credit. There is very little at present that we can add to that action, which has not been diminished in any way.

Q4. **Mr. Foulkes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Foulkes: Does the Prime Minister recall that the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) has claimed that a further meeting on Westland was fixed for 3 pm on Friday 13 December? Does she recall that, yesterday, she said that, as no meeting was agreed, no meeting could be cancelled? Did she hear the Secretary of State for Transport say on the Radio 4 "Today" programme this morning that he was glad that the meeting had been cancelled? However inadvertently, he confirmed which side was telling the truth on this issue.

The Prime Minister: As I said yesterday, no meeting was needed and no meeting was agreed—*[Interruption.]* No meeting was needed and no meeting was agreed. I made that clear yesterday.

Mr. Greenway: Is it not to the eternal discredit of the Labour party—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will ask a question on the Prime Minister's responsibilities.

Mr. Greenway: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is to the eternal discredit of the Labour party that it separated, when in government some 20 years ago, discussions on teachers' pay from discussions on conditions of service? Is it not that which has led to the damage to children's education today? Does my right hon. Friend agree that those circumstances must be reversed as soon as possible?

The Prime Minister: There have been several attempts to negotiate pay and conditions of service together. So far, all have failed. I agree that this has been to the detriment of the education system. We must make strenuous efforts this time to see that conditions of service and a pay structure that gives better teachers more pay are agreed.

Q5. **Mr. Livsey** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 january.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Livsey: Turning from Britain to Wales, to the £200 million cut in education forecast in yesterday's expenditure White Paper and the 13 primary schools in Powys that are doomed to close, will the Prime Minister instruct the Secretary of State for Wales — [HON MEMBERS: "Reading."]—to increase the proposed rate support grant in Powys—[HON MEMBERS: "Reading."] — to the Welsh average from its present totally inadequate level for 1986-87?

The Prime Minister: I know that the hon. Gentleman feels strongly about education and about primary schools in his constituency. He knows full well that it is for local education authorities to determine the pattern for the provision of education. May I point out that his constituency, Powys, is favourably treated by the Welsh rate support grant. The block grant per head in Powys is 70 per cent. of expenditure compared with an average for the Welsh counties of 59 per cent. of expenditure. The disbursement of the amount is, of course, left to the local authority.

Questions to Ministers

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Owing, perhaps, to my relative inexperience in the practices in which I now participate, may I refer you to the reply that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave me in which she referred to a possible point of order? It would have been my fault if there was a misunderstanding, but I did hear the word "order". I was not addressing a point of order in any way to you, Mr. Speaker. If I created confusion, I apologise at once to the House. I was asking my right hon. Friend a serious question. Because it was overtaken by the concept that it might be a matter of order, I do not think that my right hon. Friend was able to answer it. Is it possible for that question to be answered now, as it is relevant and urgent? Events are taking place that could be influenced by my right hon. Friend's reply.

Mr. Speaker: I think that the Prime Minister may have misunderstood the question. It occurred to me that she thought it was a point of order addressed to me. In those circumstances, I think that the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) might try again on Tuesday and get his answer then.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not a fact that, when a Secretary of State for Trade and Industry quotes from official documents, those documents should then be placed in the Library?

Mr. Speaker: Such documents should be laid, but in this instance I do not think that, there was a quotation from a document.

Mr. Heseltine: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your generosity in suggesting that the answer should be asked again on Tuesday, but I would beg you to understand that meetings will take place before Tuesday to which the answer is relevant. I therefore would be grateful if I could ask that question now.

Mr. Speaker: It would be quite irregular for me to allow Question Time to go on. Virtually every day hon. Members feel that they have not got the answers that they wanted to their questions. The solution for the right hon. Gentleman would be to put down a written question today, to which he could get an answer tomorrow morning.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The issue is whether the quote was from an official document. If it was from an official document let it be placed in the Library. The question we are all asking is: was it a quote from an official document? If it was, will it be placed in the Library? That is the point that the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) wishes to make. It is a perfect point of order and I ask that he be allowed to press it on the Floor.

Mr. Speaker: I have already dealt with this matter. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I have dealt with the matter. I have already said, and I say it again, that if Ministers quote from an official document, as opposed to paraphrasing an official document, it is our rule that that official document should be laid.

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask for your guidance? Is it in order for the processes of the House to be abused by the Labour party through the preparation of a document in the Labour party office containing 12 planted questions—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."]—to be put today to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, to the Foreign Secretary and to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry? Is this not a synthetic outrage being manufactured by the Labour party?

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West) *rose*——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have not seen that document.

Mr. Madden: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You said just now that you believed that the Prime Minister had misunderstood the question put by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). As I understood the question that he was seeking to put, he wished the House to know whether the quote made last night by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was a direct quote. Owing to the importance of this matter, which was the subject of a full day's debate yesterday, and of important events which are to take place tomorrow, perhaps you might allow the precedent, which occurs from time to time, for Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to answer particular questions. In today's circumstances, as you have said that you thought that the Prime Minister had misunderstood the question you might allow the question to be put again.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is almost a unique misunderstanding. I do not think I have ever heard a question put in the House to the Prime Minister which has been misinterpreted by the Prime Minister, or for that matter by any other Minister, as being a question to you in the Chair as a point of order. It is a material question. Obviously if the document was quoted from directly and can therefore be released, it would be a material matter affecting the public response to the various proposals that are before the Westland company. In these circumstances, and to resolve for the House and everyone concerned the difficulties we are in, surely it is possible for the Prime Minister now to be given leave to reply to the direct question.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not think I did misunderstand the question. The question as I understood it was that if there is an intended and direct quote from a document, and a speech gave a direct quote from a document, and said it was directly quoting from a document, the whole document should be laid. The first thing is, therefore, to check *Hansard* to see whether what was said was given as a direct quote from the document. That is the first thing that we must find out. What follows from that is a matter for the House, not for me.

Mr. Speaker: I think—*[Interruption.]* Order. I am on my feet. I think that the Prime Minister has dealt—*[Interruption.]* I think—[HON. MEMBERS: "No"] Order. It is not a matter for me. The Prime Minister has dealt very fairly—*[Interruption.]* Order. I believe that the right hon. Lady has dealt fairly with the question that was put to her, and which I confess I thought she may have misunderstood. I now understand that she did not misunderstand.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any more points of order on this matter—*[Interruption.]* Order. These are not matters for me.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I was originally asked whether I would allow an answer to be given to the question. I said —and it was an act of generosity—that I would allow the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) to put his question again on Tuesday. He replied that the matter was so urgent that it required an answer today. The Prime Minister has now given that answer. There is nothing more that I can do about the matter.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the way in which this matter has developed leaves you in an invidious position —clearly through no fault of yours. My understanding —and I think that it is generally shared among hon. Members—is that the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) asked a question, during the course of which he used the word "order". I thought that he was addressing a question to the Prime Minister, asking whether she would give permission for him, as he put it, to finish a quotation. It was a request to the Head of a Government of whom, until last week, he had been a member.

That was misinterpreted not by the Prime Minister, as she has acknowledged, but more generally as being a question of order relating to the convention that if an official document is referred to during the course of the proceedings of the House, that document should appear in full in the Library.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) referred to this matter on Monday. I am speaking about the convention in general terms. The problem is that if a Minister refers to an official document, effectively that Minister can determine whether the document receives more general circulation by deciding whether to acknowledge that he is quoting directly from it.

That convention put you, Mr. Speaker, in an absolutely intolerable position because once such references are made, it is natural that other hon. Members—whether Opposition or Government—will ask under which set of rules they fall.

I am not making an appeal now, because you have made your decision clear, Mr. Speaker, and I would not ask you to reverse it. However, in the interests of the House, and as it is possible that the right hon. Member for Henley has overheard this exchange, he could rise on a further point of order and clarify precisely what he meant. Secondly, it may—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the House to allow me to hear the point of order.

Mr. Kinnock: Secondly, it may occur to the right hon. Member for Henley that there are other procedures, even during the course of this afternoon, that he might employ to secure an answer in this House.

If that were generally recognised, I am sure that we could terminate what might otherwise become an extremely long exchange of attempted points of order.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that the whole House clearly heard my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) refer to column 1167 of yesterday's *Hansard*. Since a reading of that column nowhere suggests that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was quoting from any document other than the notes of his speech, this is not a matter that should detain us any longer.

Mr. Speaker: I have the page from *Hansard* in front of me, and during the course of the exchanges I have been looking at it carefully. I cannot see that the right hon. and learned Gentleman quoted from any document yesterday. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that there is a distinction between referring to a document and quoting directly from it.

Official Report

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): On a separate point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to draw to your attention what I believe is an important error in the *Hansard* report of the speech that I made last night explaining why I believed that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry could no longer stay in office and the Government maintain the trust that should exist between Ministers and Parliament. Is this the appropriate time to draw that to your attention, or should I do so after the statements?

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman would raise the matter after the statements, it would give me an opportunity to look into his speech. In order that I may do that with more accuracy, will he tell me in what way the report was inaccurate?

Mr. Strang: The passage can be found in column 1150 of *Hansard* dated 15 January. I was quoting the question which my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) put to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on Monday. I believe that there is an important omission from that quotation, which is a direct quotation from *Hansard* dated Monday 13 January. I would be happy to explain the error more fully now, or I shall do so later if you wish to check *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman will allow me to check *Hansard*, I shall take his point of order after the statements.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a further point of order, Mr. Speaker. Since the Prime Minister was party to the deception practised on the House by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who has since been to the House and made a rather limp apology, when will the right hon. Lady apologise to the House for her part in that deception?

Business of the House

3.47 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): May I ask the Leader of the House if he will state the business for next week?

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): Yes, Sir. The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 20 JANUARY—Motions on the Rate Support Grant Report (England) 1986-87 (House of Commons Paper No. 140), the Rate Support Grant Supplementary Report (England) (No. 2) 1985-86 (House of Commons Paper No. 587) and the Rate Support Grant Supplementary Report (England) (No. 3) 1984-85 (House of Commons Paper No. 138).

Afterwards motion on the Welsh Rate Support Grant Report 1986-87 (House of Commons Paper No. 100).

TUESDAY 21 JANUARY—Until about seven o'clock, Second Reading of the Atomic Energy Authority Bill *[Lords]* followed by Second Reading of the Drug Trafficking Offences Bill.

WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY—Remaining stages of the Local Government Bill.

Motions on the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 4) Order and the Revaluation Rate Rebates (Scotland) (No. 2) Order.

THURSDAY 23 JANUARY—Opposition day (4th Allotted Day). Until about seven o'clock there will be a debate entitled "The threatened closure of the Gartcosh steel mill". Afterwards there will be a debate entitled "Crisis in schools".

Both debates will arise on Opposition motions.

FRIDAY 24 JANUARY—Private Members' Bills.

MONDAY 27 JANUARY—Second Reading of the Airports Bill.

Mr. Kinnock: I thank the right hon. Gentleman. The hour and a half debate given to the Welsh rate support grant on Monday is a miserably short allocation of time considering the serious damage that Government public expenditure and economic policies are doing to communities in Wales. Even at this stage, will the right hon. Gentleman consider extending the time for that subject? When will the Roskill report on fraud trials be debated? When will the House have the opportunity to debate the public expenditure White Paper? May we know the date upon which the Chancellor of the Exchequer is to introduce his Budget?

Mr. Biffen: I shall respond to the final point first. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor expects to present his Budget on Tuesday 18 March. Perhaps we could discuss through the usual channels a question of the debate on the public expenditure White Paper. There will be, I hope, a debate on the Roskill recommendations on fraud in the reasonably near future. We could discuss through the usual channels how best to use our time on Monday on the rate support grant debates.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Can my right hon. Friend assure the House that there will be a statement on the Channel fixed link next week? Has the principle of it been endorsed by the full Cabinet?

Mr. Biffen: I am much touched and encouraged by the developing interest of my hon. Friend in the modalities of Cabinet government. I shall tell my right hon. Friend the

Secretary of State for Transport of the interest that there should be a statement made as early as possible about developments concerning the Channel fixed link. I have no doubt that he will deal with the constitutional points made by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Has the Leader of the House seen early-day motion 61?

[That this House notes that Crown immunity enables health authorities to flout the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Food Hygiene Regulations; is deeply concerned at growing evidence that hospital patients are suffering unnecessarily; believes that it is wrong in principle and deplorable in practice for Crown authorities to be above the law relating to welfare provision; and calls upon the Government to remove Crown immunity from all premises covered by the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Food Hygiene Regulations.]

It calls for the abolition of Crown immunity, which protects negligent health authorities. Is he aware that there has been yet another outbreak of salmonella poisoning in a hospital which has caused great damage to patients? Is he also aware that, unless Crown immunity is abolished, more hospital patients will be poisoned and some will die? May we have an early debate?

Mr. Biffen: I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House have been receiving a number of representations from local authorities on the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman; his long-standing interest in this matter is well known. I shall draw his remarks to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): At last business question time my right hon. Friend invited me to repeat now the question that I put to him then. Has he a rough idea as to when we are likely to have the Second Readings of the Shops Bill and the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Bill? Can my right hon. Friend go any further today?

Mr. Biffen: Just one week further into the unknown, I am afraid. We are in need at this juncture of a little diversion, so I hope that my hon. Friend will not be too pessimistic about this.

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): After the debate last night, the Leader of the House said on television not that there could be but that there would be an inquiry into the events discussed yesterday. Will he make a further statement on that next week, or can he tell us now what form the inquiry will take and when it will start?

Mr. Biffen: These matters are the responsibility of those involved in the departmental Select Committee. When I made that remark, I did so in the context of what had already been said by my right hon. Friend the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence and also of the aspirations shown by my right hon. Friend the Chairman of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry.

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): Will my right hon. Friend consider persuading my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Cabinet to bring forward the Budget date by a fortnight, because it might bring us into calmer waters and give us some good news for a change? It would also be refreshing to deal with the Treasury instead of with the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Biffen: And it would give us a fortnight's earlier revenue. The more that I reflect upon the suggestion of my hon. Friend, the more I fear that it will be thought that his suggestion was planted. However, although I regard it as imaginative, I believe it to be unlikely.

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): Since 1979 the Prime Minister and her Cabinet have advised trade unionists in Britain not to be dictated to by their leaders and that the silent majority should stand up and be counted. Will the Leader of the House arrange a debate so that the House can give the same advice to the silent majority in the Cabinet?

Mr. Biffen: I am part of the constructive, progressive and forward-looking silent majority of the Cabinet.

Mr. John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): Is my right hon. Friend aware that in the real England, far away from the media-riddled area of Westminster and Whitehall, Her Majesty's Government continue to enjoy great support? Many ordinary people cannot understand why such an appalling fuss has been made about such a small item. Would it help if Ministers could reduce the present large legislative programme and spend more time putting the Government's message across to the country and also seeing a bit more of us here?

Mr. Biffen: As I had the experience of some years of industrial work in the midlands, I realise that the heart of England is truly in Halesowen. [HON. MEMBERS: "What about Oswestry?"] Oswestry is the rural axis with Halesowen that gives balance to our national life.

I take account of the exhortation that we should spend less time legislating in this Chamber and spend more time discussing the underlying political realities outside. I must say to my hon. Friend that that is a tempting offer, but every hon. Member knows that the fortunes of the Government are related also to the formidable legislative programme upon which we have embarked, and whatever happens, day by day or week by week, we intend to finish it.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Will the Leader of the House or the Minister with responsibility for the Civil Service come to the House as soon as possible next week to make a statement outlining the position of civil servants who work directly for Ministers? Does the Leader of the House accept that, because of the statement made at the Dispatch Box last night by the Secretary of State for Trade ad Industry in which he prayed in aid in support of his case three civil servants who work in his office, those civil servants are now placed in an impossible position to confirm or deny that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was telling the truth on their behalf? It is intolerable that the British Civil Service should be placed in such a position by incompetent Ministers.

Mr. Biffen: That is an unfair comment upon the difficulty that exists with civil servants. Civil servants, having made statements in good faith proximate to the time of the events, are now being castigated as having been suborned because their statements happen to validate the remarks made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who has become the centre of a major political controversy. That is the

[Mr. Biffen]

difficulty in this matter for civil servants. I will of course consider the points made by the hon. Member and refer them to the relevant Minister.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): When the Select Committee considers the position of Westland plc and the history of that company, will it be appropriate for it to scrutinise not only the actions of the Government, but the actions of the former Secretary of State for Defence and, in particular, the nature and type of correspondence that he has had with foreign Governments and EC Commissioners subsequent to Government decisions that the Westland affair would be treated in an even-handed way? Will the Select Committee also scrutinise how it was that he or, if not him, my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) knew on Monday morning at 11 o'clock that a letter had gone from British Aerospace to the Government and why, knowing that that letter had gone, did the former Secretary of State ask whether it had been received and not what was in it?

Mr. Biffen: I tread carefully in such matters. It is, of course, a matter for the departmental Select Committees involved to decide how they will proceed with investigations, but my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has said that he is most anxious to give evidence before such an inquiry. I have no doubt that my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) will be likewise disposed.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that in anticipation of next Thursday's debate on the proposed closure of the Gartcosh steelworks the British Steel Corporation today gave notice to its employees there and announced the timetable for the cessation of production in advance of any report to the House of the Department of Trade and Industry's reply to the Select Committee's report? Is that not to treat the House with contempt? Will the Leader of the House undertake to draw the attention of the Department of Trade and Industry to that matter and ask BSC to desist until after the debate on Thursday?

Mr. Biffen: I certainly give an undertaking to refer the matter to my right hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. Roger Freeman (Kettering): Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the fact that considerable interest is felt by Conservative Members in the future of the water industry — not just its possible privatisation but the introduction of universal metering? Will he bear in mind the fact that a debate in Government time on the future of that industry before the House rises for the Easter recess will be welcomed by many of my hon. Friends?

Mr. Biffen: I understand what my hon. Friend says. I am sure that he is right to say that his request is widely shared. I cannot be certain that Government time can be made available for that important topic. I shall of course continue to take account of what he has said and to inform my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): Will the Leader of the House arrange for an early debate on the decision announced by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that he intends to convert the Patent Office into a non-departmental body, a decision which has caused great anxiety to its staff and clients?

Mr. Biffen: I note what the hon. Gentleman says. I understand, with his responsibilities in those matters, that he should raise the point. It could perhaps be considered through the usual channels.

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): Will my right hon. Friend arrange a debate on the future of the United Kingdom's six free ports? They are being placed in some jeopardy by the draconian rules of the Collector of Customs and Excise. VAT imposts with the free ports are restricting trade and could well mean that what was an imaginative project will die through lack of Government support.

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend has made that subject very much his own. I admire the skill and pertinacity with which he pursues it. I cannot immediately offer any Government time for a debate. As it relates to the Government's fiscal behaviour, the Budget and its aftermath may provide him with his opportunity.

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): Has the Leader of the House had an opportunity to read the book by John Walker entitled "The Queen has been pleased" in which Mr. Walker, to my satisfaction and that of many of my hon. Friends, has proved a relationship between the number of knighthoods and peerages awarded by the Prime Minister to industrialists and the size of the donation to the Conservative party of the industries with which they are involved. As the Prime Minister may have committed a serious crime under the terms of the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925, will he ask the Attorney-General to tell the House when he will report the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions with a view to the Prime Minister being arrested for it?

Mr. Biffen: I must confess that I have not read the book. As a good many of the contributions in the House proceed upon the basis of good-natured ignorance rather than detailed knowledge, I shall of course draw the matter to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General. I do not hold out much hope of the dramatic consequences mentioned by the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): In view of today's publication of Mr. Justice Popplewell's report on crowd safety, football hooliganism and other related football matters, and the wide interest felt by Members on both sides of the House about those matters, will my right hon. Friend assure the House that there will be an early debate on that report and other attendant interests?

Mr. Biffen: In this uncertain and at times unhappy world, it is best to settle for the statement and then to see whether the conditions have been created thereafter which result in a popular request for a debate.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): May I refer the Leader of the House to early-day motions 302 and 306 about the position of Scottish miners who have been dismissed and who have gone before industrial tribunals?

[That this House notes the statements of the Secretary of State for Energy, and the Chairman of the National Coal Board, in which they encouraged dismissed miners to take their cases to industrial tribunals; notes also the recent decisions of the tribunals in which they have either

ordered the reinstatement of dismissed miners or asked the National Coal Board to exercise clemency by reinstatement; deplores the failure of the National Coal Board to abide by the decisions of the industrial tribunals and specifically the deliberate decision of the Coal Board in Scotland not to reinstate any miners whose reinstatement has been ordered; condemns the failure of a public corporation responsible to the Government to abide by the decisions of industrial tribunals; and calls on the National Coal Board to enter into immediate negotiations with the National Union of Mineworkers with a view to securing a solution to the dispute over this matter which is endangering good industrial relations in the mining industry and prolonging bitterness within the coalfield communities.]

[That this House condemns the National Coal Board for its refusal to reinstate four dismissed miners in Scotland, having in mind that an industrial tribunal found that they were unfairly dismissed and recommended that the National Coal Board reinstate them in their employment in the coal industry; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to remind the National Coal Board that it is a creature of Parliamentary Statute and that its attitude to these cases is an affront to Parliament.]

May I plead in aid some of the words that the Leader of the House used on television last night when he said that perhaps the only way to test the veracity of reports about some meetings would be to have a taped recording. With great presence of mind, one of my constituents took that to heart, because in discussions with the pit manager and other National Coal Board officials about his dismissal he took a tape recorder and recorded the proceedings. He was then able to prove to the tribunal that the coal board was maligning him and lying about him——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Member please ask a question?

Mr. Douglas: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. Because of the importance of this matter and the great sense of unfairness, will the Leader of the House arrange for an early debate in Government time on this important issue?

Mr. Biffen: I cannot make any promise of an early debate in Government time, although I realise that this is an issue which is of considerable import to a number of people. I will draw the attention of my relevant right hon. Friends to the point that the hon. Gentleman makes. He may be able to take his cause a little further during employment Question Time next week.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): Will my right hon. Friend be kind enough to arrange an early debate on the latest Cabinet disagreement—the row between the French and British Cabinets over the Channel fixed link? Is my right hon. Friend aware that the latest state of play on the Channel, far from cordiale, project is that there is a complete impasse between a road and rail tunnel or a rail-only tunnel? Are not those matters which should not be left to Ministers alone but which should be given a fair ventilation in Parliament as soon as possible?

Mr. Biffen: I gave a cautious but carefully researched answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Stafordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) on that point. I cannot go beyond that.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): When will the right hon. Gentleman provide an opportunity for the House to debate the loss to the heritage of objects being disposed of by semi-public bodies such as universities and the churches upon which there is no restraint of export, a matter which is now much concerning those who work in the heritage world in Britain and who have those matters very much at heart?

Mr. Biffen: I thank the hon. Gentleman for the point that he made and I shall, of course, draw it to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts.

Viscount Cranborne (Dorset, South): Is my right hon. Friend sympathetic to the idea of the Government introducing a motion in the House to set up a Northern Ireland Grand Committee on the Scottish model?

Mr. Biffen: As my hon. Friend will be aware, the recent agreement concluded with the Irish Government refers to some development of a parliamentary character involving the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom. In all such matters timing is probably almost as important as anything. A certain amount of measured procrastination is not necessarily bad.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): The Leader of the House may be aware of the almost astonishing progress which has been made in the Gas Bill Standing Committee. Is he aware that his colleague, the Minister of State, courteously suggested to the Committee this morning that a sittings motion may be necessary? It would occupy the Committee on Tuesday. As the Leader of the House has announced a debate on the Second Reading of an energy Bill on Tuesday next week, which could well clash with the Standing Committee's extra sitting, does he realise that that would prevent those Opposition and Conservative Members who have a general energy interest from taking part in or attending the debate in the Chamber on Tuesday evening?

Mr. Biffen: I think the convention is that I am precluded from making observations about the business of Standing Committees. I will obviously take note of what the hon. Gentleman says.

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Will the Leader of the House give some indication about when a resolution of the House might be made about shorter speeches? He assured me some time ago that it would be fairly soon.

Mr. Biffen: I certainly hope that it will be within the next few weeks.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Will the Leader of the House tell us when he envisages the Government providing time to debate star wars so that not only the general opposition of the Labour party can be expressed, but so that we may also examine the suggestion floated this morning in *The Times* editorial? It may or may not have been the result of some sort of leak from this colander Cabinet and Government. It is that the Prime Minister backed the Sikorsky deal because of some sort of pay-off, some sort of kick-back, for continuation or promotion of star wars work in Britain.

Mr. Biffen: It is interesting to hear the hon. Gentleman refer to the editorial in *The Times* newspaper. I notice that he featured in the editorial columns of *The Times* this morning. It is gentrification before our very eyes. I take note of the importance of SDI. This is the time of year when the three individual Services debates take place, and

[Mr. Biffen]

I am certain that there will be opportunities within the ambit of those debates to make the points that the hon. Gentleman has in mind.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Will my right hon. Friend provide time for an early debate on twinning arrangements between local authorities and foreign countries? Is he aware that in Leicester, which is at the heart of England, already there is an arrangement to pair with Nicaragua and that a new plan is being arranged now that the African National Congress should be invited to Leicester on Palm Sunday to dedicate the Welford road recreation ground with its new name, the Nelson Mandela park? That is grossly offensive to all electors and ratepayers in Leicester.

Mr. Biffen: I am surprised they are not publishing an edition of postage stamps. The matters raised by my hon. Friend are important, but I cannot hold out the hope of early Government time for such a debate. He might wish to pursue such opportunity as is available to him as a private Member or, indeed, to discuss some of the fiscal aspects of this in the context of the rate support grant.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Will the right hon. Gentleman give sympathetic consideration to an early debate about the decision made at the beginning of this month by the then Secretary of State for Defence to award an order to Vickers Engineering and Shipbuilding Limited for the construction of three diesel electric submarines? That decision clearly reveals the confusion in the Government's defence and industrial policies, particularly in the light of impending privatisation of the warship yards.

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman brings to the attention of the House the points that he argued earlier this year and which have a direct constituency interest. I can best help by repeating what I pointed out to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist), which is that shortly we will have the Services debates and they will enable such points to be made.

Mr. Christopher Murphy (Welwyn Hatfield): May I draw to my right hon. Friend's attention early-day motion 220 standing in my name and that of many of my hon. Friends, about the abolition of standing charges?
[That this House would welcome early action to abolish the levying of public utility standing charges.]
Given the amount of understandable anxiety about the continuation of standing charges, will the right hon. Gentleman find time between now and Easter to enable the House to give its opinion on this subject?

Mr. Biffen: I will be absolutely candid with my hon. Friend. I see no likelihood of Government time being made available, but I will, of course, draw to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and to others the points he has just made.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I will call those hon. Members who have been standing, but I ask for brief questions because two important debates and another statement are still to come.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): I should like to ask about the public inquiry into the outbreak of salmonella poisoning at Stanley road hospital in which 19 people unfortunately lost their lives. People in my constituency and relatives, too, are becoming greatly concerned at the delay in making public the report. I understand the report is in the possession of the Government. Will the Leader of the House arrange for the report to be presented to the House and for a statement to be made by the appropriate Secretary of State?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman raises a good and accurate point. I hope it will not be long before he is satisfied about the matter.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In response to the answer the right hon. Gentleman gave to the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), as one who gave written evidence and was called upon to give evidence to the Popplewell committee, may I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman accepts that these issues do not simply lend themselves to necessarily brief questions and answers from the Home Secretary's statement? Is it not important that the House should look at this complicated and, heaven knows, urgent subject? The right hon. Gentleman should arrange a debate during the next month or two.

Mr. Biffen: I take that point. I was merely trying to suggest to my hon. Friend that it is at least encouraging to have a statement and the possibility of questions arising. That does not, of course, preclude the consideration of a debate, But I must point out that we are moving towards the time when the affairs of the House are substantially devoted to the Budget and its subsequent legislation.

Mr. John Ryman (Blyth Valley): May I ask the Leader of the House to give attention as a matter of great urgency to the continuing farce of the independent colliery review which begins work next week hearing an appeal about a colliery in my constituency? Is he aware that officials from the National Coal Board have said, surprising as it might seem, that whatever the decision of the tribunal they reserve the right to refuse to accept the decision if it is unfavourable to the National Coal Board? Is it not extraordinary that, in a form of arbitration presided over by a senior and distinguished judge, one of the parties to the dispute says four days in advance of the hearing that if it does not like the decision it will refuse to abide by it? It is a scandalous state of affairs. On at least four occasions I have asked the Leader of the House to make a statement about this and on each occasion, with great ingenuity, he has skilfully avoided committing himself or the Government to any policy.

Mr. Biffen: I did not think my fumbling and inept performance on this topic hitherto deserved quite the accolade that it has just received, but it is bound to continue much in the same vein. I will refer the point to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy, who has prime responsibility for these matters. I will also look elsewhere to see whether there is any other appropriate Government Department which should be charged with making a statement on the matter.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Arising out of what the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) said yesterday, will we have a statement next week on who it was from the Prime Minister's office that contacted the BBC to stop the interview with the right hon. Gentleman when he was Secretary of State for Defence? Was it the press secretary at No. 10? Is this not another example of the way in which the Prime Minister abuses her position?

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are dealing with business questions.

Mr. Winnick: Can we have a statement about whether this was done? If it was, was it the press secretary, and does the Leader of the House agree that it is important for us to have a statement. Putting such unfair pressure from No. 10 on the broadcasting authorities is quite clearly an abuse of the Prime Minister's authority.

Mr. Biffen: I have to say quite clearly that I have no plans for a statement on this subject being made next week. Of course, the House has plenty of other parliamentary opportunities, including questions.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): While recognising the importance of the debate on Gartcosh next Thursday in Opposition time, is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the sense of outrage in Scotland at the Government's attitude to the campaign to save Gartcosh? That attitude includes the Prime Minister's contemptuous refusal to meet the Gartcosh marchers and the refusal of the Secretary of State for Scotland to allow a debate in the Scottish Grand Committee in Edinburgh on Monday. Because Gartcosh is crucial to Ravenscraig which is crucial to Scotland's future as an industrial nation, may we have the assurance that there will be a proper debate in Government time on this whole issue, including the Government's response to the Select Committee report?

Mr. Biffen: I appreciate the very strong and genuine feelings that have been aroused over the proposed closure of Gartcosh, but there is the other side of the argument: the question of bringing about greater viability in the industrial structures of the United Kingdom, including Scotland. I am sure that those matters will be covered in next week's debate. I hope that that debate will enable the House to take account of the hon. Gentleman's points.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a Foreign Office statement next week? I ask for this statement because the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the hon. Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar), recently made an important statement in Bangladesh concerning the requirement of Her Majesty's Government that the children of British citizens who intend to seek entry into this country should undergo genetic testing. There is considerable concern about this matter, including the cost, and whether these tests will be entirely voluntary. A statement would enable answers to these important questions to be given. It would also allow the Foreign Office to explain why it introduced in secret on 19 December a new entry clearance charge of £25 for those seeking settlement in this country and a fee of £12 for those seeking entry clearance as visitors to this country.

Mr. Biffen: I shall refer those points of substance to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is the Leader of the House aware that the Prime Minister, in particular, among other Government Ministers, is adopting the growing practice of answering questions by saying that information cannot be given because of the disproportionate cost involved. Does the Leader of the House not think, because of all the talk about open government, especially in view of the furore that is taking place on another front, that it is the Government's duty to explain precisely their answers to simple questions? Is he aware, for instance, that this week there was an appalling situation when I asked the Prime Minister how many gifts she had received as Prime Minister and how many of those over the value of £75 she had retained, taking into account the allegation made in a national newspaper that she had received a bracelet costing several thousand pounds from the Sultan of Brunei, but she refused to explain how many gifts she had received.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I thought that the hon. Gentleman said that he would ask a short question.

Mr. Skinner: Well, it is a little bracelet.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. Gentleman at least ask the Leader of the House whether we can have a statement about the bracelet?

Mr. Skinner: In view of the fact that the Prime Minister will not answer these questions, will the Leader of the House bring her to the Dispatch Box and ask her to answer questions about what happened about the diamond-studded bracelet and all the other gifts that she will not disclose? There is, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, a rule that anything over £75 should not be retained by the Minister concerned.

Mr. Biffen: One of the most dangerous things in this House is the hon. Member for Bolsover in a fit of innocence or simplicity or in a fit of trying to get just a plain, honest, working man's answer to what otherwise is thought to be a tangled and exotic problem. I take note of what he says and I shall make the appropriate references. But I shall also reflect upon a point of real substance: the growing cost of questions in this House that are not necessarily related to the pursuit of open government, but are related to the existence of whole squadrons of research assistants. We have to ask ourselves whether this really is pursuing the investigative role of Parliament. On the whole, the hon. Member for Bolsover is not a great cost to the public purse as far as his questions are concerned. That is why I shall take his point with the seriousness that it merits.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The easiest way to cut the cost of questions is to give truthful answers.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that that is a point of order for me.

Sports Grounds (Popplewell Report)

4.24 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the final report of the inquiry into safety and control at sports grounds under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Popplewell, which was published today. The statement is a little longer than I would have wished. It consists of 14 paragraphs. The inquiry was established following the fire at Bradford City football ground and the events at Birmingham City on 11 May 1985.

Now that the inquiry's work is completed, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and I would like to renew the Government's gratitude to the chairman and his two assessors for the speed and conscientiousness with which they have discharged their difficult task. In addition to dealing with the events at the Heysel stadium in Brussels on 29 May and discussing the causes of hooliganism, the final report makes 15 recommendations on crowd safety and crowd control.

On crowd control, there are a number of recommendations about the maintenance of order at football grounds: wider powers of police search and arrest; a new offence of disorderly conduct at sports grounds, and a review of the recent alcohol legislation as it applies to executive boxes. Continued progress with membership schemes is also recommended.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act which came into force on 1 January has already extended the police powers of search and of arrest in ways which will help them deal with troublemakers at football grounds. I shall examine Mr. Justice Popplewell's recommendations for further powers when we see how the new Act works in practice.

On disorderly conduct, the Public Order Bill, to which the House gave a Second Reading on Monday, seeks to create a new offence which will cover hooliganism in football grounds, as elsewhere. I shall consider the recommendation for a wider offence when we see how the offence in the Bill — disorderly conduct — works in practice.

The Government have already taken a number of steps to deal with forms of misconduct about which Mr. Justice Popplewell expresses particular concern. The Public Order Bill seeks to implement a recommendation in his interim report that the possession of smoke bombs and similar devices at sports grounds be made an offence. We have taken action to ban some other items which may be used as missiles. The alcohol legislation which was passed last summer makes it an offence to be in possession of a drinks can or bottle in any area of the grounds from which the pitch may be viewed direct.

During the proceedings in the House, representations were made about the effect on the revenue which clubs derive from executive boxes. The Government undertook to monitor the situation, and I have received some information from the Football League and representations from a number of right hon. and hon. Members. I have asked for more information from the football authorities and will wish to consider that carefully, in the light of what Mr. Justice Popplewell says, before deciding whether to allow some relaxation of the controls on alcohol in executive boxes. I shall report my conclusions to the House while the Public Order Bill is before Parliament.

On membership cards, we fully endorse Mr. Justice Popplewell's recommendation. The Public Order Bill contains provisions to enable the courts to ban convicted football hooligans from attending matches. This shows our determination to do what we can to keep troublemakers away from football grounds and to restore the good name of British football. It needs to be matched, in our view, by equally determined action by the football clubs and the football authorities. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has emphasised to them the value of an effective membership card system. The football authorities have made some progress on this. In the light of the exclusion order scheme in the Public Order Bill, I hope that they will now redouble their efforts.

I deal now with crowd safety. We accept the need to strengthen urgently the measures already announced by and taken following my predecessor's statements on 13 May and 24 July.

We accept the recommendation that all sports grounds and sports stadiums in England and Wales with accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators and where association football, rugby league, rugby union and cricket are played which are not already designated under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 should be so designated. Consultations will begin immediately with the sports authorities and organisations concerned with a view to introducing the necessary orders as quickly as possible, and certainly by the summer of this year.

In Scotland, my right hon. Friend intends to introduce similarly, as soon as he can, an order designating stadiums of clubs with accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators in the first and second divisions of the Scottish Football League.

We also accept the principle of the recommendations that safety controls should be extended to all sports grounds and stadiums with stands for over 500 spectators and to indoor sports facilities with accommodation for over 500 spectators where adequate controls do not already exist. We need more facts about this. The present information that we hold at the centre is limited to stadiums and grounds with accommodation for 5,000 or more, and indoor premises with an overall capacity of more than 1,000.

The first step will be to establish the full practical effects of these recommendations. All the relevant local and fire authorities in England, Wales and Scotland are to be invited to inspect all such stands and premises not previously inspected, and to report on them to my right hon. Friend and myself. Powers are already immediately available under both the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Precautions Act 1971 to deal with any exceptional hazard which might be found in the course of these inspections. Similarly, chief fire officers and firemasters will be invited to keep under review the places that they inspected under previous initiatives last year, with the object of maintaining safety standards at those places.

When we have considered these inspections we shall quickly issue a consultative document and propose ways of achieving the objectives of the inquiry's final report, fitting this into the review already under way on the future of the Fire Precautions Act. Further legislation may well prove necessary. There will be no avoidable risk meanwhile, because any necessary emergency action can be taken under existing powers.

So far, happily, the figures this season show an improvement in the number of arrests and ejections from football grounds. Our measures against hooliganism should have a cumulative effect, but it is too soon to be satisfied. We have to deal not only with hooliganism, but with safety; not only with football grounds, but with sports grounds in general. Thanks in large part to Mr. Justice Popplewell and his colleagues, I believe that we are on the right track.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): I congratulate Mr. Justice Popplewell on his second report. His recommendations for the improvement of fire safety precautions and the plugging of gaps in them and in the legislation are both welcome and necessary, and I trust that the Government will lose no time in implementing them. Where legislation is necessary, we will facilitate it. The new and highly unsatisfactory building regulations of November 1985 must be changed as a matter of urgency, and I ask for an assurance that this will be done.

The Home Secretary is prudent in his approach to the proposed new criminal offences, but I am sorry that he said nothing about the proposal in the interim report for a specific offence of chanting racist abuse. The football authorities and the overwhelming majority of fans agree that racism is an obscenity that must be expunged from football and from other sports. I ask the Home Secretary whether this is covered by clause 19 of the Public Order Bill. It is is not, will he amend the Bill to include it?

Is the Home Secretary really satisfied with the position under the Public Order Bill under which the Government have decided not to exclude convicted hooligans from matches played abroad, including World Cup matches? The Home Secretary spoke of the need to restore the good name of British football. Surely this is nowhere more necessary than when violent louts travel abroad and sully the reputation of British fans.

The Opposition are content with the recommendation for a review of section 3(3) of the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol Etc.) Act, but we insist that it be carried out on the basis of the criteria laid down by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Hattersley) last July, when he said:

"We want equity. There should be no difference between the working man on the terrace having his half pint with his pie and people in boxes having wine with their meals."—[*Official Report*, 3 July 1985; Vol. 82, c. 448.]

One curious gap in the Home Secretary's statement was his failure to mention closed circuit television, which Mr. Justice Popplewell firmly recommended last July and which the previous Home Secretary strongly endorsed. Far too little progress has been made, with only 21 per cent. of grounds being covered by closed circuit TV. One reason for this unsatisfactory progress is lack of money. Even the richest clubs face problems, and the less affluent have simply no chance of raising the revenue to comply with Mr. Justice Popplewell's recommendations. In his statement the Home Secretary made no mention of these financial obstacles, so I repeat the commitment of the Labour party to create a football levy board, which would return to the game some of the massive revenue that the Treasury extracts from it.

So far this season there has been a distinct improvement inside the grounds. I congratulate the football authorities and the police on what they have achieved in helping to rescue the reputation of a vital and popular national sport. As Mr. Justice Popplewell points out, however, the problems of violence and hooliganism are moving outside the grounds and are being seen ever more clearly as just one alarming and depressing manifestation of the sickness of violence that is afflicting Britain. We cannot be satisfied until we have set our hand to eradicating not only the violence itself but the underlying causes, which are far too deeply rooted in our society.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for the general tone of what he said.

I understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is looking carefully at the building regulations, and the right hon. Gentleman may want to pursue the matter elsewhere.

As the right hon. Gentleman would have wished, we gave very careful thought to the question of racist chanting. Part III of the Public Order Bill will extend the existing offence of incitement to stir up racial hatred to conduct intended to do so. I hope that that will be particularly significant when we come to the kind of shouting that mars football matches. We thought it more sensible to concentrate on that—the details of it will be discussed in Committee—than to create a wider offence which would be confined to football matches and would be very difficult to enforce.

I take the right hon. Gentleman's point about exclusion orders. He was a little sceptical about them on Monday, but he seems a little more enthusiastic about them today, because he wants them extended to foreign fields. There would be difficulty in implementing them, but it is a point that we can perfectly reasonably discuss in Committee.

From what I have heard—I come new to this subject—I am a little puzzled about the Opposition's attitude to executive boxes. There is quite strong pressure from the clubs for a relaxation. I have not announced a relaxation today, but the pressure for it has come from both sides of the House, and I am not quite clear where the Labour party stands on this issue. There will be opportunities to discuss this before we are much older.

The right hon. Gentleman, perfectly understandably, homed in on finance. The general principle that people who are offering the public entertainment or sport should be prepared to do so in conditions which are clearly and evidently safe is a general one which most people would accept. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the Minister with responsibility for sport, who is here, had a working group which looked into the financial implications for football. The Football Trust, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, has done valuable work and assumed valuable responsibilities in this context. I cannot go further than that.

Mr. Patrick Jenkin (Wanstead and Woodford): Will my right hon. Friend say more about the introduction of membership cards? Is he satisfied that the football authorities are determined to introduce a scheme, or are they still just going through the motions because they do not want to do it?

Mr. Hurd: As I said, they have made some progress in recent times. The latest figure that I have—I would not vouch for it being absolutely up to date—is that 15 clubs out of the 92 have introduced, or are about to introduce, membership schemes which cover at least 50 per cent. of their ground capacity. I know that my right hon. Friend has a close interest in this matter. We would like to see greater progress.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): I join my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) in welcoming most of the proposals. I am especially glad to hear that the daft idea that people be prevented from attending away games of football, as a solution to the problem, has been dropped.

May I press the right hon. Gentleman on the financial question? If no money is coming in in one form or another —plenty of money is being made from football, as my right hon. Friend said — and if no money is to be provided for carrying through, at the necessary speed, the real safety programme, many clubs, particularly the small ones, will be hit again and again, and many will be driven out of business. I urge the Home Secretary to look at the whole of this matter again and come back with a proposal which will enable all clubs, large and small, to make their grounds safe in a measureable time—say two years.

Mr. Hurd: Before I answer the right hon. Gentleman, I apologise to the right hon. Member for Gorton for not answering his question about closed circuit television. The latest figures that I have show that of 42 clubs in the first and second divisions of the football league, 25 have closed circuit television, and that nine out of the 10 clubs in the Scottish premier division have it or are having it installed. In addition, there are the three, I hope by now famous, Home Office "hoolivans", which are doing valuable work. That is progress, although there is room for more.

I listened to the speech of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) in our debate on the Public Order Bill, and I understand how strongly he feels about the matter. I must refer back to the working group of my hon. Friend, which considered the financing of safety improvements at Football League grounds; that is, at the 92 grounds where the professional game is played. Its preliminary conclusions are that the clubs, together with the Football Grounds Improvement Trust, can fund the cost of the work over a five-year period. The FGIT is funded by the Football Trust, which in turn is funded by the Football Pools Promoters Association. My hon. Friend and the sports councils are open to representation and are willing to give advice on these matters, but so far progress has been reasonally good.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I congratulate Mr. Justice Popplewell on his report, and my right hon. Friend on his speedy response to it. Will he be careful not to make any change in the alcohol restriction until the end of the season, to see whether the much improved behaviour is continued through to the end of the World Cup? May I suggest that with the complexity of modern world sport there is a good case for the Minister with responsibility for sport having overall responsibility for crowd safety, sports and international events, rather than having his responsibilities spread over three Departments?

Mr. Hurd: I thought my hon. Friend was about to suggest that he should be responsible for these matters in Scotland. I am in difficulties about the alcohol restriction. If we are to have a relaxation, the natural vehicle for it is the Public Order Bill, which had its Second Reading on Monday. I said that I would give my conclusions to the House during its passage, so that if the House generally believed that the restriction should be relaxed, it could be relaxed without delay. That runs counter to the greater caution recommended by my hon. Friend, but it is a reasonable compromise between those who want immediate relaxation and those who hold my hon. Friend's view.

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridge, North-East): Will the Minister accept that one cannot have safety on the cheap? Further to the statement of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), does the Minister accept that considerable sums are slushing around in football and that taxing transfer fees or finding the available money would be a more sensible way of ensuring safety than would hitting the dwindling numbers of supporters, and punishing small clubs which cannot afford the improvements? Will he give the House his statistics on the diminution of violence and ejections? Is it not simply the case that he has compared the beginning of this season with the end of last season?

Mr. Hurd: I note what the hon. Gentleman says about finance. I do not wish to repeat the reply that I have already given which shows that the machinery at work and the funds available seem capable of financing the safety work. If certain sports have particular problems, it seems reasonable that they should go to the sports councils or my hon. Friend the Minister for advice. The hon. Gentleman will accept that my figures are incomplete. According to the Metropolitan police department, until 11 January 1986 the number of ejections and arrests from football grounds in London was 1,470, compared with 2,652 last year—a reduction of 44 per cent. In Greater Manchester gates have increased by 6 per cent., and arrests and ejections have decreased by 56 per cent.—that is on a December comparison. The hon. Gentleman is right to be cautious, and I was cautious in my comments. Neverthless, so far the record this season has considerably improved.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warrington and Leamington): May I call my right hon. Friend's attention specifically to the fact that the biggest problem may be the number of people who arrive at a ground having consumed an excessive amount of alcohol? Is he aware of the great unfairness between clubs over the provision of alcohol? In some clubs it is available in hospitality suites and at certain bars of the grounds, whereas in others no drink is supplied, not even in the boardroom. As there have been no examples of trouble arising from the provision of alcohol in executive suites, will my right hon. Friend reconsider the matter, bearing in mind the income of clubs?

Mr. Hurd: That point was widely discussed during the passage of the Bill last Session. Parliament deliberately included in the Bill a wide measure of local options so that local magistrates could consider, on local criteria and arguments, the case for exemptions from the general rule. That has happened, with the result which my hon. Friend criticises. It is a reasonable principle that local magistrates should have that facility.

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): Does the Home Secretary accept that most football supporters are likely to accept the recommendations of Mr. Justice Popplewell? Does he further accept that most football clubs will be disappointed with his response, in particular to recommendation 14, which relates to the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol Etc.) Act 1985, especially in view of the Minister of State's reply on 3 July? I asked the hon. Gentleman when he was likely to make a judgment after the monitoring of the Bill and he replied:

"It would be sensible if we saw the Bill in action over the most part of this coming season, or at least half of it . . . That might allow us, if we were so minded, and after discussion . . . to introduce amendments through other legislation . . . The hon. Gentleman can take it from me that we shall monitor this because we recognise that if football were to be starved of funds for its improvement and rehabilitation, that would be a worry."—[*Official Report*, 3 July 1985; Vol. 82, c. 458.]

Will the Home Secretary recognise that that evidence has been forthcoming from the all-party football committee, the Football League and many others, and that unless, before next season, clubs have the knowledge that the restriction will be amended by the Public Order Bill, many executive boxes will be unfilled, and many clubs will be starved of their funds?

Mr. Hurd: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point, which he has put strongly on many occasions. It is different from the view of the Labour Front Bench. We are doing precisely what my hon. Friend said we would do, which is monitoring how the position develops, and what effect the rule has primarily on grounds, and on clubs' finances. We have some information, but we are asking for more. I have already explained that we thought that a reasonable compromise was to give our conclusions while the Public Order Bill was still before the House so that if hon. Members felt that there should be a relaxation, we could proceed accordingly. We can give our views on that.

Mr. Geoff Lawler (Bradford, North): Although it has taken a major tragedy to bring it about, we have a report which, if all its recommendations are implemented, will mean that all spectators at sporting events in future can feel confident that all that can be done will be done to ensure their safety. The people of Bradford and elsewhere will be grateful to Mr. Justice Popplewell for that. Will my right hon. Friend review the point in the report that the same venue can be used for both sporting and entertainment purposes, but that different safety standards can apply? Will he review the necessary legislation to amend that anomaly?

Mr. Hurd: That point was not covered in my statement, and I shall certainly look further into the matter which my hon. Friend, who represents a Bradford constituency, raises.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): May I, as one who watches professional soccer as often as possible, assure the Home Secretary that most of us welcome the recommendations of the Popplewell inquiry? One point that appears to have been overlooked in the report is the question of football supporters travelling by coach. Many coaches arrive at the destination town, although not necessarily the football ground, sometimes hours before the kick-off, and similarly on the way back many coaches stop short of their destination, thus enabling many supporters to consume perhaps a large amount of alcohol.

I support my hon. Friend the Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) in his plea for the abolition of the illogical alcohol ban in executive boxes. Notwithstanding the voting propensities of those who use the boxes, the fact is that most of them do not rampage around the town in the way that some football supporters do. We ought to remember that this ban is penalising clubs, such as West Bromwich Albion, which have spent many hundreds of thousands of pounds in providing executive boxes.

Lastly, I ask the Home Secretary to look again at the question of a football betting levy board. Surely the game of working people ought to be treated in the same way as racing, the so-called sport of kings?

Mr. Hurd: There is obviously something in the hon. Gentleman's first point, but I do not think that it can be solved by changing the law again. It is surely mainly a matter for co-operation between the police and the coach operators, but let us look further into that.

I note what the hon. Gentleman said about executive boxes. He has to deal with the argument of equity; the argument which his right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton was putting. Indeed, the House too will have to deal with the point in due course. I do not think that a case has been made for a new system of the kind put forward by the Labour party and by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape).

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I propose to allow questions to continue for a further 15 minutes. I hope that in that time every hon. Member wishing to ask a question will be called. I ask for brief questions, as two important debates are to be held thereafter.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Can the Home Secretary say when the promises made by the Prime Minister and the former Minister with responsibility for sport that Bradford City football club would receive additional financial assistance to rebuild its ground will be honoured?

Mr. Hurd: I shall have to look into that, and either my hon. Friend or I will let the hon. Gentleman know.

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): While warmly welcoming the Popplewell report, may I ask my hon. Friend to look in particular at recommendation 4 in the final report, about responsibility for safety going to one local authority; and, in the interim report, at the important recommendation that police radio systems be improved?

Mr. Hurd: I should like to reflect further on the first point. I fully agree with the second. We are following that up.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Can my right hon. Friend give any figures for disturbances in the current season? Will he take note of the contrast between the rather better standard of conduct that one might find at a rugby football ground, such as Twickenham, and the rather lower standard of behaviour at some soccer grounds?

Mr. Hurd: I would not dream of entering on the second comparison, because I think that I could not easily escape from it.

On the first point. I have given the House the figures that I have, which are in terms not so much of disturbances as of arrests and ejections. I think that that is the handiest way of giving the figures. I have done that in respect of both the Metropolitan police district and Greater Manchester. They show a welcome improvement.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): I echo the word of caution that my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) entered. There is a danger that we could impose conditions on clubs—be they football, rugby or cricket clubs—which the clubs simply could not meet

[Mr. Harry Ewing]

financially, and we would not achieve anything by putting them out of existence. Is the Home Secretary seriously suggesting that we should designate clubs such as Stranraer, Cowdenbeath and Berwick Rangers in Scotland where there is never more than a total of 300 or 400 people at the game? Would it not be better to continue with the present arrangement in Scotland whereby the grounds that are not designated are subject to crowd control limits by police on occasions when there are larger than normal sporting events?

Mr. Hurd: I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman has grasped what I was announcing, and I do not blame him — it is complicated. Almost all the big football and rugby league fields are already designated. What I have announced today will cover about eight cricket grounds, about 20 rugby union grounds, about 18 football grounds outside the league in England and Wales, and I think about 25 in Scotland, but the test is a capacity of over 10,000. Most of these grounds are for designation, and all these grounds have been covered as a result of the inspections that took place after May last year. I imagine that in the great majority of them any necessary work is already in hand or is being planned. What I have announced about designation, and what Mr. Justice Popplewell recommended in this respect, is a completing and tidying up operation, rather than a large new development.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): Will my right hon. Friend accept the conclusion in paragraph 4.86 that the effect of the Sporting Events Control of Alcohol etc. Act 1985 — about which there has been a chorus this afternoon, quite rightly—on clubs will be "little short of disastrous"? Will he appreciate that this revenue which is not coming into the game could have been used for the improvement of grounds? Will he give urgent consideration to a review of the Act? If he does not act well before the end of the season, plans will be laid for next season which will have the same effect and that money will not be available for the clubs. May we please have an early debate on the whole subject?

Mr. Hurd: I understand the force of what my hon. Friend says. As he rightly points out, it was endorsed by Mr. Justice Popplewell and, indeed, by at least two Opposition Members, so we shall certainly have to come back to this. What I would ask is that the clubs give us more precise facts and figures to back up their argument.

My hon. Friend put the question of a debate to the Leader of the House during business questions, and I shall be in touch with my right hon. Friend about it. However, I should not like to make any definite promise, given that there will be other opportunities to discuss several aspects of the matter, including the one mentioned by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Terry Lewis (Worsley): Further to the reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry), and touching upon the question asked by the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), there was a firm promise by the Minister of State that there would be a review and a report would be made halfway through the Session. We are now over halfway through the Session, people are making plans and revenue will be lost between now and the end of the season in advance bookings for executive boxes. The Minister of State and other Members have visited Manchester United and seen the problem. I believe that a firm promise was made to that club. I urge the Home Secretary to move rather faster than he is now indicating to the House he intends to do.

Mr. Hurd: I think that what I indicated to the House is on all fours with what my hon. Friend said previously. That is what he said we would do, and that is what we are doing. We will give our conclusions while the Public Order Bill is before the House. The hon. Gentleman should have a word with his right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton about the attitude of the Opposition Front Bench on this matter.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to page 60 at 5.90, where it says at sub-paragraph II *(a)*:

"Thus those not particularly given to violence witness violence in others and see it being exercised, without let or hindrance."

Does my right hon. Friend agree that the conduct of the players in this case is regularly far from exemplary? They jump all over each other, they hug and kiss each other, and they fight each other. It is not conducive to good conduct on the terraces. Will he see what he can do, in consultation with the Football Association, to tighten discipline in this respect?

Mr. Hurd: I think that it would be a little difficult to draft a clause to cover all the activities to which my hon. Friend refers. This clearly must be a matter for those within the sport, and I am sure that they will have noticed what Mr. Justice Popplewell has said, and the way in which my hon. Friend has endorsed it.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Why has the Home Secretary not accepted Mr. Justice Popplewell's strongly expressed view that the safety of undesignated buildings and stadiums should be the responsibility of one authority? The right hon. Gentleman says that he has powers to deal with emergencies while inspections are being carried out, but Mr. Justice Popplewell doubted whether all indoor activities, in Scotland in particular, were covered by such powers, and he asked for a review of the powers. Has that review been set in train?

Mr. Hurd: We are reviewing that aspect. We are in a difficulty over timing, because there is a strong case for revising the 1971 Act in relation to fire safety and control. We are in the middle of doing that and we might ask the House to consider proposals during this Parliament. Mr. Justice Popplewell's proposal for further use of the 1971 Act comes in the middle of the review, so that an awkwardness is caused. If the hon. Gentleman studies my complicated statement he will see how we are trying, procedurally, to find a way through that awkwardness, which involves indoor sports as well as others. I have neither accepted nor rejected the proposal which the hon. Gentleman mentioned at the beginning of his question, so we shall come back to it.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): I do not want to do the question of money to death, but the great aspiration of the club in my constituency is promotion from the third to the second division. It does not pay high wages, and it pays no large transfer fees. It is a responsible club, which has taken on many recommendations, but the Popplewell recommendations will put further severe financial

restraints on its activities. Will my right hon. Friend and the Chancellor of the Exchequer consider the possibility of giving back to football more of the money that goes to the football pools?

Mr. Hurd: That is a long-standing suggestion, supported by aficionados of the game, but it does not seem to be making much headway. My hon. Friend should obtain the facts and figures for his club, to illustrate the difficulties which he foresees. The work that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State has accomplished with his working group suggests that necessary work in the 92 areas on which he has been concentrating can be undertaken with existing resources, but the sports councils and my hon. Friend are available to advise on how necessary work can be done.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I praise the imaginative way in which the Popplewell inquiry went about its work. May I also draw attention to the sad story of the opaque glass panels mentioned in paragraph 4.88, because Scotland's leading club, Heart of Midlothian, has had to erect a panel so that people having a drink cannot watch the game. Is that not absurd? How much will clubs lose if something is not done about the stormy and difficult problem of executive eating places? What about the "casuals" mentioned in the report?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman asks about loss of revenue because of the rules for executive boxes. I am asking for the figures. I have anecdotal figures, but we need more if we are to overcome the equity objection. We are being asked from several parts of the House to distinguish between people in executive boxes and people on the terraces. We do not want to create the impression that people in executive boxes are more law-abiding than the many thousands—the majority—on the terraces. I am not endorsing the argument, but summarising the argument that prevails, not least because of the advocacy of the right hon. Member for Gorton when the Bill was being discussed. We must examine the matter again when we have the necessary figures.

I had not heard of the "casuals" until my attention was drawn to the relevant paragraph in the report. I understand from Scottish colleagues that there is close co-operation between the police in Scotland and the clubs in dealing with that serious mischief.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): A compulsory system under which one must produce a membership card before entering a ground is clearly impracticable, especially at large grounds. Does not the difficulty and expense of such a system demonstrate the desirability of having national identity cards for everyone? In view of hon. Members' interest in everything European, I remind the House that many countries in Europe operate a national identity card system.

Mr. Hurd: That suggestion is made in various contexts these days. Any Government would have great difficulty in persuading Parliament of the need for such a restriction. Limited but welcome progress has been made by the Football League and by clubs in introducing membership card systems which cover at least 50 per cent. of ground capacity. That is what the football authorities asked them to do. Particularly because of the proposal for exclusion orders which the football authorities have welcomed, and because we are doing our bit in the Public Order Bill to help, we hope that the clubs will do their bit to accelerate and perhaps take more seriously the membership card system proposal.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): Is the Home Secretary aware that the answers that he gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) and to other hon. Members on both sides of the House show a certain complacency towards the financial crises affecting clubs in England and Wales, and particularly those in Scotland? Does he accept the importance of the football game to our people? Does he recognise that it is not just a matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Secretary of State for the Environment, because he has responsibility for securing money, either through public subsidy or from the football pools, to help clubs to improve their grounds for safety and other reasons?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman neglects an additional principle, which is that when any body offers entertainment or sport to the community its basic responsibility is to ensure that the entertainment or sport is conducted in safe conditions. That is a basic, underlying responsibility of those taking the initiative and organising the game or entertainment.

However, realising that there might be a problem, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary took the initiative on football in his working group, which suggested that it would be wrong to exaggerate the scale of the problem. It would also be wrong to exaggerate the new requirements or impositions which I announced today. There may be a problem in some cases and that is why my hon. Friend and the sports councils are available for consultation.

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): May I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to paragraph 5.87 and Mr. Justice Popplewell's conclusion that the evidence does not support the proposition that unemployment and violence at football grounds are connected? People will expect the courts to hand out adequate sentences to violent offenders, so does not that proposition have significance when we discuss the problem of violence generally?

May I also put in a plea for small football clubs, such as Scunthorpe United, which is operated by people who are not after profit? That club's capacity might be over 10,000, but the gate is usually less than 2,000. Onerous financial obligations will be placed upon such clubs through having to take new fire and safety precautions.

Mr. Hurd: I am glad that my hon. Friend has drawn attention to paragraph 5.87 of the report. As regards the football club in his constituency, I repeat the advice that I have given to others. If the capacity at the ground is much greater than the numbers who go to the ground, the club may well have the option to restrict its capacity and so come below the level. That is the type of semi-technical problem on which the club may well need advice, and which it will receive.

Mr. John Ryman (Blyth Valley): As one of the leading football clubs in the country, Blyth Spartans, is in my constituency, may I ask the Secretary of State to consider one point which has not been dealt with? This is the question of enforcement. He no doubt appreciates from his earlier experience as Minister of State, Home Office the great difficulties that racecourses have in enforcing exclusions on people who have been warned off

[Mr. John Ryman]

racecourses for nefarious reasons. What specific proposals does the Secretary of State have to ensure that football clubs are able to enforce entrance bans to their grounds?

Mr. Hurd: One will never achieve 100 per cent. enforcement. However, as the arrangements to deal with such problems grow—closed circuit television and the circulation of photographs—people will be increasingly detereed from the kind of hooliganism which mars the game.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): I welcome the national membership scheme, and Leicester City was one of the pioneers in instituting it.

May I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to paragraphs 4.77 and 4.84 of the report. Paragraph 4.77 refers to drink inside a spectator at a football ground. Is my right hon. Friend aware of the difficulties that face the grounds at the moment when so-called supporters stop off at the nearby garages and motorway service stations and tank up, not only with petrol, but with alcohol? Surely the way to deal with this problem is to withdraw the off-licence.

Paragraph 4.84 of the report refers to the closure of pubs. The police can request that a number of pubs round the football ground be closed. The police do not request the closure of supermarkets and off-licences, except in exceptional circumstances. Enforcement should be made to prevent any alcohol being available outside the ground.

Mr. Hurd: The Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol Etc.) Act 1985 gives local magistrates considerable powers in these matters. It is for the police and for the magistrates, in each locality, to study what happens there and to work out a system to use their powers effectively.

Mr. Mark Carlisle (Warrington, South): I apologise to my right hon. Friend for being absent when he made his statement. It is apparent from the questions that have been asked that Mr. Justice Popplewell's proposals will impose financial obligations on the football clubs. I hope my right hon. Friend will not close his mind to the proposals made by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) to widen the horserace betting levy to a general betting levy for the good of all sport. Many feel that there is merit in that proposal.

Mr. Hurd: That is an interesting proposal, which goes fairly wide. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend and the House will not gallop away with the idea that there are no resources available for this purpose. I have already mentioned the Football Grounds Improvement Trust. I gather that the sum of £8 million has been made available to the trust for the purposes of which we have spoken. That is a substantial annual sum. The great bulk of the work of designation has been done, so there are limits to the scale of the problems that worry hon. Members.

Mr. Kaufman: I wish to deal with section 3(3) Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol Etc.) Act 1985. The Home Secretary says, fairly, that he comes fresh to these matters. When we were consulted by his predecessor on the draft Bill we insisted upon equity, and his right hon. and learned Friend, after considering the possibilities, chose the form of equity that is in the Bill. When other forms of equity were later broached with him he set his face against them and, as a result, we have the Bill in its present form. As I said in the later stages, the implication of that equity has been financially troubling to the football clubs.

I repeat the words of my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell). We continue to insist on equity, but we are content with the proposals of Mr. Justice Popplewell and I wish to say that specifically today. However, this matter should be reconsidered. It appears that the Secretary of State intends that changes in this matter will be in an amendment to the Public Order Bill as it travels through the House. I suggest that it would be appropriate, at a time that the Secretary of State considers suitable, to enter into discussions so that we can arrive at a form of equity that is of assistance to the football clubs.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful for that helpful intervention. It certainly clarifies something which has hitherto been somewhat obscure. Let us discuss this when the time comes.

Official Report

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) has been very patient. Would he like to put his point of order briefly? I think that I can help him.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): I am grateful, Mr. Speaker. Further to the point of order which I broached immediately after Prime Minister's Question Time. When I checked my speech in *Hansard* this morning I noticed the quotation, referred to in column 1150, which I quoted from the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) on Monday. I am reported as having quoted from his quotation as follows:

"whether the Government had received a letter from" —[*Official Report*, 15 January 1986; Vol. 89, c. 1150.]

My recollection is that I quoted more extensively—

"whether the Government had received a letter from the chairman"—

and went on to say,

"who is Sir Austin Pearce".

I want to draw the attention of the House to this because of its crucial significance. I believe that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was consciously deceiving the House, and it is important that——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think the hon. Gentleman would wish to say "consciously"

Mr. Strang: I withdraw that. I do not wish to prolong this, Mr. Speaker, but I hope you will address yourself to what I think is an important correction to the substance of my speech.

Mr. Speaker: If I have this right the hon. Gentleman wishes *Hansard* to correct the quotation to read,

"whether the Government had received a letter from the chairman",

and to add,

"who is Sir Austin Pearce."

I will arrange for that to be done.

BILL PRESENTED

AIRPORTS

Mr. Secretary Ridley, supported by the Prime Minister, Mr. Secretary Howe, Mr. Secretary Brittan, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Secretary Edwards, Mr. Secretary Baker and Mr. Michael Spicer, presented a Bill to provide for the dissolution of the British Airports Authority and the vesting of its property, rights and liabilities in a company nominated by the Secretary of State; to provide for the reorganisation of other airport undertakings in the public sector; to provide for the regulation of the use of airports and for the imposition of economic controls at certain airports; to make other amendments of the law relating to airports; to make provision with respect to the control of capital expenditure by local authority airport undertakings; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 60].

European Community (Fisheries)

5.17 pm

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Michael Jopling): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's unnumbered explanatory memoranda dated 10th December 1985 on 1986 total allowable catches and quotas, on modifications to the proposed 1986 total allowable catches and quotas and on the fisheries agreement for 1986 between the European Community and Norway, of European Community Documents Nos. 9284/85 on amendments to Regulation 2057/82 establishing certain control measures for fishing activities by vessels of Member States, 8562/85 on the allocation of flat rate quantities of hake, horse mackerel and blue whiting to Spain, and 10047/85 on 1986 fish guide prices; and welcomes and approves the provisional agreement reached on these arrangements for 1986 with the improvements obtained for the United Kingdom fishing industry.

The motion makes it clear that this afternoon's debate covers a number of documents on European Community fisheries legislation, most of which are concerned with fishing arrangements for 1986. These documents have been recommended for further consideration of the House by the Select Committee on European Legislation, for whose vigilant scrutiny we are all most grateful.

Though I will necessarily be going into a good deal of detail on some of the matters involved, the broad principles of the common fisheries policy are of course now well established following the first-class deal that the Government negotiated in 1983.

Since the House last debated the common fisheries policy on 10 January last, this deal has been consolidated by the successful conclusion of the accession arrangements with Spain and Portugal. Now, as my right hon. Friend the Minister of State has already reported to the House, we have once again been able to negotiate a satisfactory package of quotas and associated measures for 1986 in time for the beginning of the year, only this time it covers a Community of 12 nations, not just of 10. There can be no doubt that the common fisheries policy is, indeed, proving to be every bit as successful as we hoped.

The first group of unnumbered explanatory memoranda referred to in the motion concerns the Commission's proposals for the total allowable catches and quotas for 1986 and the associated fishing arrangements for 1986 under the European Community-Norway agreement. I should explain that these proposals were produced only 10 days before the Fisheries Council on 16-17 December. Following lengthy negotiations at that Council, and an additional meeting of the Council on 20 December, a compromise package emerged to which all the other member states were able to agree.

I considered the package very satisfactory for the United Kingdom but, in view of the recommendation of the Select Committee, I thought it right to enter a formal reservation on the adoption of the regulations on TACs and quotas and on Norway, pending a debate in the House. So that fishing should not be interrupted, I agreed, following the same procedure as last year, that the regulations should be adopted on an interim basis until 25 January only, pending clarification of the United Kingdom's position following completion of our parliamentary scrutiny procedures.

I shall now outline the main elements of interest to the United Kingdom, starting with the North sea joint stocks. As the House is aware, the TACs for these stocks are

[Mr. Michael Jopling]

agreed with Norway in the light of the latest scientific evidence. For 1986, there are increases in the availability of haddock and saithe but decreases for cod, plaice and whiting. The higher United Kingdom quotas of haddock and saithe, representing increases of 12·8 and 25·2 per cent. respectively, will be welcomed by our fishermen, given the reduction in our North sea cod quota to 75,790 tonnes, brought about by the current situation of the cod stock on which I know that the House will share my concern.

The total allowable catch of 170,000 tonnes for North sea cod agreed with Norway reflects this and, although the reduction is naturally a considerable disappointment to those sectors of the industry involved, I believe that they recognise it as necessary and realistic to protect that fishery.

On North sea herring, I shall refer later to the Commission's negotiations with Norway on the share-out of the stock in 1986 between Norway and the Community. At this point, I should like only to draw attention to the fact that the combined TAC for the North sea has been increased yet again, this time to 570,000 tonnes with the possibility of further growth in future. The United Kingdom quota for the northern and central North sea, —IVA and IVB— which are the areas of main interest to our fishermen, is increased by more than 13,000 tonnes to 71,615 tonnes, on top of which we have secured a further 5,700 tonnes through quota swaps agreed in the margins of the Council.

Thus, we have obtained a substantial increase in our herring opportunities in the North sea.

As for stocks outside the north sea, the TACs for haddock and herring to the west of Scotland will be lower than in 1985, reflecting the clear scientific advice on the state of the stocks. Nonetheless, I am pleased to report that I was able to ensure that the reduction on herring, in particular, will not be as great as that originally proposed by the Commission, which is a matter of considerable importance for the west coast herring fishery.

For western mackerel, the Commission originally proposed a very substantial reduction in the TAC. This proposal was increased at the Council meeting, resulting in a TAC of 362,000 tonnes—a reduction of 11·6 per cent.—giving the United Kingdom a quota of 195,950 tonnes. This stock is of great importance to the United Kingdom fishing industry, and I am sure that the industry will appreciate the need for this reduction to maintain the longer-term viability of that stock.

For the whitefish stocks in area VII, which, I remind the House, includes the English channel, the Irish sea, the Bristol channel and the western approaches, there are several increases, which have been warmly welcomed by the industry. During 1985, these stocks continued to attract a considerable amount of attention, and, although we were able to negotiate a number of quota swaps with other member states, it was necessary to restrict fishing and, in some cases, to close fisheries before the end of the year. For 1986, our opportunities for most of these st··ks will be greater than last year. Our Council package gives us an overall increase of 250 tonnes in our sole quotas. In addition, we were able to obtain a further 380 tonnes, mainly in the Irish sea, through a swap with the Netherlands, giving us a total increase of about one third in our availability in area VII.

For plaice, I was able at last to obtain a considerable increase in the TAC for Bristol channel plaice, which will increase our quota by 90 tonnes. I know that this will be most welcome, especially to the local Welsh fishermen. We have also achieved an increase in our quota for English channel plaice.

The stocks included in the Commission's second TACs and quotas proposal are those which needed to be added or amended as a result of the accession of Spain and Portugal. For western hake, our quota is increased by 760 tonnes. For monkfish and megrim in areas VI and VII, the quotas for 1985 did not reflect the existing pattern of fishing by us or other member states. The United Kingdom's quotas for 1986 have been increased and redistributed between the areas to reflect more accurately the present pattern of fishing there.

In accordance with the accession treaty, TACs and quotas were set for Norway lobster, also known as nephrops, and pollock in areas VI and VII. The Commission's proposals for these stocks were, for member states other than Spain and Portugal, based largely on the available catch figures for previous years. However, the quotas allocated to the United Kingdom, especially for area VII, were below the level of some of the recent catches, but I was able to obtain highly satisfactory increases in some cases.

Nephrops is particularly important to fishermen in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and I know that there was some anxiety that our proposed quotas would not be sufficient. However, the quotas finally agreed are well above our recent catches and will, I hope, reassure those fishermen and processors concerned that their interests have been amply safeguarded. The quotas for pollock and Norway lobster were on an ad hoc basis for 1986 without prejudice to the allocation of the stocks in future years.

In addition to the package of TACs and quotas for Community fishermen in the waters of the member states, the Council had also to consider the reciprocal fishing arrangements for 1986 with third countries. The most important are the arrangements with Norway, which the Select Committee has recommended for the consideration of the House.

I have already dealt with the joint stocks in the North sea where the arrangements agreed reflect substantial transfers from Norway, but I must draw attention to the increased quotas for north-east Arctic cod and haddock, which should provide some alternative opportunities, especially for our larger vessels.

In addition, there are useful reductions in the allocations to Norway in Community waters of west of Scotland herring, down 900 tonnes, and of western mackerel, down 5,000 tonnes. These help to maintain the opportunities for our own fishermen, despite reductions in the TACs.

The main point of interest in the reciprocal arrangements negotiated with Norway is clearly the share-out of the North sea herring stock for 1986. I know that this has caused concern to our industry, and it is indeed difficult to resist the conclusion that the Commission, in its understandable eagerness to reach an early agreement with Norway, allowed itself to be pushed too far by Norway, despite the advice of the member states' representatives who were on the spot. I made it very clear at the Council on 16 and 17 December that we were not

happy with how the Commission had conducted these negotiations, and we will continue to press for a more satisfactory negotiating procedure.

The House will wish to consider the agreement in its full context. Last year, no agreement was reached with Norway on North sea herring. As a result, each party managed its fishery in its own zone. The Community restricted its catches to 80 per cent. of a notional TAC of 410,000 tonnes for the North sea as a whole to protect the upturn in the herring stocks and to avoid prejudicing further negotiations. Norway, however, caught in its own zone in excess of 150,000 tonnes—well beyond what the Community could have agreed was appropriate.

There was clearly a danger that continued failure to agree on joint management of the stock would have led to competitive over-fishing by each party, to the detriment of the stock. That was one of the reasons why the Commission felt able to agree to an allocation of 200,000 tonnes to Norway for 1986 out of a TAC of 570,000 tonnes for the North sea as a whole, to be fished in the northern and central sectors of the North sea only, with 50,000 tonnes available to be taken in the Community's zone. That agreement is on a strictly ad hoc basis for 1986, and discussions are to continue on the basis for a longer term agreement on ownership shares.

The second main reason that the Commission was able to advance in support of its agreement with Norway was that the allocation to Norway of North sea herring explicitly represents a transfer from the Community to Norway to help redress the overall balance of the other arrangements for 1986, to which I have already referred. In order not to prejudice each party's position on the respective ownership shares of North sea herring, it was not possible to put a precise figure on the level of this transfer. However, our own calculation of the balance of the remainder of the agreement for 1986, taking into account elements of compensation carried forward from 1985, indicates that it favours the Community by the equivalent of about 35,000 tonnes of herring. That factor has to be kept in mind when considering the scale of the herring allocation to Norway. Likewise, although our pelagic fleet is concerned about the 50,000 tonnes of herring available for Norway to fish in the Community's zone, we must remember that in the case of all the other joint stocks, joint management implies an element of mutual access to each other's waters.

To sum up, we have to bear in mind that reopening the negotiations with Norway on herring would have led to delay in the fixing of TACs and quotas generally. Any reduction in the herring allocation to Norway would have had to be balanced by equivalent reductions in the transfers from Norway to the Community on whitefish stocks, for many of which the United Kingdom share is much higher than that for North sea herring. Our overall judgment was, and is, that the package of TACs, quotas and reciprocal fishing arrangements for 1986 is very satisfactory indeed from the United Kingdom point of view, and I have no hesitation in commending it to the House.

I should now like to remind the House of a further element in the package—or, rather, not in the package. The House will recall that last year we agreed to a temporary derogation for one season from the 10 per cent. by-catch limit on human consumption whitefish taken in the Danish industrial fishery for Norway pout in the North sea. Despite the limited and temporary nature of that derogation, considerable concern was expressed about it both by the British fishing industry and by hon. Members on a number of occasions. When the derogation expired on 31 May 1985, the Commission reviewed the data available on the quantities of whitefish taken under the derogation, which were admittedly small, and proposed an extension of the derogation for a further season.

We took the view that a temporary derogation was a temporary derogation and that no case had been made out for continuing to depart from the 10 per cent. by-catch limit laid down for the industrial fisheries as part of the basic 1983 common fisheries policy settlement. I am glad to say that, as a result of our firmness on this matter and the support we received from other member states, notably France, the Commission agreed as part of the package on 17 December to withdraw its proposal on Norway pout. It is common enough for a Commission proposal to be amended, but, as I think those who are experts in these matters will be aware, it is rare indeed for one to be withdrawn altogether. As a result of our successful campaign on this issue, with the support of the industry and the House, I am confident that the Norway pout can now return to the deserved obscurity from which it emerged last year.

I will now deal briefly with the other documents mentioned in the motion. In each case the Select Committee recommended that adoption of these proposals need not be delayed pending a debate, and I accordingly entered no reservation on these when they came to the Council for adoption, in two cases in a revised form.

Document No. 8662/85 covers the allocation of the flat rate quantities of hake, horse mackerel and blue whiting to Spain provided for in the treaty of accession. As the House will recall, the magnitude of Spain's hake quota in the waters of the then existing member states was a critical element in the long and difficult accession negotiations. In the end, Spain was granted for a three-year period up to 4,500 tonnes of hake in addition to the quota, to the extent necessary to give Spain a total allocation of 18,000 tonnes. The document divides that 4,500 tonnes into 3,000 tonnes for areas VI and VII, and 1,500 tonnes for the Bay of Biscay, broadly in proportion to the division of the TACs.

For horse mackerel and blue whiting, Spain receives flat rate quantities, outside the unallocated TACs of 31,000 tonnes of horse mackerel and 30,000 tonnes of blue whiting. In each case, the proposal allocates 10,000 tonnes to the waters of interest to the United Kingdom—areas VI and VII. That is somewhat less than we might have expected given the pattern of existing fisheries. I hope that the House will agree that the proposal which was adopted as it stands represents a sensible and practical application of the provisions of the accession treaty.

Document 9284/85 deals with a number of detailed amendments to the Community's control arrangements, designed particularly to tighten up control on TACs and quotas. The House will know the importance we attach to control. We were instrumental in establishing the Community's Inspectorate of Inspectorates and I am glad to report that, as a result of the Commission's inspectors' work over the last year or so, a great deal of progress has been made in ensuring that all member states take positive steps to respect their national quotas.

However, the Commission has identified several areas where further powers are needed, and a number of these were provided for in the revised regulation agreed by the

[Mr. Michael Jopling]

Council on 17 December. In particular, the Commission will be able to require additional catch information from member states.

Member states are also required to provide the Commission with a written report of any formal administrative inquiry instigated at the latter's request, so that the Commission can be satisfied that everything possible has been done to eliminate flaws in the control system.

In the member states themselves, it will now be possible to apply sanctions for all control offences to the owners or charterers of vessels as well as to skippers. There will be a formal obligation on the member states to ensure that the accuracy of logbooks is checked.

New controls have also been introduced for exercising tighter control over klondikers. These are already subject to tight control when receiving from United Kingdom fishing vessels in our waters. It will now be possible to ensure that the catches from other member states' vessels are also closely monitored.

I should draw the attention of the House to the fact that two of the proposals in document 9284/85 were withdrawn before the draft regulation was put to the Council. The first would have permitted the Commission to close a fishery when the Community's total allowable catch or quota had been exhausted, even though some member states might not have exhausted their individual quotas. The second would have empowered Commission inspectors to carry out investigations unaccompanied by national inspectors.

Both the proposals affect the relative competences of the Commission and of the member states and caused difficulty for nearly all member states. It was therefore not possible to reach agreement. The Commission has, however, at our request, promised the Council a report early this year on the state of control arrangements throughout the Community, and that report, when it appears, may provide a basis for reconsideration of these and any other desirable changes.

I turn to the Commission's proposals for guide prices in 1986, contained in document 10047/85. Guide prices are used to calculate the Community withdrawal prices for fish withdrawn from the human consumption market. It is of considerable importance to reach agreement on the guide prices sufficiently early in December to allow all the other prices derived from them to be applied from the start of the new fishing year, on 1 January.

As in previous years, the Commission's proposals are in three parts. The first of these is of great concern to the United Kingdom, as it covers the main species which are of interest to our fishermen. The proposed range of increases between nil and 6 per cent. seemed to us on the whole, to have been drawn up on a very sound basis. In the course of negotiation the balance was changed marginally, the increase for cod being set at 6 per cent. instead of the 5 per cent. originally proposed. That increase was, however, offset by a reduction of one percentage point to 5 per cent. and 4 per cent., respectively, in the Commission's proposals for haddock and whiting. Of slightly greater significance, however, was the three percentage point price reduction for herring, the price of which was to have been left unchanged. This reduction, for which we pressed, should help Community herring to sell in competition with supplies from third countries where prices are generally lower. Overall, therefore, I consider that the revised guide prices for 1986 provide the United Kingdom industry with a sound and realistic level of support.

I should like once again to sum up the overall message that emerges from these documents. In 1983 the Government negotiated a first-class deal for the United Kingdom on the common fisheries policy. Last year, we negotiated its extension to Spain and Portugal on a basis which fully preserves its advantages for the United Kingdom. Other countries have sought, on this point or that, to unpick or adjust the balance of the deal, but it is in fact secure for the rest of this century and beyond. There is clear evidence that the common fisheries policy is now working increasingly effectively. That is shown by the fact that TACs and quotas have again been agreed before the beginning of the year and that control arrangements are being tightened up.

During the relevant negotiations, the Government have shown how hard they are prepared to fight to defend the real interests of the United Kingdom fishing industry. This is demonstrated both by our success in securing the withdrawal of the Commission's proposal on Norway pout and by the list of valuable improvements that we secured in the final package of TACs and quotas and other arrangements for 1986. I have no hesitation in asking the House to approve these arrangements.

5.42 pm

Mr. Stuart Randall (Kingston upon Hull, West): I shall keep my speech as short as possible because a number of hon. Members want to speak about these EEC documents.

There was general satisfaction in the industry that the Government were able for the second time to complete the negotiations on TACs and quotas before the beginning of the fishing year. Clearly the negotiations were made much more difficult this year because of the accession of Spain and Portugal to the EEC. Advice from the marine scientists that there would need to be a substantial reduction in certain key species, such as North sea cod and west coast mackeral, accentuated the difficulties.

The industry, especially in Scotland, seemed satisfied with the way in which the Government handled the Norway pout whitefish by-catch. That by-catch had been increased for a transitional period from 10 per cent. to 18 per cent. As a result, the authorities appeared to turn a blind eye to the other young fish caught as a by-catch when pout was being fished in this area. I understand that the Danes were the main culprits. This was unsatisfactory and totally contrary to the Community's policy on conservation. I hope that the Minister will confirm that he is satisfied that this unacceptable behaviour will cease with the introduction of these new quotas. If control over this by-catch is regained, fish that is suitable for human consumption will not be used for industrial purposes and the depleted whitefish stocks in the North sea will be able to recover more quickly.

The reduction in the North sea cod quota is bad news for certain parts of the industry. Cod is the most valuable fish, especially for east coast fishermen who do not have access to haddock to compensate for the fall in the cod quota. Severe hardship for those fishermen is likely to ensue.

It is vital to base quotas on scientific advice, but the industry feels that a quota reduction of this magnitude will cause serious dislocation in the industry and believes that

a more gentle reduction could have been achieved, say, over two or three years. Was that option considered? Would it have been viable from a conservation point of view?

The industry has to accept the sharply reduced North sea cod quota—it has no option. Nevertheless, it is important in debates such as this to reflect the industry's attitudes. The view widely held by the industry is that the reduction in the North sea cod quota arises mainly from the failure of the Government and the EEC Commission to enforce their policy rather than from the industry's performance and behaviour. It is not good enough for the Government to say that the quota cuts are necessary just because of the scientific advice and informaton given to them. The failure of Government policy has resulted in these severe cuts in cod quotas.

The industry would like the House to know that it was not the industry that created the so-called "paper fish" and allowed poor enforcement which resulted in certain stocks being over-exploited. The industry feels that it is having to carry the can for the maloperation of the common fisheries policy.

The North sea cod quota has been reduced in 1986 from about 107,000 tonnes to about 75,000 tonnes — a reduction of about 30,000 tonnes. It can be argued that in reality the reduction is appreciably less because our fishermen did not exploit the whole quota. The reasons are that the cod stocks have been depleted, and cod are therefore more difficult to catch, and the very bad weather. The Minister knows all about that bad weather. The industry has been compensated to an extent in that cod prices have generally remained firm.

Just before Christmas, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced a £16 million package for hill farmers to compensate them for bad weather. Does the right hon. Gentleman intend compensating the fishing industry in similar fashion for bad weather?

The part of the 1986 quotas that has received the most intense opposition from British fishermen is the huge increase in the herring quota for Norway. The Minister commented on that. The feeling is that, during the negotiations, the EEC seemed to run riot. It appeared to ignore British officials and opinion. This has brought into question whether the Commissioner responsible for fishing should have the power to make what seemed to have been a unilateral and irrational decision on this matter. The EEC system of crisis management must surely now come into question.

The Minister showed his concern about the way in which the decision was arrived at. It would be wrong of me not to accept his comments. Norway, which is a non-EEC country, has been allocated 40 per cent. of the total EEC herring catch. The industry feels that there is no reasonable basis for allowing that to happen. Perhaps the Minister will say why it was necessary for the Norwegian demands to be fully met. Was it not possible to arrive at a more reasonable compromise?

The consequence of that decision is that Norway will be entitled to catch 200,000 tonnes out of a total of 500,000 tonnes for 1986. Does the Minister agree that that will be the starting point for Norway when it comes to negotiating the herring quota for 1987 and that it is likely to produce great difficulties in next year's negotiations and for British fishermen in the meantime? Surely the Minister will agree that this precipitous action over the quotas is bound to create problems later.

In last year's debate the right hon. Gentleman reported to the House on the state of negotiations with Norway on herring stocks. He said:

> "It has not yet proved possible to reach agreement with Norway on the problem of the allocation of North sea herring stock. But, without sacrificing our existing firm position on that issue, it has been agreed that negotiations will continue in the course of 1985."—[*Official Report*, 10 January 1985; Vol. 70, c. 969.]

How does the Minister square that so-called firm position with the fact that he has allowed 40 per cent. of the total stock to be given to the Norwegians? Clearly the Minister has sacrificed the interests of the British fishing industry in these crucial negotiations and has allowed himself to be dictated to by the Commission in Brussels. The Minister's performance was just not good enough.

Quotas are central to the common fisheries policy which came into operation in January 1983. For the policy to remain intact it is vital that the agreed quotas are enforced. The policy relies on member states to direct enforcement resources in their own sectors and to ensure that their quotas, mesh sizes and other factors are adhered to. So far the enforcement policy has left a lot to be desired, although improvements are being made in some areas.

One key problem has been the lack of political will in some EEC countries to ensure that enforcement works. To be fair, the United Kingdom has led the way in improving enforcement within the community. Also, satisfactory strides have been made nationally on enforcement. However, many people in the industry feel bitter at the way that other EEC countries have not stuck to the rules whereas the United Kingdom has. That has been costly to our industry in fishing opportunities and jobs.

As the right hon. Gentleman has pointed out, Spain and Portugal are now part of the common fisheries policy. Spain alone has a huge fleet of about 17,000 vessels. There is concern and doubt in the industry as to whether Spain will implement adequate control and enforcement regulations. There is still concern over the phasing out of the Nimrods and about whether the three smaller civilian planes, which are slower and less powerful, will be able to fulfil the same function as the Nimrods. Would it not have been better to review that change after experience with the Spanish and Portuguese fleets?

To date there has been a lot of abuse by the Spanish of the common fisheries policy. They have been using undersized nets and have been fishing in areas where they do not have quotas. The general impression in the industry is that the Spanish fleet is aggressive and undisciplined. Does the Minister believe that the EEC and the inspectorate are truly ready for this massive increase in the EEC fleet through the accession of Spain and Portugal to the Community?

The Minister of State, the right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer), made great play in *Fishing News* on 3 January and in other publications of the way in which he intends to restrict the number of Spanish vessels in British waters to 150 at any given time. I do not dispute that the Minister is keen and enthusiastic to ensure that the Spanish adhere to the rules now that they are part of the common fisheries policy. Essentially, the system that the Minister of State has proposed involves monitoring the number of Spanish vessels in British waters and sending the information to the EEC Commission. I am not sure what the Commission will do with the information. I understand that Ireland and France will also

[Mr. Stuart Randall]

participate in the scheme. That all seems laudable, but I do not think that the scheme goes nearly far enough for the whole common fisheries policy. There is considerable scepticism in the industry about the effectiveness of policing and enforcement in the various EEC countries.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): Does my hon. Friend accept that there is a need for action in another commercial area? British fishermen who are desperate for jobs are often employed by Spanish firms, many fishing from Spain, and do not get paid. If they protest about their conditions and lack of pay, they are often left to pay their own fares home and are in a desperate plight. There is a need for commercial discipline of Spanish fishing firms.

Mr. Randall: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that matter. It all comes under the heading of flags of convenience and quota hopping. I do not want to develop it in my speech, but as a representative of Hull, which is a major fishing centre, as every hon. Member knows, I have had experience of fishermen who have been exploited by Spanish companies. They have been on vessels with inadequate safety equipment. Hatches have been sealed. The fishermen have not had food or medical equipment. Log books have not been kept up to date. Their accommodation has been infested by cockroaches. They have had to suffer appalling conditions. Unfortunately, the companies have been able to get away with it. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has introduced new measures which were reported in a written answer on, I think, 9 December and which will address the problem. I appreciate what the Minister has done, but I do not think it goes far enough. I hope that eventually we will have primary legislation on the matter.

More effective enforcement policies are required. We need to build up the confidence of fishermen in the various EEC countries in the enforcement arrangements which, above all, must be seen to be fair. At the moment people in the industry tell me that the Commission fails miserably to provide any feedback on how well the enforcement scheme is working. The Minister should tell us whether he knows in detail how well enforcement arrangements are working in other EEC countries.

Also, will the Minister tell us whether he formally—I stress the word "formally"—receives information from the Commission about the abuse of the common fisheries policy by other EEC countries? If so, will he arrange for copies of that information to be placed in the House of Commons Library?

Mr. Jopling: I appreciate what the hon. Gentleman has been saying on enforcement. Is he aware that, within the first 10 days of Spain's accession to the Community, our fishery protection officers arrested a Spanish vessel, which has been fined £15,000? Will he join me in congratulating our officers on their prompt action so soon after Spanish accession?

Mr. Randall: Of course I congratulate the authorities on achieving that. The point I am making is that, first, there is little confidence in the industry in the working of the scheme. Secondly, the Minister must provide feedback to the industry on how the scheme is working. That does not exist and it is an important point. I hope that the Minister will take it up when he has meetings with the Commission.

Is the question of specific details of abuse by various EEC countries always on the agenda for ministerial meetings on fishing matters, and, if not, why not? Surely the matter is worth serious and regular consideration by Ministers. I understand that the new EEC inspectorate has been successful in flushing out a number of cases of abuse, and the one to which the Minister referred is a good example. Why is that sort of information not made more public?

Is the Minister satisfied that sufficient penalties have been applied to those countries that have constantly abused the policy? Has he considered reminding the Commission of the range of penalties that might be applied to offenders, such as the withdrawal of FEOGA grants or even quota reductions?

As the industry feels that there is not sufficient feedback of information from the Commission on how well the common fisheries policy is working, will the Minister raise that matter with the Commission to see what improvements can be made?

I believe that it is important for this House to discuss the issues in the Community papers before us. The time available for this debate has been too short—due, as we all know, to the Home Secretary's statement. However, there is a broader range of more worrying issues to do with the operation of the common fisheries policy that need to be considered by the House. Accordingly, I hope that it will not be too long before we have a half-day debate on the general state of the fishing industry in this country.

6.2 pm

Sir Walter Clegg (Wyre): I listened with interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall). I believe that it is the first time that he has spoken from the Opposition Front Bench, and I welcome him to his new position. There have been all sorts, shapes and sizes of Opposition spokesmen——

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): And Ministers.

Sir Walter Clegg: Indeed. I hope that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West enjoys his new position.

This is a useful debate, although it is highly technical. Reading through the papers has been like threading through a minefield. There is certainly a great deal of gobbledegook per square inch. Perhaps for future debates we could consider producing a summary of the papers, which would be of great help in saving the time of hon. Members.

I was pleased to hear my right hon. Friend the Minister say that enforcement is to be improved. Many hon. Members have always maintained that enforcement is the key to a successful policy. Indeed, I am almost sorry about the arrangement that a Community inspector should not inspect a country without the participation of that country's inspectorate. Although there may be drawbacks on sovereignty, if an inspectorate could go where it wanted, when it wanted, that would have a salutary effect, especially if some of our fishing inspectors were allowed to inspect other countries.

I am pleased that klondiking is to be tackled to reduce the amount of fish being transferred in that way. I also think that the hon. Gentleman's suggestion about reports

from the Commission on the effectiveness of enforcement would be helpful. After all, we cannot judge the success of the operation without that.

My right hon. Friend dealt with the quotas for the coming year. I am primarily concerned with area VI, which has had an increase in sole quotas that should prove helpful. Often fishermen think that the technical advice given by scientists is over-optimistic. Although there may be a quota, the fish may not be available to be caught. Perhaps the system should include taking account of what the fishermen say about the size of stocks as well as what the scientists say.

Since the common fisheries policy began, and especially since the withdrawal of Iceland, the English fleet has suffered severely. The picture in Fleetwood, Hull and Grimsby is one of almost total despair for the old, long-distance Icelandic trawlers. We are having to rely more on inshore fishermen to provide the markets with fish.

Although this matter is not entirely within the control of my right hon. Friend, the fishing communities in England are at some disadvantage compared with those in Scotland, who have the Highlands and Islands Development Board to help them. Perhaps the time has come for some regional help for the English fishing communities that have been so badly hit by the Icelandic withdrawal. Indeed, for Fleetwood the past year has been simply a matter of hanging on. I greatly admire those who are still operating the inshore fleet. They have faced enormous difficulties with quotas, the weather, increased overheads and many other problems.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): The Minister who is to reply to the debate represents a constituency in the Highlands and Islands Development Board area. Those of us who are close to that area feel strongly about some of the unfortunate positions that arise as a result of the board's activities. I have heard rumours that the board and the Sea Fish Industry Authority are now beginning to get their act together. Until now, the two organisations appear to have been following different fishing policies.

Sir Walter Clegg: I had not realised that the southern Scots were as badly off as the northern English. I look forward to what the Minister has to say when he replies to the debate.

The documentation refers to a reduction in the size of the Spanish fleet, which we all agree is essential, and to decommissioning proposals. Decommissioning grants have been available in this country, and many owners have been able to recoup some of their losses. What worries me is that those who have suffered most from the diminution of our fishing areas because of the withdrawal of Iceland are not the owners but the men who sail in the vessels. Quite frankly, their redundancy payments system is a shambles. I know that that is not a direct responsibility of my right hon. Friend, but as a sponsoring Minister he should be aware that there is considerable bitterness and concern about that matter.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The hon. Gentleman said that the redundancy payments scheme is a shambles. My brother, who worked for a trawler firm in Hull for about 18 years, received as redundancy pay the princely sum of £385.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: That is better than most get.

Sir Walter Clegg: I was about to say just what the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) said. That man was luckier than many of the others, partly due to the conditions of service of fishermen. I am concerned to hear that cases are still before tribunals and that appeals are in progress. Obviously we cannot comment on those. However, I believe that for the future of the fishing industry fishermen must know where they stand on redundancy. The sooner that is put right, the better.

Like the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West I hope that we shall have a further debate in the not-too-distant future on the general state of the fishing industry because the matters that we are discussing today are highly technical which, to a certain extent, limits the debate.

The common fisheries policy is working better than most people thought it would. I hope that my right hon. Friend will continue to press for enforcement. That is the key. The more enforcement we get, the better the fishermen will accept the situation. The closing of fisheries and the reduction of quotas inflicts great hardship on the fishermen because they cannot earn a living while the fishery is closed. There is an increasing desire to look at conservation, which was perhaps not the case 20 or 30 years ago. The importance of it is now realised. Therefore, enforcement in preserving the stocks is important.

6.12 pm

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): I sympathise with the hon. Member for Wyre (Sir W. Clegg) about the hard days that have come to the Fleetwood fleet and other ports such as Hull and Grimsby. I was used to seeing the Fleetwood trawlers coming into my home port of Stornoway on their way to and from the fishing ground. They brought a certain amount of trade to the town. The local traders regret the disappearance of the fleets.

The hon. Member for Wyre is right to seek assistance for his local inshore fishermen. However, the fact that the Highlands and Islands Development Board does not offer help to fishermen in parts of Scotland, as the hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) said, is due not to any animosity against the fishermen but to the fact that the board's remit is confined to a certain area of Scotland.

In a previous fisheries debate a Conservative Member accused me of having only tales of woe and prophecies of doom. I am willing and glad to concede that today the Minister has given us grounds for satisfaction. I am sure that the fishermen, who are inevitably interested in the industry, will welcome that.

The mechanisms for enforcing protection are extremely welcome. That has been a weak link in the chain. Many of our own fishermen have kept to the rules, but those of other countries have not. Some fishermen used to say that the protection was only against honest men who would not break the rules anyway and that the others simply ignored it. The present mechanisms are a welcome improvement.

I particularly welcome the way in which the by-catch of 18 per cent. in the Norway pout fishery has been reversed. I agree that that is a considerable achievement. Once that was conceded it appeared that it would be difficult to reverse it. There was no reason at that time for extending the 10 per cent. We all know that in certain fisheries it is impossible to catch 100 per cent. of a species, but we must allow a by-catch. Fishermen were willing to allow 10 per cent., but what is the point of 18 per cent.? It might now be said that they could have 25 per cent. for the destruction of perfectly good fish for human

[Mr. Donald Stewart]

consumption. Therefore, I congratulate the Minister on the return to 10 per cent. and I hope that that will be set in concrete for the future.

One of the great disappointments that has created anger and incredulity in the fishing industry is the concession of 40 per cent. of the North sea herring allocated to Norway. All the evidence is that there is a historic performance, according to the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, of a level of 7 per cent. Now they will get 50,000 out of 200,000 tonnes in the EEC waters, which is effectively in British waters.

I hope that that will also be bombed out like the Norway pout by-catch of 18 per cent. because the fishermen believe that the Commission arrived at the negotiation determined to meet the Norwegians at all costs. It seems to me that the Norwegians do better outside the Common Market than the United Kingdom is doing as a member. One wonders what was the quid pro quo that allowed a TAC of that level to the Norwegians.

The reduction in cod quota is also a disappointment and the increase in the haddock quota does not compensate for that. However, I agree that we must listen to the scientific evidence. There is no use carrying on if the stocks cannot take the strain. One ray of hope is that when those stocks are fished with some restraint the recovery can be amazingly prolific in a short time.

Another matter that should be dealt with without delay to avoid uncertainty is the pelagic fisheries. A fleet of trawlers was allowed into those fisheries in 1985. I am sorry that the Ministry did not take immediate action to withdraw the licences because the precious stock still depends on strict adherence to the rules. I hope that that will be borne in mind. I welcome the report that we have had today.

6.17 pm

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): From what has been said so far, I think that the House will agree with the Minister's assessment that this year's settlement is satisfactory. It was encouraging to hear the right hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) and the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) agree with that in general. From my point of view, the most satisfactory aspect was the maintenance of the pout box and our not agreeing to the Commission's proposal to liberalise the human consumption by-catch. On behalf of the fishermen in the east of Scotland, I thank my right hon. Friend the Minister and his hon. Friends for their efforts. This is one of the most satisfactory features of the agreement in the Council of Ministers. I hope that this is the last time that this proposal comes from the Commission. I trust that it will not be resurrected.

I am glad that my right hon. Friend immediately recognised, as did the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food after the Fisheries Council, the widespread dissatisfaction with the European Community's deal with Norway. I am not against Norway. I like Norway and the Norwegians. Some of my best friends are in the Norwegian Government. I met the Hoyre Stortingruppe about 15 years ago, and many of them are now in the Norwegian Government. I do not want to see any bad blood between Norway and the Community, Norway and Britain and particularly Norway and Scotland. However, I think that we can enhance our relations with Norway by making a more satisfactory arrangement than has been concluded this year. It has not been as bad as it might have been because herring has not yet recovered its proper place in the fish markets. It is still a weak market, and I hope that it will not be too long before it returns in strength.

I hope that two things can be achieved—a stronger herring market, and more satisfactory arrangements with Norway on herring. Perhaps to that end my right hon. Friend will encourage the Commission to undertake an education programme whereby officials might visit some of the fishing communities interested in the arrangement with Norway in particular to see whether, before next year, they can better understand our concerns.

There has been considerable disappointment at the sudden and substantial reduction in the cod TAC. It is hardly compensated for by the increase allowed for haddock. I say that for two reasons. The first is the price consideration. The price of cod is about 50 per cent. higher than the price of haddock, which is an important consideration for the fishermen. What is more, too many of the haddock being caught are of the smaller variety. There is not a market for that, and too much of the fish is going into intervention. Just as we have all agreed that it would be a bad thing to have more human consumption fish picked up at by-catches of the pout box, it would be unfortunate if too much small haddock fit for human consumption did not find a market.

A related matter, which is not part of this year's Council, is mesh sizes. There is much controversy about what should happen, particularly for commercial species, and about the direction in which to go. I urge my right hon. Friend the Minister to give further consideration to the compromise proposals that I understand have been submitted by the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, on this and on small haddock. It should be one of the objectives of an effective marketing regime that one should seek to balance supply and demand. If, as is likely, there is a healthy fishing industry in the coming years, it will be enhanced by a more satisfactory balancing of these supply and demand considerations.

6.23 pm

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): I have a great deal of sympathy with the point made by the hon. Member for Wyre (Sir W. Clegg) about the complexity of the matters that we are considering. In future, will the Minister do himself greater justice by bringing more light and shade to the debate, so that we can applaud his achievements and see more clearly his failures, by not giving us quite such an extensive tour d'horizon as he did, breaking down into consideration of the problems of megrim and pollock, blue whiting, area VI and so on? I am always grateful for amplification from the Minister when the points at issue are difficult. However, in a debate such as this, most of the matters could be published in advance in the simplified form suggested by the hon. Member for Wyre. We could then concentrate on the issue with which the House wants to grapple.

I said that the Minister might not have done himself justice by his approach tonight. Therefore, I express my satisfaction with the outcome of the negotiations on the Norway pout box. That was clearly an aberration of a most unacceptable kind, raising the by-catch from 10 to 18 per cent. There was unanimity in the fishing industries and

across the House that this had to be brought to an end. This is something for which the Minister deserves great credit. I hope that we can take some comfort from what he has said about the unlikelihood of this matter ever being raised again in the same way.

Having dealt with light, I must turn now to the shade of the Minister's speech. The darkest corner of the negotiations on which he has reported are the arrangements with Norway on North sea herring. That is unacceptable and quite extraordinary. The idea that the Norwegians should receive 40 per cent. of central and northern North sea herring TACs is fantastically inequitable. It cannot be justified for this year, but even more disturbing is the policy that, because the final arrangements for herring have not been agreed, that might conceivably be used as a baseline for a permanent regime. I hope that the Minister will give us a categorical assurance that he intends to be trenchant and robust in rejecting any such notion.

I do not know how the 40 per cent. was arrived at, but it is worrying that the permanent regime may be based on historical considerations of Norway's catches in particular years. The Minister and the Government must not allow a historic base to be taken from a time when the Norwegians were substantially overfishing and there was a threat to stocks from that overfishing.

I move on from the inequity of the present position to the way in which it was arrived at. The Minister properly drew attention to his anxieties about how the Commission had initialled the agreement, despite the notifications that had been given by Britain and France about the unacceptability of what was proposed. We all share his concern, but it is important that we learn something more of how this can be avoided in the future.

Did the Commission act in defiance of the views of member states because of the deadline on the accession of the Iberian countries and the desirability of getting agreement on the whole package from the beginning of the year? If so the Government's approach, and that of the House, should be that these matters cannot properly be left so late in negotiations that the Commission has the freedom to sell the pass. I hope that the Minister will say something about the manner in which the Government intend to defend our interests in formulating a permanent arrangement.

The hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) spoke about a matter that was not decided at the Council but is to be considered in March—minimum mesh size. It is of particular importance to the Scottish fleet that an increase should not be proposed and that the compromise should be set at the 85 mm mark. That is about the best that we can hope for, so I hope that the Government will deal with that matter with considerable force.

The pelagic fishing review is the background to some of the matters that we have been discussing today. There is considerable anxiety among Scottish fishermen, in particular that the increase in the number of freezer trawlers with licences will adversely affect the pelagic fleet. I do not know how the Minister proposes to reverse the embarrassment that has been caused. I hope that it is not too late. It has been suggested that those three licences should be withdrawn. Certainly, the present position is most unsatisfactory.

In November, we were told that the outcome of the pelagic review would be announced before the end of the year, but we are still waiting. Can the Minister give us the expected date of the completion of the review?

Dr. Godman: Does the hon. Gentleman know what is likely to happen to the crews of those three vessels if their licences are removed?

Mr. Maclennan: I can only reply by putting another question. What will happen to the crews of those vessels that have been unable to obtain precious stock licences and what will happen to the fishermen whose catches are substantially reduced because of the occurrence of overcatching? Incomes are dropping, which has led to redundancies in several inshore ports. It is not much good robbing Peter to pay Paul. If that is what the Minister has done by granting licences to the three freezer vessels, he was unwise. I believe that it was not done deliberately, but it is a mess which has a continuing consequence for the inshore fleet. It is not a mess that will go away. I hope that the Minister recognises that fact.

I wish to discuss the reduction in cod TACs and the compensatory increases — as the Minister put it — in haddock. If the reduction in cod were based on unassailable scientific evidence, it could not be resisted. However, the Minister cannot argue that the increases in haddock will offset that reduction. Further pressure could be placed upon those who already catch haddock, because of the possible adverse effect on haddock prices. That underlines the difficulties with which the industry has to contend.

I do not quarrel with the Minister's overall assessment of the package and the state of the industry this year. However, it is a fragile industry with great ups and downs and it is subject to considerable hazards. The most tragic example of that occurred off the coast of my constituency during the recess when the Bon Ami sank with all hands on board. That event raises the matter of safety measures in the Minch and in the north-west and the appropriateness of locating helicopter safety services in Stornoway in the constituency of the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart). I hope that the Government are already considering such measures.

The country owes a great deal to the fishing industry. The Government's stewardship to ensure adequate returns is important not only for the future of fishing and of consumers, but for those fragile communities where our fleet is largely based. This year, I believe that the Minister has presented a fair account of the conclusion of an agreement which, I am pleased to say, was reached early in the year, giving some certainty as to prospects for the year ahead.

6.34 pm

Mr. Alexander Pollock (Moray): Following a period of conventional silence on this and related subjects, I am grateful for the chance of catching your eye, Mr. Speaker, at the start of 1986. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the new Secretary of State for Scotland will take as much interest in fishing matters as did his predecessor. He will be warmly welcomed if he takes the opportunity to acquaint himself at first hand with the enormous contribution that Scotland makes to the industry, especially in the north-east.

While debating the European fishing agreement of 1986, we should remember the general state of the fishing

[Mr. Alexander Pollock]

industry. The latest figures issued in November by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland showed that the Scottish fishing fleet made an operating profit of £27·7 million from a total income of £182·3 million, which is a considerable improvement on the three previous years.

Regarding the 1986 average, I commend the Government on reaching political agreement before the new year for the second year in succession. It suggests a deeper political commitment among the member states, which must be warmly welcomed. I trust that a similar momentum can be maintained in other matters as they fall due for review.

Perhaps the most impressive achievement to emerge from the Council has been the successful resistance to the Commission's proposal for an increase in the Norway pout by-catch derogation. The Minister made clear his satisfaction about that outcome.

The matter of enforcement has been raised by several hon. Members. I, too, was concerned when the news came last August of the Government's plans to introduce radical changes in the arrangements for fishery protection and surveillance. A major Nimrod base lies at Kinloss in my constituency. My fishing constituents are especially aware of that service's contribution to the effective policing of those who seek to evade the rules. Last September a photograph from a Nimrod cost a Basque trawler skipper a fine of about £35,000 for illegal fishing off the west coast of Scotland. I hope that the Minister can reassure us that careful consideration is being given by the Department to the effectiveness of any alternative arrangements.

As the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) reminded us, 1985 was a tragic year for all those who exact their trade from the sea. The loss, just before Christmas, of the crew of the Banff-registered Bon Ami came two months after the disappearance of the Macduff fishing vessel, Ocean Harvest, when four men were lost. It must be our hope that 1986 will be kinder to our fishermen and their families, to whom we all owe such a large debt.

6.38 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I echo the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member for Moray (Mr. Pollock). I have been associated with the fishing industry for many years. Fearsome hazards are placed upon those who follow that trade, and I am pleased to associate myself with the hon. Gentleman's remarks. This is the first time that I have followed the hon. Gentleman in a fisheries debate, but I am sure that it will not be the last.

I offer a brief contribution to what I believe to be a too brief debate on an industry that is so important to Scotland, and especially to the more remote maritime communities. We have an interesting collection of documents, which I would call a mixed catch.

The fears of the fishing communities aroused by the accession of Spain to the European Community have been considerably diminished. The grant aid offered for the decommissioning of Spanish fishing vessels is a most sensible measure, because the Spanish fishing fleet must be severely reduced to a level where it poses no threat to the viability of the fishing stocks that those vessels will harvest over the next decade or two. Extra capacity must be reduced before a new common fisheries policy is negotiated in the 1990s.

Mr. Austin Mitchell I echo my hon. Friend's remarks about the need to take Spanish vessels out of commission. It is good that they are receiving a far better decommissioning grant than our vessels did when our fleet was being run down. At the same time, it is wrong that the Spanish industry receives a 50 per cent. grant for new construction, whereas ours receives a 25 per cent. grant.

Dr. Godman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for mentioning what can only be described as an absurd anomaly. The decommissioning grant is about £400 per gross registered tonne. It is absurd that the Spanish should be awarded the type of new build grant that my hon. Friend mentioned.

The hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) claims that he is not anti-Norwegian. I am sure that we all readily accept that. I should like to claim that I am not anti-Spanish when talking about Spanish fishing activities. I shall quote Mr. Boyd Gordon, who I believed was a former senior official in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, but somehow he is still around.

When answering a question put to him by the hon. Member for Fife, North-East in the Scottish Affairs Committee's investigation of the fisheries protection services, Mr. Boyd Gordon had this to say about the Spanish fishing fleet in Scottish waters:

"At the moment, they can have 16 vessels at any time in Area VI"—

that is the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea area—

"which comprises waters partly off Scotland and partly off England. Under the accession arrangements, I think that that number is going up to 25. But there will be strict control of the number of Spanish vessels, especially now. The problem with Spain is to make sure that no more than the 16 or 25 are in your waters at the one time. They are notorious law-breakers in that regard, and we regularly find unlicensed Spanish vessels fishing off the West Coast — not in any great numbers; but we certainly find Spanish vessels that should not be there."

Spanish fishing must be subjected to close surveillance. However, the fears about their activities are being reduced.

Agreement has been reached between the EEC and Norway. Like some of my hon. Friends and some Conservative Members, I find it disturbing that that concordat gives Norway an incredibly high percentage —some 40 per cent.—of the central northern North sea herring total allowable catch. Surely the Norwegians are not entitled to such a share of a stock which is still recovering. Is the Minister satisfied with the quality of the negotiators acting on behalf of British fishing interests? Is he satisfied about their understanding of the needs of the United Kingdom fishing industry? Members of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation are deeply dissatisfied with the Community's role in this affair.

I join the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) in expressing anxiety about the increase in the minimum mesh size from 80 mm to 90 mm. I understand that, unexpectedly, that has been extended to the west of Scotland. If true, it will take effect from 1 January 1987. The introduction of such a minimum size will have serious effects on the whiting fisheries harvested by small vessels from ports on the east and west coasts of

Scotland. The question should and will be asked whether the Minister will seek a derogation to 80 mm in respect of the whiting fishery.

The quality of the enforcement of the common fisheries policy is important, because the management of fishing —I can say this because I come from a fishing family— is too important a subject to be left to fishermen. As has been correctly said, the stewardship must rest with the Government. If the fishermen see that the enforcement system to which they and others are subject is reasonable and fair, they will play by the rules.

When I was on a fairly large fishing vessel five years ago fishing out of a United Kingdom port—I had better not tell the House which one—the skipper when he was fishing off Shetland ordered the crew to insert a small mesh net inside the belly of the trawl net. I asked him why he did that, because not even the Norway pout could get through such a tiny mesh—I could not get my little finger through—and he said, "I will obey the rules when others obey them and when they are fair and square." The improvements in enforcement are to be welcomed.

The consequence of the regulation which allows penal or administrative action to be taken against owners and charterers as well as skippers over irregularities under the regulations may help to reduce some of the dreadful exploitation to which British fishermen have been subjected by Spanish fishing interests. That will go a long way towards dissuading skippers from fishing where they should not fish. Similarly, the need for member states to verify log book entries is a most welcome development.

We have a mixed bag of documents. As the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland said, they contain shade and light, but nevertheless there are some positive aspects to them. In general, I welcome the documents.

6.48 pm

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): I shall concentrate on the subject which is uppermost in the minds of the fishermen of south-west England—the Spanish question. My area is closer to Spain than any other part of the United Kingdom. The *Fishing News* of 3 January carried the headline:

"We are ready for the Spanish."

I wish that were true.

I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend and to the Minister of State. They have done splendid work in this matter. I seek further reassurances, for the reason that my right hon. Friend gave when he mentioned the recent arrest of a Spanish trawler.

Our fishery protection boats can go almost 200 miles off Land's End and pick up Spanish trawlers carrying out illegal fishing almost at will. There is a huge problem there and nobody knows the extent of illegal fishing. I look to my hon. Friend with some confidence to intensify our enforcement efforts, because I am certain that the Spaniards will not enforce conservation measures on their own fishermen.

6.51 pm

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): The Minister has hauled in a big catch for us and I shall try to be brief. I want to concentrate on cod because Grimsby is a cod port. It is geared to cod: its vessels are appropriate for cod but not for much else. Anyway, there is not much else for the fishermen to catch. The haddock is further north in Scottish waters and it is expensive and difficult for us to catch it. For the Grimsby fishermen, it is cod or nothing. This year the cod catch has been down substantially and it has been a tough struggle to land even the quota. We have had great difficulties, with vessels carrying on long into the winter and making much more frequent and later trips. Prices have improved, but they have not risen sufficiently to compensate for the drop in the catch.

Moreover, the cut in the North sea cod quota in these measures will be a bitter blow for Grimsby because, while it is a 30 per cent. cut in quota, it is a 17 per cent. cut on this year's catch. The industry is already hard hit and facing difficulties. It is not generating enough revenue for reinvestment in new vessels to replace our aging fleet. I accept that the cut is based on scientific advice, but could not something have been done to protect Grimsby? It may be a matter of squeezing more for Grimsby from elsewhere, particularly from the Scots who have done far better out of this than we have, and who always have the alternative of haddock, which Grimsby does not have to the same degree, or perhaps it is a matter of providing some compensation for the loss of the CAT class vessels, which have now been laid up. They made a vital contribution to the fish throughput for the port but were not part of our sectoral quota. To maintain the quantity of fish coming in, Grimsby needs some compensation for the loss of those vessels.

If there is to be a cut in the cod quota, it is imperative that the Minister should press for special measures of conservation, because such measures are necessary for the cod stocks. In particular, he should press for an increase in the mesh sizes so that we can provide for proper conservation. I know that mesh sizes are to be increased from January next year, but that is a long time away and there is a welter of derogations and exceptions for that. We shall face difficulties even then, because there will be extra costs for re-equipping and there is a need for compensation for fishermen for the fall in catches. We need those conservation measures and we also need seasonal restrictions on fishing in spawning areas. In some cases there should be an absolute ban on fishing in spawning areas. We must rebuild the cod stocks if Grimsby is to have a viable future.

There is another essential matter. It is right and fair that there should be compensation for Grimsby fishermen for the loss of earnings, which will now hit them because the cod quota is down so substantially. It is, after all, a cod quota cut as a consequence of Government decisions and Government agreement. It is not the fault of the fishermen, but it will affect their earnings severely. It is a peculiar regional problem for the English ports, and particularly for the premier English fishing ports such as Grimsby.

Fishing has always been a poor relation, yet the treaty of Rome said it should be treated in the same way as agriculture. It never has been. Last year the Minister gave £16·9 million in compensation to specific geographical areas such as Durham, north Yorkshire and Northumberland to help hill farmers who had had to contend with bad weather and poor harvests. The same principle should apply to the fishermen in the English ports, particularly in Grimsby which has been affected and will continue to be affected by the disastrous drop in the cod catches. It is confined to a specific geographical area and will have severe consequences for the profitability of the industry. Fishing should qualify for special help, as did hill farmers, and on the same scale, or the fishing industry will be in difficulties.

[Mr. Austin Mitchell]

I should like to comment briefly on a couple of other aspects of importance to Grimsby. The first concerns guide prices, about which the Minister said little. The increase in guide prices is pathetic. They are being edged up by a low figure in each review, in this case by 6 per cent. Such guide prices have no relevance to the costs of catching fish and to the costs of keeping the industry going. The whole guide price system was based on the French market, not on the English market. In other words, red fish and dace do not sell for much in this country but are priced quite highly in France because they are prized there. Cod is important in this country, but brings a far lower price in France because it is not so important there. The system is geared to French needs and not to ours.

Grimsby used to have its autonomous withdrawal system, with prices two to three times higher than the official withdrawal prices, but the withdrawal system collapsed three years ago and now there is no base to the market, except for the withdrawal prices based on the guide prices. If we are to raise the roof, we need to raise the floor as well. The guide prices should be increased to provide a firm base for a viable market and they need to relate to the costs of catching fish.

In the matter of control, the CFP system of policing has never been satisfactory. Thirteen inspectors is a pathetic and inadequate figure. Answers to parliamentary questions that I put down soon after the inspectors started to operate showed that the 13 spent most of their time in this country policing the most law-abiding part of the system rather than policing our continental competitors who are less strict in their observance of the rules. If the CFP is to be accepted, it has to be fair and impress equal consequences on all. In this country there is a feeling that everybody else is getting away with cheating, with inadequate supervision, with catches that are beyond the limits, because they are not adequately controlled by this police force. There is traditionally close collusion between the fisheries inspectorate and the local fishing industry in continental ports which certainly does not exist in English ports. I do not know about Scottish ports.

Three or four years ago my wife made a film about illegal Dutch fishing at a time when there was a ban on herring. In the Dutch ports they were landing herring. She immediately went to the local fishery inspector and said, "We should like to film you dealing with this problem of herring." First, he said it was mackerel and that it was nothing to do with him. Then he flatly refused to attend to the matter because he said that he would end up in the dock. That is the sort of warm relationship that exists there. The inspectors are the people who are policing the system, but European inspectors cannot operate if national controls are not effective and adequate.

What is proposed is totally inadequate. The catching fleet has been more than doubled with the accession of Spain and Portugal, but we have not doubled the number of inspectors for the control of a nation which traditionally cheats and does not observe regulations. The system must be enforceable.

My main point is a simple straightforward one about the needs of the Grimsby fishing industry. The Government's policy has been one of letting market forces prevail, and market forces have been running down an industry which vitally needs investment if it is to survive. Grimsby has a good future because, with proper conservation, the stocks will build up and we shall have a prosperous future. We have to survive to be able to inherit and to catch that future, and we need special help from the Government. We do not want the Minister to stand by and say, "We can do nothing; it is all down to market forces." Unless we get special help, we shall not survive to catch that adequate future.

It is vital that the industry be concentrated in centres of excellence like Grimsby, which has the facilities, the landing and the ice and food processing, all of which forms an excellent nucleus for the expansion of the fishing industry, but it needs help if it is to survive. There is no point in the Government standing by and saying, "There is nothing we can do."

7 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): This has been a useful debate on an extremely important industry. We are grateful to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for the details that he gave when he introduced these documents. Fishing is an important industry throughout the United Kingdom. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) that we ought to have a further opportunity in the near future to discuss the affairs of the fishing industry.

I should like to refer to a point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) and by the hon. Members for Moray (Mr. Pollock) and for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) concerning the tragic loss of life in the Scottish fishing fleet in recent months. This is a matter of great concern throughout the country, particularly in the fishing communities. I have fishing communities in my constituency, so I am aware of this great concern. The House is to have an opportunity to debate fishing fleet safety when the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie) introduces his private Member's Bill next month. I welcome his initiative, and I have no doubt that he will receive widespread support.

I ask the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. McKay), to say something tonight about the apparent serious lack of helicopter cover to deal with emergencies off the north-west coast of Scotland. This is a matter of immediate concern, and it would be useful if the Under-Secretary of State could say something about it.

Other aspects have been mentioned in the debate. I share the satisfaction of all right hon. and hon. Members who have spoken about the ending of the outrageous derogation from the by-catch limit in the Danish industrial fishery in the North sea. I pay tribute to the Scottish Fishermen's Federation for its efforts to demonstrate the harmful effects of that derogation on whitefish stocks in the North sea. That point was referred to by, among others, the right hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Stewart). It caused concern during the time that the derogation took effect. The 10 per cent. limit should never have been increased to 18 per cent., and I sincerely hope that we shall hear no more about it. I congratulate the Minister on having ensured its demise this year.

I wish to refer to two detailed points on the new restrictions that are to come into effect. Everybody recognises the need to conserve stocks on the basis of scientific evidence. However, it is important that restrictions should be phased gradually, wherever possible, in order to protect not only those who fish for

these species of fish but those on shore who trade in and process the fish. We remember the almost complete destruction not only of the offshore herring catching fleet but of the onshore herring processing industry in this country when there was a complete ban on herring fishing around our coasts.

The first detailed point that I want to raise on these documents is the increase in mesh size from 80 mm to 90 mm for the demersal fishery in the North sea and off the west coast of Scotland. That point was referred to by the hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson). It could create serious difficulties for a number of small fishing vessels which rely upon the whiting fishery in those waters. Is it really necessary to impose these restrictions? In future, would it be possible for further restrictions to be phased and for fair warning to be given of them? The Minister must recognise the difficulties that restrictions create for a number of small fishing vessels and their crews.

My second detailed point, which has already been referred to by the hon. Member for Fife, North-East and by my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), is the substantial cut of 31,000 tonnes in the British share of the total allowable catch for cod in the North sea. That is a substantial volume of fish. It will create difficulties not only for fishermen but for onshore processors and traders. In future will the Government try to avoid such drastic fluctuations in the total allowable catch and similar restrictions?

One of the key points in the debate concerns the Norwegian share of the herring total allowable catch in the North sea. We have heard about the Minister's dissatisfaction over the Norwegians having got away with 40 per cent. of that valuable fishery. The Government seem to have been completely outmanoeuvred. The conduct of the European Commission in general and of M. Simonet in particular in negotiating that deal raises serious questions. Representations have been made by a number of people. The Scottish Fishermen's Federation has said:

"We were very angry indeed at the unbelievably high percentage share (40 per cent.) of the Central and Northern North Sea Herring TAC allocated to Norway as part of the EEC/ Norway Fisheries Agreement for 1986 negotiated by the Commission and ratified by the Fish Council in December last, inasmuch as we do not believe the Norwegians to be entitled to such a high share of this recovering stock and, moreover, we fear very much for the precedent which this One-Year Deal may have set in the context of the need for both Norway and the Community to settle a substantive agreement on the future share-out of North Sea Herring."

The federation goes on to express its lack of confidence in the Commission's negotiations with Norway. I understand that the Minister is not satisfied with them. The federation suggests that in future there should be an independent element in the negotiations. I understand that representatives of the Scottish Fishermens Federation were present during the negotiations, and its observation was:

"The Commission seemed hell-bent on achieving a deal with Norway at all costs and, in so doing, behaved in a cavalier fashion in proceeding to a settlement after paying little or no regard to the positions put to them by the Officials of the various Member States."

The Scottish Fishermen's Federation has an axe to grind, but I notice that its views seem to be confirmed by a more independent source, Agro-Europe, in its fish report of December 1985, which referred to

"thinly veiled accusations that Simonet might just be paying more attention to the needs of the whitefish fishing industry in his native France rather than to those of British herring fishermen. It was even suggested by some industry representatives that Simonet was trying to keep the French sweet in the hope of avoiding too heavy demands from Paris on matters relating to the Spanish fleet after accession."

It has happened. It must not be allowed to happen again.

I join the hon. Members for Wyre (Sir W. Clegg) and for Moray and other hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby, in appealing for effective enforcement of the agreed restrictions throughout the European Community. We have heard a certain amount about the Inspectorate of Inspectorates. We have even heard about the Minister of State's computer. But there is a legitimate sense of outrage among British fishermen that the effective controls that are applied to them are not matched by controls over the fleets of other European Community nations. The Spanish got themselves a bad reputation, even before joining the European Community. The hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) pointed out that a Spanish vessel managed to get itself arrested only days after Spain's accession to the European Community. That does not seem to demonstrate good intentions on Spain's part.

I see from a banner headline in *Fishing News* of 3 January 1986 that the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer), has said:

"'We're ready for the Spanish'".

I am not sure that the Minister of State is a particularly convincing figure as a latter-day Drake trying to see off the Spanish armada, but we wish him and his officials well in dealing with this clear threat.

The industry and the House expect the Government to enforce the fishing restrictions upon vessels of all nations that come within our waters. Like the hon. Member for Wyre, I want not just private reporting through the Minister's famous computer. It would be useful if we could have a public account of the conduct of the respective fishing fleets in European waters—not only around Britain, but elsewhere—and of the enforcement measures which may have been taken.

I repeat the appeal of my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, West, at the beginning of the debate, that more time should be made available at an early date to discuss this extremely important industry.

7.10 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. John MacKay): We have had a most interesting and informative debate on the European Community documents recommended by the Select Committee for consideration by the House. As is usual in these debates, we have ranged widely over many other aspects of United Kingdom and Community fisheries policy. I am grateful to the many hon. Members who have contributed to the debate and to those who cut their speeches short to allow everyone who wished to speak the opportunity to say a few words. I fully recognise that the fishing industry is an important element in many of our constituencies.

As each year passes since the common fisheries policy was introduced in 1983, we see more and more clearly that the deal that we negotiated then has been good for this country and for our fishing industry. The CFP has provided the stability which fishermen need in order to plan ahead. The developing arrangements for the conservation of stocks, the annual allocations of total

[Mr. John MacKay]

allowable catches and national quotas, and the improved procedures for control and enforcement have all helped to provide improved opportunities for the fishermen and to safeguard their long-term interests.

In 1985 the CFP was extended to cover the accession of Spain and Portugal to the Community. I know that some of our fishermen were apprehensive about this enlargement of the Community, but, as my right hon. Friend noted at the start of today's debate, the arrangements have been agreed without too much trauma, and I do not think that there is any need for the industry to feel threatened by the changes that have taken place.

There has been a broad recognition in the House today of the fact that the arrangements that we negotiated for TACs and quotas in 1986 are very satisfactory for the United Kingdom industry. Some aspects of the overall package are not ideal, notably the provision for Norwegian catches of North sea herring, but the arrangements have generally been given a warm welcome by the industry itself.

In particular, mention has been made today of the successful resistance that we mounted to the Commission's proposal for a further derogation allowing an 18 per cent. by-catch of white fish in the industrial fishery for Norway pout. This was regarded by the fishing industry as being the major issue of 1985, and it is very gratifying for Fishery Ministers to come to the House and report that we have achieved what the industry wanted. I am sure that my right hon. Friend has noted the thanks and appreciation of all hon. Members who spoke, in particular the right hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) who said that it was very good for my right hon. Friend to be able to come to the Dispatch Box with real grounds for satisfaction.

I would just mention the performance of the industry in 1985. The value of the fish landed up to 31 October 1985 was £260 million, compared with £245 million for the corresponding period of 1984. My hon. Friend the Member for Moray (Mr. Pollock) highlighted the position of the Scottish fleet, which plays such an important part in the economy of his constituency.

One of the problems which most Members have mentioned is that of North sea cod. I fully appreciate the problem, especially as it affects Grimsby, mentioned by the hon. Members for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), and for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall), and by other hon. Members. The scientific advice on the need for the reduction of the TAC was very firm indeed. The figure recommended by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea was, in fact, 130,000 tonnes, so that by settling for 170,000 tonnes we are already taking certain risks in order to mitigate the impact on fishermen. The new quota will not necessarily restrict fishermen's activities this year, because, if the scientists are right, the cod will unfortunately be that much less abundant.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby mentioned that the quota of 107,530 tonnes in 1985 was not caught. Although all the figures are not in, we consider that about 90,000 tonnes was caught. The main problem is a very poor 1984 year class. Of course, if surveys during the year produce evidence that the original assessment was substantially wrong the advice will no doubt be reviewed, but it would be wrong of me to hold out any hope that we are likely to see any increase later in the year as a result of the scientists' advice.

Many Members mentioned the control of Spanish fishing. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) is perhaps nearer the problem than any of the rest of us. I assure the House that every effort is being made to ensure the effective control of Spanish fishing in the waters round our coast, following Spain's accession to the Community. A majority of the Spanish fleet operates outside Community waters under agreements with third countries. The number of vessels allowed to fish at any one time in Community waters will be strictly limited. The House can be assured, by the catching and fining of a Spanish vessel so early this year, that we take the whole matter very seriously indeed.

With Spain inside the Community, Spanish vessels will be subject to the full range of existing Community conservation and control measures, including logbooks and landing declarations. We will most assuredly enforce these measures in our waters, and we can expect an improvement in enforcement at the Spanish end under the supervision of the Community's Inspectorate of Inspectorates.

Mr. Harris: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way—I did try to limit my speech to two minutes. May I ask whether he has had any indication at all of when the number of inspectors will be increased to 21, because this is crucial? I know that my right hon. Friend has been pressing very hard on this.

Mr. MacKay: I cannot give my hon. Friend a date for it, but the Council has endorsed the Commission's proposals for an increase in the complement of inspectors in 1986 from 13 to 21, and we hope that this will be done as soon as possible.

While I am speaking about control and enforcement, may I say that, as the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West freely recognised, we have led the way on enforcement in the Community and we think that a lot of progress has been made. Had I time, I would give the House the evidence on which I base that statement; for example, the catch limits closed down 46 fisheries in 1984 and 52 fisheries in 1985, not just in this country, but throughout the Community, which shows that member states are increasingly taking action to manage the fisheries so that quotas are not exhausted before the end of the year.

I was asked about the possibility of reporting this. The Commission will report on control arrangements early this year. My right hon. Friend, I think, referred to that. We have asked the Commission to study whether there should be some system of penalty on compensation when a member state exceeds a quota. We have listened with interest to these points and will see what we can do about publishing these various papers when they come to us.

A few quick words on quota hopping. From 1 January 1986, all licences contain new conditions aimed at ensuring that vessels wishing to fish against United Kingdom quotas have a real economic link with the United Kingdom. Licensed vessels need to be registered under part IV of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, normally operate from the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands, be crewed by at least 75 per cent. British or European Community nationals, excluding Spanish,

Portuguese or Greek nationals, under the transitional arrangements, be resident in the United Kingdom and have all the crew contributing to United Kingdom national insurance or the equivalent Isle of Man or Channel Islands schemes. As a further deterrent, western hake was designated a pressure stock, which will restrict access to the fishery.

I have little time left in which to deal with the Norwegian point. My right hon. Friend explained that the agreement with Norway involved an explicit transfer from the Community to Norway of North sea herring for 1986 to balance the rest of the agreement. In addition, the agreement does not just concern North sea herring, but covers a wide range of important fish stocks and assures vital access to Norwegian grounds for our whitefish fleet. I am happy to give an assurance that the Government cannot accept that the decision to allocate 40 per cent. of the herring in the central and northern North sea to Norway in 1986 sets any kind of precedent for the longer-term share out. My right hon. Friend has continually made it clear that he was not at all pleased with the way in which the negotiations were conducted by the Commission. He has made that clear to the Commission. We very much hope that a repeat of the situation will not happen this year.

I have only sufficient time to mention one very serious point which it would be remiss of me not to mention. I was asked by three hon. Members about the safety of fishing vessels in the light of the tragic loss of the Bon Ami off the north-west coast of Scotland at the end of last year. At present my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has responsibility for safety, and his Department is conducting the shipping investigation. I cannot say more than that. However, I assure hon. Members that his Department and the Fisheries Departments view the incident with great seriousness.

Last year we finished on the successful note of scrapping the proposals for the Norway pout by-catch derogation, together with an agreement on tax and quotas for the main fish stocks in 1986. This year the industry will undoubtedly have to face certain difficulties and problems, including the unfortunate but necessary reduction in quota in North sea cod. There are opportunities for the industry to continue to prosper, and I am sure that it will seize them.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's unnumbered explanatory memoranda dated 10th December 1985 on 1986 total allowable catches and quotas, on modifications to the proposed 1986 total allowable catches and quotas and on the fisheries agreement for 1986 between the European Community and Norway, of European Community Documents Nos. 9284/85 on amendments to Regulation 2057/82 establishing certain control measures for fishing activities by vessels of Member States, 8662/85 on the allocation of flat rate quantities of hake, horse mackerel and blue whiting to Spain, and 10047/85 on 1986 fish guide prices; and welcomes and approves the provisional agreement reached on these arrangements for 1986 with the improvements obtained for the United Kingdom fishing industry.

Hong Kong (Nationality)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox Boyd.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): The House will wish to know that many right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak in the debate. As it must end at 10 o'clock, I appeal for short speeches.

7.20 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington): The White Paper which is before the House today sets out the Government's proposals for implementing the nationality provisions of the Hong Kong Act 1985. With the White Paper is the draft of an Order in Council which would enact the provisions and which, subject to what is said in the debate, we would hope to lay formally before the House before Easter.

The Government believe that the nationality provisions in the White Paper are fair and comprehensive. They are intended to establish clearly the future citizenship of British dependent territories citizens in Hong Kong once Hong Kong ceases to be a dependent territory on 1 July 1997. We are introducing them in good time to prevent uncertainty, and to ensure that people in Hong Kong and third countries have an opportunity to get used to the new passport. Once the order is made there will be much detailed work still to do, but the foundation will have been laid, and we believe that it will provide a stable basis on which the people of Hong Kong can plan their future with confidence.

The nationality provisions arise directly from the Sino-British joint declaration on Hong Kong and its associated exchange of memoranda on nationality. Hon. Members will recall that the House debated and approved the Government's intention to sign the agreement just over a year ago, after the people of Hong Kong had been given an opportunity to express their views, and the overwhelming majority had found it acceptable. Following that debate, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister went to Peking to sign the agreement.

As a consequence, the Hong Kong Bill was passed and received Royal Assent in April last year. Paragraph 2 of the schedule to the Act allows for provision to be made by Order in Council for the ending on 1 July 1997 of British dependent territories citizenship for those having such citizenship through a connection with Hong Kong, and for their acquisition of a new form of nationality, the holders of which will be known as British nationals (overseas). The paragraph also allows provision to be made for the avoidance of statelessness.

It is important for the House to remember the whole time that what we can do for nationality is confined by the Hong Kong Act. The framework has already been set by the Act, and the Order in Council must keep within that framework. Its role is not to reopen questions already considered and approved by the House, but to establish the detailed arrangements which will be necessary to give effect to the provisions set out in the agreement and the Act. Furthermore, neither that agreement nor the Act in any way alters the decision initially taken in 1961, and confirmed in subsequent legislation, that British nationals in Hong Kong are subject to United Kingdom immigration control. It is the Government's general policy to maintain the effectiveness of that control, and the case for making

[Mr. David Waddington]

concessions to any particular group of people, whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere, must be judged, not in isolation, but in the context of the Government's general policy and the pleas that many people throughout the world make to be allowed to come to settle in this country. That is the background to the Government's approach to the issues to be addressed by the House this evening.

During the debate on the Hong Kong Bill the Government undertook to put forward their detailed proposals for the nationality order in good time, and in a form which would allow them to be debated and, if necessary, amended, before the House was invited to give its approval. We have done that. The White Paper containing the order was published in the United Kingdom and in Hong Kong on 17 October. The 3·25 million British dependent territories citizens in Hong Kong to whom these matters are of vital interest have had a full opportunity to comment on the order. Hon. Members now have a chance to express their views. The Government will listen carefully to all that is said tonight. We shall consider particularly whether we should amend any of the provisions in the order.

We have followed carefully the reaction in Hong Kong to the White Paper, the text of which had been agreed with the Hong Kong Government and Executive Council. It was debated in the Hong Kong Legislative Council on 4 December 1985, and some important points were raised. During that debate Members asked the British Government to do more to explain the arrangements for the new passport to third countries. They wanted to be assured that it would be internationally acceptable as a travel document, and that its holder would enjoy the same rights of access to other countries as those holding British dependent territory passports. They asked that the new passport should say that the holder did not need entry clearance to enter the United Kingdom. Members also supported the request by the non-Chinese ethnic minority in Hong Kong and by some former service men to be granted British citizenship rather than British national (overseas) status or British overseas citizenship. A motion to that effect was passed, supported by the Hong Kong Government, and I shall respond to those points which are of the greatest importance in a few minutes. It might be for the convenience of the House if I first say a few words in explanation of the draft order.

I should like to make it clear at the outset that the order can, by definition, affect only those who are British dependent territories citizens by virtue of a connection with Hong Kong. Therefore, it cannot affect anyone who is not a British dependent territories citizen, or whose citizenship can be derived wholly from a connection with another dependent territory. But it is not sufficient simply to refer in the order to

"a connection with Hong Kong"

without defining what such a connection may be.

Article 2 of the draft order provides that definition. It sets out in a convenient, logical and clear format all the ways in which a person may have become connected with Hong Kong. It encompasses all the Hong Kong British dependent territories citizens listed in annex 2 to the White Paper—although, as the White Paper explains, virtually all such people in Hong Kong are citizens by birth, registration or naturalisation there. It is possible, however, that a citizen may be able to trace this connection through a number of the circumstances set out in article 2 and in the more detailed annex 2. While the categories in article 2 are satisfactory for legislative purposes, the greater detail given in annex 2 is intended to help people find out whether they come within the order by matching their particular circumstances with those in the list. Therefore, article 2 defines connection with Hong Kong for the purpose of the order, and article 3 provides that anyone who is a British dependent territories citizen by virtue of such a connection shall cease to be such a citizen on 1 July 1997.

Article 4 sets out the way in which the new status of British national (overseas) may be acquired by those who will cease to be British dependent territories citizens in 1997. The terms of the United Kingdom memorandum associated with the joint declaration provide that this status will be acquired by such persons only if they hold or are included in a passport showing the new status issued before 1 July 1997 or before the end of 1997 in the case of persons born in the first six months of that year. Under the terms of the agreement, therefore, it will not be transmitted to descendants born after 30 June 1997.

All Hong Kong British dependent territories citizens will be entitled to acquire BN(O) status. Acquisition will be by registration. This is consistent with the long-standing provision in British nationality law for those exercising an entitlement to citizenship, but the terms of the memorandum, reflecting the particular needs of Hong Kong, link its acquisition to the holding of a BN(O) passport. The passport, together with the central register which will be maintained, will be evidence of the new status so article 4 provides a clear entitlement to hold a BN(O) passport.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): I am sorry to intervene while the Minister is going into such detail, but I rise perhaps more on a point of comfort than of order. Can something be done about the coldness of the Chamber? There are great gusts of cold air blowing in and it is excessively chilly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman feels uncomfortable, I shall make some inquiries about the problem.

Mr. Waddington: I am sure that that should be done in deference to our guests from Hong Kong, who may be finding it very uncomfortable. I hope that what I am saying does not create any cold winds.

The formalities going with registration will be kept to a minimum. This is very important. We envisage only that each person's particulars will be entered on a central register. It is important to repeat the point that no separate fee will be charged for registration.

I come next to the article dealing with statelessness. The joint declaration guarantees to all those BDTCs, except those who have left Hong Kong permanently and have the right of abode elsewhere, the right of abode in Hong Kong from 1 July 1997, and the Order in Council gives all Hong Kong BDTCs the right to register as BN(O)s. During the passage of the Hong Kong Bill a number of Members were concerned that those British dependent territories citizens in Hong Kong who were not ethnically Chinese, and their children, might be left stateless in 1997 because they would not be regarded as Chinese nationals. The Government recognised that concern and gave a firm undertaking that no former Hong Kong British dependent

territories citizen, nor any child born after June 1997 to such a person, would remain stateless as a result of the agreement. In Committee on the Bill in another place, this undertaking was extended to cover the grandchildren of former Hong Kong British dependent territories citizens if they were born stateless.

Our proposals to deal with that undertaking are set out in article 6. It provides that any former Hong Kong British dependent territories citizen who for any reason has not acquired the BN(O) status to which he is entitled and would otherwise be stateless in 1997 will automatically become a British overseas citizen on 1 July of that year. Any of their children born after June 1997, if they would otherwise be stateless, will also acquire British overseas citizenship at birth, and any of their grandchildren, if born stateless, will be entitled to be registered as British overseas citizens.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): The Minister may well be aware that the Library of the House of Commons has produced an addendum to the research note previously issued, No. 205, dated 3 December. The addendum is dated 15 January, the last paragraph of which says:

"The possibility of statelessness could arise for people who do not have and cannot obtain any citizenship other than that of Hong Kong but are not Chinese and therefore not automatically claimed by the Chinese Government as nationals of China. This could apply to a minority of the roughly two per cent. of Hong Kong's population who are not Chinese."

Can the Minister confirm that that statement is correct, and if so, whether it is compatible with what he is now saying to the House?

Mr. Waddington: I think that the hon. Gentleman may not have been following what I was saying. I shall come back to this later. The whole point of article 6 is to make provision, otherwise there would be statelessness. Because of article 6, there will not be statelessness. If a non-Chinese ethnic person chooses for some reason not to apply for BN(O) status before 1 July 1997—he is, of course, entitled to apply for it—then, as distinct from ethnic Chinese inhabitants of Hong Kong, he will not automatically become a Chinese citizen. Therefore he could, if he had no other nationality, be stateless—hence article 6 in furtherance of the undertakings given to the House automatically gives such a person the status of British overseas citizen. I shall come back to this in more detail, because it is one of the most important matters under discussion.

Non-Chinese ethnic BDTCs will be entitled to BN(O) status, but if for any reason they do not become BN(O)s, they will have a recognised nationality status, and so will their descendants until well into the middle of the next century.

The Government recognise, of course, that nationality status alone is not sufficient. It is equally important that those now established in Hong Kong should continue to have right of abode there. Clearly, right of abode in Hong Kong after June 1997 cannot be secured by holding any form of British nationality, since Hong Kong will no longer be part of British territory. For this reason the agreement made separate provisions to safeguard rights of abode in Hong Kong. These are set out in section XIV of annex I to the joint declaration. For the non-Chinese ethnic community, right of abode is guaranteed to all those who have been ordinarily resident for seven years in Hong Kong either before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong special administrative region, and who have taken it as their place of permanent residence. The same guarantee extends to their children born in Hong Kong; and to anyone who had right of abode only in Hong Kong before 1 July 1997 even if he has not been there for seven years. In other words, the guarantee cover all the non-Chinese ethnic Hong Kong British dependent territories citizens except those who have left Hong Kong permanently and have the right of abode elsewhere.

The Indian community in particular, with support from the Executive and Legislative Councils of Hong Kong, argue that these provisions do not go far enough. They are concerned, firstly, that BN(O) status will not itself give them right of abode in Hong Kong; and secondly, about the nationality status of their descendants after the second generation born after 1997, and they have therefore asked to be granted British citizenship rather than BN(O) or BOC status.

I shall listen very carefully to all that is said in the debate, but I have to say that the Government are not persuaded that it would be right to grant British citizenship to those BDTCs who are not ethnically Chinese. They want to continue to live in Hong Kong. The joint declaration guarantees their right to do so. British citizenship cannot help them in this regard. British citizenship cannot, after 30 June 1997, give them the right of abode in a territory which will no longer be British. Furthermore, the grant of British citizenship would not benefit future generations any more than the present proposals. British citizenship can be transmitted to only one generation born abroad. The second generation has an entitlement to registration as British citizens similar to the proposed entitlement to BOC status. After that there is no automatic claim to entitlement or registration as a British citizen. There is, therefore, no advantage for future generations in avoiding statelessness or securing their future in Hong Kong by conferring British citizenship on the non-Chinese ethnic community in Hong Kong.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) *rose*——

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Will my hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Waddington: To be fair, I must give way to an Opposition Member first.

Mr. Sheerman: Surely the Minister has met members of the Indian community, to whom many of us have listened sympathetically. The Minister's remarks will not put their minds at rest. Can the Minister speak again in the debate and go further to try to put their minds at rest? That part of the community has special worries and a special place in Hong Kong, and in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Waddington: The House was anxious that we should follow tonight's procedure. The House was anxious that the Government should not just bring before the House a draft order and ask for its approval after a one-and-a-half hour debate after 10 o'clock. It would be silly to say that I was not here to listen. The whole purpose of the exercise is that I should listen to everything that hon. Members say. It would be equally silly if I did not spell out the difficulties. It would be unfair to give the impression that there are no difficulties. I shall listen carefully.

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): Is the comparison with other nationalities fair? The claim by non-Chinese ethnics

[Mr. John Morris]

is that they have no choice. They are there and have nowhere else to go. After two generations they will be stateless. Is that not their real fear?

Mr. Waddington: The right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) and others must face the fact that by granting any form of British nationality we cannot guarantee the right of abode in Hong Kong. The right of abode in Hong Kong is guaranteed to such people as a result of a joint agreement and cannot be guaranteed as a result of the conferment of British nationality. We have made provision in article 6 for the conferment of nationality on those who do not take out BN(O) citizenship before 1 July 1997. Article 6 also provides that that citizenship can be taken up by two further generations. That takes us well into the middle of the next century. One would expect that by then people still resident in Hong Kong will have taken out Chinese citizenship.

Mr. Adley: The assumption behind what my hon. Friend says is that the only alternative open to the non-Chinese ethnic minority in Hong Kong is some form of British citizenship. Will my hon. Friend elaborate briefly on the discussions between the British Government and the Chinese Government in the liaison group about the possibility of people in that category obtaining Chinese citizenship under Chinese nationality laws? It would be unwise to assume that this is just a normal immigration debate.

Mr. Waddington: Article 7 of the Chinese nationality law provides that aliens or stateless persons who are willing to abide by China's constitution and laws may acquire Chinese nationality on approval of their application, provided that they are settled in China. One should not assume that those who are settled in China long after the takeover will not by then be Chinese citizens because of Chinese law.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): It is understood that the British Government cannot do anything about the long-term status of such people in Hong Kong. Surely they are seeking full British citizenship as a fallback if all else fails.

Mr. Waddington: The problem must be looked at in that context, not in the context of giving security to these people in Hong Kong. One must ask what might be the effect on others if the claim were conceded. We know from experience that many claims are made by people who have connections with Britain to allow them to come to Britain if certain circumstances develop. One cannot ignore the knock-on effect or that other claims could arise. Let us see how the argument develops during the debate. I do not want to speak for too long, but I want to cover the other points raised in our debate in December.

Mr. James Prior (Waveney): I come new to the subject, but I am worried, because the debate in the Legislative Council on 4 December showed that the Chinese Members of the Council were taking a different attitude from that which they took earlier. That is what worries some of us. It should be given careful consideration.

Mr. Waddington: We shall give that matter careful consideration. The fact that the Chinese Members of the council are taking a different attitude should send warning notes through our minds. My right hon. Friend is saying that before that debate in December some people gave the impression that they felt that more should be done for the BDTCs, not just for the Indian BDTCs in Hong Kong. I should be surprised if after a time other groups were not easily identified and wanted similar privileges. We shall be debating that in the near future.

I shall be dealing with service men. They are a good example of how one can keep on identifying groups with special claims. I am not now talking about groups in Hong Kong, but about others throughout the world whose status is less than that of full British citizens.

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): Will the hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Waddington: I must move on in fairness to other hon. Members. I am sure that the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) has a good chance of being called to speak.

The Unofficial Members have also asked that some 400 or so former service men in Hong Kong should be granted British citizenship, or alternatively that the Government should consider sympathetically any application that they might make for registration as British citizens under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981. The Government fully recognise the contribution that these service men made during the war, and indeed the contribution made by many other people in Hong Kong during those years, but it does not necessarily follow that we should mark this contribution by granting them British citizenship. Their sufferings were matched by many other people in Hong Kong, and indeed in other parts of the world. Like their neighbours, many of them were born in Hong Kong, as were their parents and grandparents, and all their personal and family connections are there.

Furthermore, the order must, as I have said, keep within the framework of the agreement and the Hong Kong Act. That framework would not allow us to grant British citizenship to all former service men in Hong Kong even if we thought it right to do so. Paragraph 2(3) of the schedule to the Act does not allow us to use the order to grant British citizenship to those BDTCs who have another nationality, and are not at risk of becoming stateless; nor, obviously, does the Act provide a power to grant citizenship to former service men who are not even BDTCs. We could therefore risk creating invidious distinctions between one former service man and another. I hope I have made it absolutely clear to the House that we could not deal with those former service men as one class under this order.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend for giving way to this further interruption. Many of the service men are ethnic Chinese and would, under the joint declaration, automatically acquire Chinese nationality. I am puzzled, because the comparison between this group and the group discussed earlier does not really stand up. The group discussed a moment ago are not automatically entitled to Chinese nationality. My hon. and learned Friend has read out some of the conditions on which their nationality application will be judged. There are other conditions which my hon. and learned Friend read out, all of which amount to it being left to the discretion of the People's Republic of China whether these people should have Chinese nationality. Surely the two groups are not comparable.

Mr. Waddington: With respect to my right hon. Friend, I was not trying to compare the two groups. I was going through the list of matters which were raised in the debate on 9 December and which are mentioned in the letter received by my right hon. and hon. Friends from the Legislative Council.

I am not making a comparison—different arguments apply. The argument for the first case is that they will not be left stateless. The order specifically provides that they will get nationality status. They will get the nationality of British overseas citizen. There is no argument that this would not give them the right of abode in Hong Kong, because, as I pointed out, no nationality is conferred as giving the right of abode in Hong Kong.

A different argument applies with ex-service men. One cannot deal with ex-service men as a class under the order, because the order only allows us to give people British citizenship if they come within the statelessness provisions of the Act.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Is it possible for the Minister to consider their cases under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981, using the discretion given by that section at least to consider who might be eligible?

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman must be clairvoyant. The Government will consider carefully any application for British citizenship under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 on grounds of service under the Government of Hong Kong, but I need to make it clear that this section cannot apply to those who were in service under the Government of the United Kingdom, which may have been the position for some of the Hong Kong ex-service men. There is no other provision in the British Nationality Act 1981 under which former Crown servants under the Government of the United Kingdom can be granted British citizenship if they do not meet the normal requirements for citizenship.

It is not possible to say in advance what the outcome of any application under section 4(5) would be. Those who would come within the terms of section 4(5) would be those who had served under an organ of a dependent territory. The Government are committed to using the power very sparingly and granting British citizenship only to those who have given outstanding service. It would be necessary to take these factors fully into account in fairness to other ex-service men throughout the world.

I believe that the provisions in the draft order, taken together with the guarantees given in the agreement, go as far as we possibly can in ensuring that all British dependent territories citizens resident in Hong Kong regardless of their background, ethnic origin or future citizenship status are ensured of a satisfactory and secure future there and that the provisions are fair for them all. I shall listen with interest and sympathy to the views of the House and will certainly wish to consider carefully any suggestions for overcoming the difficulties that I have outlined in meeting the requests made in the recent letter endorsed by the Legislative Council.

I should like to consider a matter which, while it does not come directly within the terms of the draft order, is nevertheless closely linked with it — the detailed arrangements which we propose to follow in issuing passports to British nationals (overseas) once the order comes into effect.

We intend to issue these passports from 1 July 1987. Those who then hold valid BDTC passports will be able, if they wish, to retain them. From 1 July 1987 Hong Kong BDTCs will have a choice of applying for a BDTC passport with a restricted validity until 30 June 1997 or for a BN(O) passport valid for a full 10 years. It will not be possible to carry both a BN(O) and a BDTC passport. The fee will be set under the Consular Fees Act 1980 and, save for exchange variations, it will be the same throughout the world. The fee is for the passport, just as all of us have to pay for passports. As I made clear earlier, it is not a fee for citizenship.

Passports issued to BDTCs in Hong Kong are currently issued by the Governor in the name of Her Majesty. It would be inappropriate for passports issued to BN(O)s which will remain valid beyond 30 June 1997 to be issued by the Governor. BN(O) passports will therefore be issued from the start by "Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State" as they are at present in the United Kingdom and at consular posts overseas.

One issue which has been of particular concern is the right of abode endorsement to be placed in BN(O) passports. This must be agreed with the Chinese Government, because the United Kingdom Government cannot give such a right in the special administrative region after June 1997. We have therefore discussed this matter with the Chinese Government in the Joint Liaison Group, and they have agreed in principle that the wording of the endorsement should be as follows:

"The holder of this passport has Hong Kong Permanent identity card No.—which states that the holder has the right of abode in Hong Kong".

We expect to reach final agreement on this and other related matters at the next meeting of the Sino-British joint liaison group in March.

This endorsement will effectively guarantee that BN(O)s will be able to return to Hong Kong and there is therefore every reason to think that the BN(O) passport will be acceptable to third countries as the present BDTC passport. This at the present time enables holders to travel to about 70 countries in the world visa free.

I appreciate the concern felt in Hong Kong which has led Members of the Legislative Council to propose an endorsement in the passport to show that the holder does not require entry clearance in the United Kingdom. It is of course a fact that no visas are required for holders of BDTC passports to visit the United Kingdom, but entry clearance is a facility available to those coming to this country who wish to assure their entry before they set off and it would be wrong to say anything that might discourage the use of this facility.

There is another important point to be made. It is a fundamental part of our system of "on entry" control that people arriving here have to satisfy the immigration officer that they qualify for admission under the immigration rules. Obviously we must beware of putting any endorsement in the passport which might mislead and give an impression that in some way examination by an immigration officer and compliance with the ordinary immigration rules is not required. Bona fide visitors from Hong Kong are always welcome here and always will be, but there are difficulties about an endorsement in the passport and we have to ensure that people are not misled by it. I am, however, considering with sympathy how to meet the concern which Members of the Legislative Council have voiced on this matter.

Mr. John Morris: The Minister will be aware of the concern about the acceptability of the BN(O) passport in

[Mr. John Morris]

other countries. He has just told us that for 70 countries BDTC passport holders require no visa. What steps have been taken, especially with our European colleagues, to ensure acceptance of this new passport?

Mr. Waddington: The new BN(O) passport will contain an endorsement making it clear that the person concerned is returnable to Hong Kong. There is no reason why the passport should not be treated by other countries in exactly the same way as the BDTC passport, because third countries are concerned with returnability. That is why it was so important to get that endorsement in the passport.

One of the reasons why we have introduced the draft order so early is that there should be adequate time for discussion and for preparation. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is right to say that the Foreign Office will now go to considerable lengths to explain to other countries the significance of the new BN(O) passport, so that when it arrives on the scene in 1987 they will know its significance and not have to have explained to them what I have explained to the House today. That is a reasonable way in which to proceed.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Have no other countries given any assurances that they will accept this form of passport? The right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) asked about European countries.

Mr. Waddington: Yes, they have. The United States and Australia have said that it will be acceptable, and the European parliament has passed a resolution saying that it should be acceptable. These are early days. My hon. and learned Friend would not expect the Foreign Office to have started this process before the House had debated the matter. There is plenty of evidence that the passport will be acceptable overseas.

We believe that the draft order provides for nationality arrangements that are fair and consistent as between BDTCs in Hong Kong, and that they are on the right lines. We shall listen with interest, however, to what the House says and consider whether any amendments are desirable or necessary before we bring the order back. It is right that we should act with care and deliberation, as the order will be a key step in the implementation of the agreement. The agreement itself was widely accepted by the people of Hong Kong and welcomed around the world as a significant achievement. With the help of the House and of the people of Hong Kong we look forward to the nationality order being seen in the same light.

8.2 pm

Mr. Alfred Dubs (Battersea): I welcome this opportunity to discuss the Order in Council in draft. I regret that originally we were due to have only a three-hour debate, but even that was shortened by 20 minutes. The matter might not seem to be the source of that much concern in Britain, but it is vital to the people of Hong Kong who will be aware of what we say tonight and will analyse the Minister's pronouncements in detail. He knows that a great deal of attention will be paid to what he said.

I had the opportunity to visit Hong Kong for a few days last month. I returned with much more confidence in Hong Kong's future after 1997 than perhaps I had before I set out. It is important that, whatever criticisms we make of the Order in Council and whatever emphasis we give to the anxieties of the people of Hong Kong that their needs are not being met fully by the Order in Council, we say nothing that damages the overall confidence of the people of Hong Kong in their future after 1997.

In a sense, we are considering means of amending the British Nationality Act 1981. The Minister knows that part of the Act dealt with the circumstances of British dependent territory citizens. During debates on the Bill in Committee and on the Floor of the House, the Minister's predecessor put much emphasis on Hong Kong, the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar. That was the nub of the case for BDTC status. Before the Bill was enacted, Gibraltar's position was changed and, after the Falklands war, the Government realised that the people of the Falkland Islands did not have the right of entry to Britain, so their circumstances were changed. That leaves Hong Kong. Now, the Nationality Act as it was intended to apply to Hong Kong is having to be changed because it is no longer appropriate. That is cause for concern.

Furthermore, the Government have had to change the concept of British overseas citizenship because, in the British Nationality Act 1981, that concept implied no hereditary status. The Government have now had to present a new concept of British overseas citizenship which has hereditary status for two generations. I mention that because it casts doubt on how the Government have approached nationality in the past few years.

The Government have a responsibility regarding the British national (overseas) passports, I am not sure that the Minister has addressed himself fully to the worries of the people in Hong Kong. He said that there would be an addition to the BN(O) passport mentioning the Chinese identity card. Even at the moment, however, Hong Kong holders of BDTC passports are having difficulties when they come to Britain as visitors or for other bona fide purposes. There are many bitter complaints in Hong Kong about how they are being treated. Indeed, that is why the Government in Hong Kong advise people before coming to Britain to get an entry certificate, although none is obligatory under the regulations.

Furthermore, some of the staff of the Hong Kong Government office in London have had difficulties and hassles at Heathrow and Gatwick airports. The Minister's assurance that BN(O) passports will be regarded as BDTC passports is something of a mixed blessing. The Minister owes it to the people of Hong Kong to ensure that BN(O) passports get a little more recognition than they are likely to get to judge from his comparison with BDTC passports.

The people of Hong Kong value highly the right to travel. The Minister said that he is hopeful that the no-visa arrangement which applies to holders of BDTC passports from Hong Kong will be extended to BN(O) passports. The Government could be a bit more positive and forthright. I urge the Minister to ask his Foreign Office colleagues to bring more pressure to bear on other Governments. It is not enough merely to say that it seems all right and that they hope that other Governments will take the passport.

The Minister will have seen the letter from Lydia Dunn, the senior Unofficial Member who, on this subject, says:

"Measures should be introduced to allow unobstructed and untroubled entry into the United Kingdom by *bona fide* travellers from Hong Kong".

I understand the Minister's technical point. The method suggested in the letter might not be the most appropriate, but I wish that the Minister could be more forthright about Hong Kong people travelling to Britain and to third countries with BN(O) passports. After all, the BN(O) passport is being introduced later this year so that foreign Governments can get used to it. Unless the British Government give a bit more weight to their value, however, there is a danger that people in Hong Kong will exercise their choice of sticking with BDTC passports until the last minute in 1997. If we are to have more sense, the Government must be more forthright and committed.

The Minister will also be aware that there is in Hong Kong a considerable element of distrust in Britain, especially since the passage of the British Nationality Act 1981. I have referred to the hassles experienced by people from Hong Kong when seeking entry to Britain.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): I also apologise for not being here at the beginning of the debate. The hon. Gentleman said that members of staff at the Hong Kong Government office in London had encountered difficulties at Heathrow and Gatwick. That is a serious and disturbing charge. I am not criticising him for making it, but perhaps he could substantiate it. No doubt the Government would wish to be helpful, as it would be inconceivable and awful if bona fide members of the staff of the Hong Kong Government had difficulties coming and going.

Mr. Dubs: I take the hon. Gentleman's point. Many of the things that happen at Heathrow and Gatwick airports are inconceivable and awful. As for the Hong Kong Government office, I base what I say on a conversation with the London office of the Hong Kong Government when I was told that even its staff had had difficulties at airports. I am not saying that these people were turned away; rather that they were subjected to hassle. I believe that "hassle" is the most appropriate word. The Hong Kong Government office in London may wish to make representations about that, following the intervention by the hon. Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes). The main point is that the Minister has been made aware of what has happened and of the anxiety about that matter.

I should like to refer to the position of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and to the Legislative Council debate which took place early in December 1985, and at which I was privileged to be present. I was able to hear the whole of that debate.

Approximately 10,000 people are members of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and have BDTC status. That group of people comprises approximately 6,000 people of Indian origin, nearly 2,000 of Portuguese origin and about 2,000 of Eurasian origin. The Minister did not fully recognise their problem, although other hon. Members have recognised that the ethnic minorities will not automatically become Chinese citizens. The ethnic minorities believe that they will have a lesser status in Hong Kong after 1997 than the bulk of the population of Hong Kong. They are concerned about their future because they will not have equal status. That is the nub of their argument.

The Minister is getting close to playing with words when he argues that BOC status is a way of avoiding statelessness. When the House debated the Third Reading of the British Nationality Bill in June 1981, my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) succinctly said:

> "British overseas citizenship is not a citizenship but a subterfuge".—[*Official Report*, 4 June 1981; Vol. 5, c. 1158.]

There is a danger that the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong will, after 1997, be given a very doubtful status that is tantamount to statelessness. That is the reason for their anxiety. As one of my hon. Friends said, they have no choice in the matter. The ethnic minorities were looking for comfort in the Order in Council and in the Minister's remarks, but I fear that they found none.

I should like to pay tribute to the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants which ably conveyed to us the case on behalf of the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

As far as I know, there are approximately 400 prisoners of war in Hong Kong. They are mainly of Portuguese origin and they are seeking to gain British citizenship under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981.

I should also like to mention the civil servants and others in administration who have occupied sensitive posts under the present Hong Kong administration. That group includes the police special branch. They expressed their anxiety to me that their career prospects may not be bright after 1997. I believe that there has been an understanding that some of these people will be considered under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981. Can the Minister say a little more about that?

The Minister did not refer to the 8,000 or 9,000 Vietnamese who are in open or closed camps in Hong Kong. Hopefully that problem will not exist in 1997. Although their position is not directly affected by the Order in Council and today's debate, the fact is that, unless they are removed from Hong Kong by 1997, they will be in a very invidious position. I do not believe that this country has a responsibility to take every Vietnamese boat person, but we have a responsibility to take our share. If we do that, other countries will follow suit. We are not doing as much as we should and therefore the problem may continue almost until 1997.

I wonder whether the Minister has fully appreciated the many anxieties that have been expressed in the House and in what I have said. There are no precedents for the situation that will face Hong Kong in 1997. It is a matter not of giving Hong Kong independence but rather of handing Hong Kong over, on the basis of a Sino-British agreement, to another country. Therefore, the people of Hong Kong are entitled to sympathy and consideration from the House and the people of Britain.

I contend that the Minister has not shown that sympathy or understanding. The people of Hong Kong feel badly let down. As Lydia Dunn states in her letter:

> "There is a good deal of lingering cynicism in Hong Kong about the gradual erosion of the rights and privileges of British subjects outside the United Kingdom as a result of successive amendments in recent years to the laws governing nationality and immigration".

The people of Hong Kong feel let down and the Minister must do something about that. He has not said enough this evening to give the people of Hong Kong, who feel that they are being missed out by the Order in Council, confidence that he understands their anxieties. In the absence of assurances from the Minister, the Opposition will have no alternative but to express their concern in the Division Lobby.

8.17 pm

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): There are four main questions in the debate, and I want to refer briefly to each of them. The first is whether the British national

[Sir Peter Blaker]

(overseas) passport will be acceptable to other countries, bearing in mind the particular form of endorsement about the right of abode in Hong Kong. I do not believe that that will be a difficult question to solve. We have 18 months in which to solve it and we already know that the United States, Australia and various other countries find that form of passport acceptable. I am confident that in the 18 months available we will find that all the relevant countries will find that passport acceptable, as they did the British dependent territories citizen passport.

I recognise the importance of this subject to the people of Hong Kong, as it affects their ability to travel to different parts of the world and return to Hong Kong freely. I do not think that they should be too worried about the problem.

The second question is whether the new passport should be endorsed in a way that will enable visitors to this country, either for business or tourism, to be sure that there will not be the problem of delays at Heathrow or other ports of entry that sometimes occurs. I have felt for some time that the present situation is unsatisfactory. Visitors from Hong Kong find that they can go more freely to other countries—for example, the United States or Europe—than they can here. When they pass through immigration control at British airports, they are unduly delayed.

I hope that the Minister will pursue that matter. He has many clever officials in his Department and, as I believe he said, it is a matter of finding the right form of words that will avoid the sort of problems to which he referred. I believe that if he were to ask his clever civil servants to find the right form of words, they could do so.

The third question concerns the ex-service men. I have sent to the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton), a petition from three organisations in Hong Kong. He has not yet had time to reply to it, as I only sent it to him the other day. The three organisations are the Hong Kong and China branch of the Royal British Legion, the Second World War Veterans Association of Hong Kong and finally the Hong Kong Prisoners of War Association. Those organisations ask that the Home Secretary should exercise his discretion under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 in their favour and grant British citizenship to their members.

I believe that those three organisations have cast their net very wide. They seem to be including not only former Hong Kong prisoners of war but—I do not have all the details, but I shall get them—people who have served in the British forces, no matter where. That could include people who served in British regiments that were in Hong Kong in 1941. Such people are in a totally different situation from the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force. The latter were volunteers—they were not conscripted and they served in Hong Kong. Those who were not killed became prisoners of war. My father was one, and that is why I speak with some feeling on that matter.

Members of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force are in a special situation. I must correct the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs). I do not believe that they number 400. The number 400 applies to members of all three organisations to which I have referred. There are fewer than 100 former Hong Kong prisoners of war. That is a more manageable problem. I hope that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister will consider the case of those former volunteers who served in Hong Kong and were prisoners during the whole war.

I am talking not about those who are British citizens—they have the right to come to Britain anyway—but about the Portuguese, Indians and Eurasians, many of whom are from families that have lived in Hong Kong for a long time, sometimes well back into the last century. There are fewer than 100 of those people, and their numbers will continue to dwindle during the next 11 years.

I do not think that there is any danger of a precedent being set if the Government consider the petition favourably. I do not think that will open the floodgates to many applications from, for example, Chinese who were in civilian prison camps. The Chinese were not in civilian prison camps. Those camps held only non-Chinese, because it was Japanese policy not to put the Chinese into the camps.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): The right hon. Gentleman is attempting to distinguish between those who should and those who should not be entitled to certain concessions. He referred to fewer than 100 being manageable, although 400 seemed to be a large number. Is he aware that, in the past 19 years, over 1 million more people have emigrated from than have emigrated to Britain? The idea of playing a numbers game and delineating certain nationalities is objectionable to members of the Labour party.

Sir Peter Blaker: The hon. Gentleman is at liberty to say that we should admit for permanent residence in Britain all the BDTCs residing in Hong Kong—about 3 million—if they wish to come. That position is not supported by me or, I think, the majority of our fellow citizens. That would impose an impossible burden. One must indeed look at the numbers issue.

The fourth main question in the debate concerns the Indians and the Portuguese. They ask to have the right of abode in Britain. I congratulate them on the way in which they have presented their case. Their petition to the Legislative Council was a model of clarity which enabled one to follow this complicated matter with—I will not say, with ease—a great deal less pain than normally is the case. They have formidable support. They now have the support of the Legislative Council. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior) pointed out, members of the Legislative Council formerly said that, if this concession were granted to the Indians and the Portuguese, many other people, including the Chinese, would want the same concession. They no longer say that.

I understand from a telephone call I received this morning that the Indians and the Portuguese have the support of the General Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Manufacturers Association and the Federation of Hong Kong Industries.

I am referring, of course, not to the Indians and the Portuguese who have Indian and Portuguese passports, but to the BDTCs. In general, those communities have been remarkably successful in business. They account for a disproportionate amount of Hong Kong's trade and have made a success of their lives in Hong Kong. Some of them have been involved in less prosperous activities, such as clerical work or guard duties, but they are nevertheless solid citizens.

I understand the point which these BDTCs are making. After 1997, the United Kingdom, which will be

responsible ultimately for them as BN(O)s, will not be responsible for the place where they have the right of abode. My hon. and learned Friend the Minister rightly stressed that, under the agreement, they will have the right of abode in Hong Kong. I understand that they will be able to apply for Chinese nationality. I should like the Government to explore that point a little further with China, because it would be useful to obtain clarification on how China will apply the discretion, which it appears it has, according to its nationality law.

I should like to put this point in a friendly way to the Indians and Portuguese in Hong Kong who are making this plea, many of whom I know. Are they not tending to forget how good the agreement with China is? It is a remarkable agreement—better than any hon. Member would have believed possible. Looking again at it this week I am amazed at how fully it gives the Hong Kong people all the guarantees after 1997 for which they could ask. Perhaps some hon. Members have not recently looked at the agreement.

Paragraph 13 on page 22 gives the Chinese statement of policy, not the British Government's statement of policy. Every possible freedom is guaranteed in that paragraph. Page 20 states:

"The Special Administrative Region shall maintain the educational system previously practised in Hong Kong."

Page 14 states:

"The . . . capitalist system and life-style shall remain unchanged for 50 years."

It is a remarkable agreement. It is a solemn treaty, which will be deposited with the United Nations. It will be incorporated in Hong Kong's basic law.

As I understand it, the Indians and the Portuguese say that, whatever the agreement contains, it might not turn out as it says. They would like an extra option. It would be unusual, but advantageous, for the Indians and the Portuguese if that option were available. I must say that my view is more optimistic than theirs. I believe that China signed the agreement because it meant what it said. It took several years of negotiation to hammer out the agreement. It was not done lightly. Moreover, it is very much in China's interests to carry out the agreement, because Hong Kong is the source of a large part of China's foreign exchange earnings. Hong Kong is increasingly becoming the "open door" in China's open door policy with the Western world. It is becoming the channel through which technology reaches China. All this will continue. Hong Kong will not lose its value to China in 1997. It will become more valuable.

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): Does the right hon. Gentleman foresee some anxiety by the Hong Kong people who are dependent upon the succession in government in the People's Republic of China? Deng Xiaoping will not be there for ever.

Sir Peter Blaker: That is obvious. I shall not dispute that. Of course he will not be there for ever. But regardless of who is in charge in China, underlying factors suggest that there is a good future for Hong Kong. I hope that the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) will reflect on the points I have made.

The agreement is already being put into force. An excellent agreement has been reached on the release of land in the coming year. The Land Commission is already functioning. There is already a good agreement on Hong Kong's position with respect to the Asian Development bank. Both sides are putting the agreement into effect. I believe that confidence during the next 11 years will grow steadily. As Deng Xiaoping has said, the success of Hong Kong is an example to Taiwan. Joining Taiwan with China is the main point in China's foreign policy.

We have only recently obtained this excellent agreement. It could not be easy for the British Parliament to take a decision now, more than 11 years before the transfer of sovereignty to China—the prospect which is worrying the ethnic communities in Hong Kong—based on the possibility that the agreement which we have only just signed will not work. From an outside observer's point of view that would seem a difficult act to perform. Let us remember another point. If the Indians and the Portuguese in 1997 or thereafter were to find the position in Hong Kong intolerable, many people of other races would say the same thing.

I welcome the Government's willingness to consider the points that hon. Members make in the debate. I am glad that we have had the debate in this form so that the Government may consider whether the draft order should be changed. I hope that they will take into the account the change in the attitude of the Legislative Council in the last few months when they are making up their mind. As far as I am concerned, I want to put it firmly on record that I believe that the events which are causing concern to the ethnic minorities will not take place.

8.30 pm

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): I am one of those who, in the excellent company of the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), warmly welcomed the Sino-British agreement. It was an historic achievement. I believe that it is working out well, although there are a few colonial types—most of them chaps who want to scribble their nonsense in whatever media will present their concerns—who are trying to stir worries about developments up to 1997 and thereafter.

I entirely endorse the comments just now of the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South. I am certain, as he is, that China has a total commitment to making the agreement work. I am sure she is totally committed to the stability and prosperity and the well-being of the people of Hong Kong. But there are reasons for concern in limited areas. If I may, I want to touch on two that are relevant to the draft order.

The first, which has been discussed and will be pursued in the debate, is the acceptability of the British national overseas passport when it is introduced in 1987. The British Government must be responsible for proving its practicality and its acceptability. Her Majesty's Government must pursue negotiations with countries throughout the world to ensure that the 70 or so visa abolition agreements that now apply to the present British dependent territories citizenship passport will apply to the British national (overseas) passport when it is introduced. The Minister should give strong reassurance on that point. If negotiations are not being pursued with the 70 or so countries, they should shortly be undertaken.

Consideration must be given, too, to providing, after the introduction of the BN(O) passport, an unhindered —I mean unhindered—passage to visit Britain for those who wish to do so without being harassed by immigration officials. I will not make any quips about Heathrow. It is disturbing that there are unhappy instances at that airport and other ports of entry time after time. Those of us who

[Mr. Andrew Faulds]

have large immigrant communities in our constituencies could cite case after case. Hong Kongers who are British nationals should not have to suffer the suspicious caution that is natural to immigration bureaucrats. There must be an open sesame endorsement to prevent the distressing hindrances and delays that are far too common.

My second main concern is the unhappy impending limbo of those 10,000 or so BDTCs who, because they are not of Chinese stock, will not become Chinese nationals in 1997. In raising the issue I am not casting any doubt at all on the intentions of the Chinese. I am raising it because it is a matter of concern, whether we want to face it or not, to a great number of people in Hong Kong. I was the first hon. Member, I think, to raise this issue in the debate on 5 December, 1984.

Those 10,000 include about 6,000 Indians, some 3,000 Eurasians and some others such as the Portuguese. The draft order proposes that in 1997 they will become British overseas citizens—BOCs. This proliferation of initials for the six different types of British citizenship is very vexing. It is a pity we have had to indulge in such surreptitious terminologies to pretend that we are still an open-hearted country. The BOC status will give those people no right of abode in Britain or anywhere else and will effectively leave them stateless, however the Minister may try to argue to the contrary.

The people of Macao, a few miles away from Hong Kong, have full entitlement to Portuguese citizenship. After Portugal's entry into the EEC they will be entitled to free entry into the Community and into Britain to pursue work if they wish to do so. How ironic for the Hong Kongers. Millions of people abroad have the right to enter Britain—from Australia, Canada and New Zealand and, indeed, from South Africa when the funk flight starts, as it will in the next year or sooner. Millions can come too from the EEC.

But all those are white. It is only the colour of those 10,000, or most of them, and the immigration fears of every Government, sedulously worked on by the less worthy of our colleagues, some of whom are absent this evening, that prevent Her Majesty's Government from behaving honourably towards those 10,000. What discreditable conduct all this is in the wrapping up of our residual imperial responsibilities.

I have had considerable correspondence over the months with the Council of Hongkong Indian Association in its pursuit of the right to full British nationality and the right of abode in Britain. In one of its earlier letters, of 27 April 1985, it disputed the contention by Baroness Young in the other place that if the non-Chinese BDTCs were granted the right of abode there would be resentment by the majority Chinese. That false argument was disposed of roundly by the unanimous endorsement of Miss Lydia Dunn's speech in the Legislative Council debate of 4 December in Hong Kong when she argued, to the surprise of many people but absolutely sincerely, for just such special treatment for this non-Chinese minority.

In a letter of 31 December last year the president of the Association, Mr. Harilela, summarised their dilemma. I cannot do better than quote his words on the nationality issue:

"Any form of nationality which has such serious shortcomings must be regarded as a uniquely attenuated one, and would leave its holder in a position of great disadvantage. The BN(O) status carries no notion of citizenship, and is little better than a travel document facility. Yet this is all the British government has been prepared to offer to the 10,000 or so non-ethnic Chinese BDTCs. We therefore request that this small group of people be given full British citizenship with the right of abode in the UK. Of this group some 4,500 to 6,000 are of ethnic Indian origin without being Indian citizens, and while our Council is primarily concerned with the fate of this particular group, any plea which we make must also apply to the other 3,000 to 4,000 ethnic minority BDTCs who are largely of Portuguese or Eurasian origin.

The ethnic Indian BDTCs came to Hong Kong because it was a part of the British Empire. They were first brought out here by the British to help colonise Hong Kong in the nineteenth century and many have since served the Crown loyally as policemen, soldiers and civil servants. Many came here shortly after India became independent in 1947 and, having decided to settle here, renounced their Indian citizenship and became British in the expectation that they would spend the rest of their lives under British rule. They therefore severed their ties with India when they swore allegiance to the Crown. . . . In contrast with many Indian communities throughout the world the ethnic Indian community of Hong Kong is totally British in outlook and attitude. . . .

They are a legacy of the British empire and Britain must continue to be responsible for them. . . . The non-Chinese BDTC minorities face an uncertain future, and while the numbers involved are small the principle involved is a great one."

Really, no hon. Member can dispute or disregard our responsibility in this matter. Matters of principle, and this is one, should not be lightly put aside by parliamentarians.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the non-ethnic Chinese are seeking an assurance, not seeking to come to this country? They want an assurance that they will have a citizenship that means something and that gives them the right of abode in the place where they want to live—Hong Kong.

Mr. Faulds: Yes. I did not spell out that point because I thought that it was self-evident. It is obviously the reason for their arguments, and we should accept that it is a perfectly proper basis for their position.

Many of my hon. Friends will have read the excellent article in *The Times* a few days ago entitled

"What will befall Hong Kong's dispossessed?"

It was written by Anne Owers of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. She powerfully details the concern which should properly be shown for those people and argues the need to meet that concern by granting right of abode. She concludes her article with a paragraph that I want to read to the House; it is a warning that we should all heed and which I certainly endorse. It states:

"Britain's failure to take responsibility for ensuring that all British people in Hong Kong have an effective and secure nationality status is now creating insecurity for them and for Hong Kong; in the long term"——

this is the point—

"the legacy of bitterness and mistrust which it has created could do even greater harm to Britain's own long-term interests."

It is those long-term interests of this country about which we in this House should be concerned.

8.42 pm

Sir Paul Bryan (Boothferry): I congratulate my hon. and learned Friend the Minister on a very clear exposition of a very complicated subject.

I, together with the Minister and my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), was in Hong Kong for the historic opening of the Legislative Council building in October. A year had passed since I was there for the announcement of the joint agreement, so I had

the opportunity to see at first hand the really dramatic improvement in confidence since the agreement was signed.

Private home purchase had increased by 50 per cent., as had office space—both undeniable signs of increasing confidence. The stock exchange had recovered, the first elections for the Legislative Council had gone well, and all seemed to agree that the elected councillors were of very high calibre. That was a good start to the long and difficult period of adjustment that leads to 1997.

Confidence remains good, but brittle. People are naturally touchy. For example, the remarks of Xu Jia Tun of the New China News Agency were taken as an ominous sign that the PRC meant to interfere in the development of democracy in Hong Kong. Ji Pengfei, the director of the states council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, tried to allay fears during his visit, but not with great success. I am sure that such incidents will repeat themselves and try the nerves of the public many times before the takeover. I agree with the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) that we must not say anything tonight that will disturb confidence.

In debating the order—and a very impressive debate it was—the new Legislative Council brought to the surface all the worries that go with the practical formulation of even a small part of the agreement. This will happen time and again between now and 1997. The new Legislative Council will have a great responsibility in leading the people of Hong Kong through some troubled and emotive waters.

The council is extremely lucky, at this vital stage in its development, to have Miss Lydia Dunn in the all-important role of senior Unofficial Member. Her letter to all hon. Members highlights the three points that we have been discussing — the acceptability of the BN(O) passport, the future of former service men, and the treatment of the ethnic minorities.

On the question of the acceptability of the BN(O) passport, there is plenty that the Government could and should do to make the passport more acceptable. However, we shall have to exercise patience, for it cannot all be done at once. Clearly the Government must take every possible step to persuade foreign Governments to acknowledge its validity, but they cannot be expected to do so officially until the passport is in being so that they can see the exact form that it takes.

I see no reason why the 70 countries that already grant visa exemption should reject the passport. The unofficial assurance that the Government have obtained from Australia, America, Germany and so on, are as much as we can expect at this stage.

The British Government can act straight away by taking the lead in showing their willingness to make the entry of Hong Kong citizens into this country as simple as possible. I do not apologise for repeating what has already been said about the difficulties of the Hong Kong people when trying easily to come into this country. They are great travellers. There are more than 1 million international departures from Hong Kong every year.

I must tell my hon. and learned Friend that one of the main sources of friction between Hong Kong and Britain is, and has been for many years, the treatment of Hong Kong citizens at British airports. It does not seem to improve, whatever protests we make. I press the Home Office to examine present practice carefully, and to get it improved well before we come to the problem of dealing with the new passports.

As the PRC, understandably, will not countenance a passport issued by a colonial power granting the right of abode in Hong Kong, it appears that achieving the same effect by reference to the identity card is as good a solution as any. Negotiations leading to that solution were a very reassuring example to the people of Hong Kong that the joint liaison committee really does work. It was effective in tackling a practical problem that affects the daily lives of the people.

The plan to issue the first BN(O) passports in 1987 is entirely sensible as that provides plenty of time to establish the passport's validity before the transfer of power. The Minister appears to assume that a certificate of entry, in addition to a passport, is something that everybody will naturally understand to be necessary. He will have to explain that more convincingly than he has done so far to persuade the people of Hong Kong or me that that is so. At present, it is a very tiresome chore.

I refer my hon. and learned Friend to the speech of Mr. Swayne and others in the Legislative Council debate. I should like to hear his answer to the question put by Mr. Howard Young, who is not only a Legislative Councillor but the managing director of Swire Travel, about how it is possible for the American Government to issue free of charge visas of indefinite validity, while the Hong Kong Government charge £12.

On the question of the volunteer prisoners of war, I entirely support my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South, who is knowledgeable on this subject. It could no doubt be argued with legal precision that that would be illogical, that it would set a precedent, and so on. But when Governments make illogical exceptions of that sort, they often show themselves to be not only kindly but wise. The problem gets smaller as the numbers get less. The procedural difficulties cannot be very great. Where there is a will there is a way. It seems to me that this is the kind of action that will show the people of Hong Kong that if Her Majesty's Government can help they will do so.

The unanimous recommendation of the Legislative Council regarding ethnic minorities is a more difficult problem for the Government. I have listened to the arguments of their representatives many time and I sympathise with them. Moreover, I realise that if the outcome of the joint agreement is as we hope, very few members of the minority are likely to take advantage of their right of abode in Britain. Taking all that into account, I still appreciate the difficulty facing the Minister. He has to deal with thousands of claims from all over the world and they all think that they have justified reasons for a right of abode in Britain. He has a difficult task. All I ask is that he gives the matter serious consideration because people feel strongly about it and it is a problem which cannot be shrugged off.

Members of the Legislative Council will be disappointed with the outcome of this debate. Despite the unanimity of their views on the three issues, they will not receive the firm undertaking on all three subjects they had hoped for. However, I ask them not to assume or to say that their views have been ignored or scorned on this or any future occasion. That would be counter-productive.

[Sir Paul Bryan]

They have many friends in the House and in the other place who will continue to fight their case. We are their allies, not their opponents.

The Government are not unsympathetic to Hong Kong. I am proud of the persistent and untiring efforts of the Government at the highest level, especially over the past four years, which have produced a far more promising long-term outlook for the territory than many of us had hoped. I assure the Legislative Council that their friends here will not let up on their efforts on behalf of the people of Hong Kong.

8.52 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I have listened to the comments of the hon. Member for Boothferry (Sir P. Bryan) with great attention and I am able to agree with many, if not all, of them. In previous discussions about Hong Kong I have expressed my grave reservations about the way in which the British Government have handled the matter of nationality for the people of Hong Kong, in particular the status and the future of BDTC passport holders. I believe that we have a moral responsibility towards BDTC passport holders which was not adequately fulfilled by Britain.

I regret to say that the House of Commons, which has built its reputation on its fearless championing of the causes of those who are oppressed or dispossessed — particularly on an international basis — has on this occasion all too easily been viewed as part of the conspiracy to sweep some of the issues under the carpet. There has been an all too cosy cross-party agreement on some of the issues where it would have served the people of Hong Kong better if there had been a more strenuous debate.

I appreciate that those are uncomfortable words with which, no doubt, many hon. Members will disagree. However, the sentiments that I have expressed are not only my own; they are also widely, and in my view justifiably, held in Hong Kong itself. We must recognise the dissatisfaction and concern about this issue in Hong Kong. That point was made in the report of the assessment office on the Anglo-Chinese agreement. The assessment team found that on nationality

"most of those who commented . . . did so in adverse or critical terms . . . There was a widely shared hope that the British Government and Parliament may find a way of assurance for BDTCs in coming years".

It is within that context that we now hold the debate.

I have no doubt that the Minister will be able to provide, as he has already suggested, thousands of careful reasons for not taking the action that his heart and our sense of justice require. Those reasons will, no doubt, be based on premises and previous practices. However, there have been no premises for the situation in which we find ourselves. Britain has handed countries over to self-government but has never handed over an entire people lock, stock and barrel to another Government. Moreover, many of those inhabitants fled from that Government in fear and in the hope of freedom. I make no comment about the present state of the PRC Government. We know that there are many moves in that Government which must be welcome and reassuring. I merely state the fact that many people have fled from a previous tyranny. We are facing a new problem where old practices do not apply and should not be applied. If the Minister recognises nothing else I hope that he will recognise that.

It must be recognised that decisions being made today will be made against a background of cynicism towards Britain and a fear for the future of Hong Kong. We do not want to encourage that, but we should recognise that half the population of Hong Kong are very young and have their whole future to look forward to. Indeed, half of them are under 35 years of age. More importantly, many are immigrants who have known statelessness and the fear of being a refugee.

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Ashdown: I would prefer not to. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will be called. I ask him to forgive me.

What the Minister decides today will be of special importance and will be taken as a mark of Britain's seriousness towards achieving an equitable solution in Hong Kong. There is already a prevailing feeling in the colony, which may be justified or not, that Britain simply wants to walk away from the problem with the minimum of inconvenience. If that feeling is untrue we can show it by the decisions that we take today and that the Minister will take in due course.

The British Government are offering two forms of "citizenship". I put the word citizenship in inverted commas. There is British national (overseas) status and British overseas citizenship status. Bluntly, and discarding euphemism, they are merely two different names for the same thing. They both describe a British nationality that carries no right of abode anywhere, cannot be passed on to the children except in limited circumstances, and is little more than a travel facility. The hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) mentioned in his excellent speech the contrary situation in Macao in the way in which the Portuguese are treating their people in similar circumstances. He said, and it is right to point out, that at exactly the same time as the people in Hong Kong may be apprehensive about the approach of 1997, they will be able to look 40 or 50 miles across the bay to 80,000 people who have the right to enter Britain which is denied to Britain's own nationals in Hong Kong. It is scarcely surprising that the issue is giving rise to strong feelings.

I do not claim that Britain can or could provide a home or even a right to work for all BDTC passport holders in Hong Kong. However, there are a limited number of assurances that we can provide in the present circumstances. We should be prepared to use section 4 (5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 in a liberal manner. That section allowed those who have worked in a paid or unpaid capacity for the British Government to register as British citizens at the discretion of the Home Secretary.

At present, it appears — I ask the Minister to comment on this, as we had a small exchange about it earlier—that no one is being granted British citizenship under this section in case it increases the insecurity. This is simply inadequate and, as it creates insecurity in those who now assist us in the running of Hong Kong, it is counter-productive as well. The Home Secretary should be prepared now to set out his criteria for granting citizenship under this section and to put the provisions into operation as soon as possible.

In view of the importance of the decisions that the Home Secretary will be taking, there should be a right of

appeal against those decisions. If he cannot do this, I ask him to look especially at the position of former service men. There are a mere 400 of them and the Government should make it clear that they will give sympathetic consideration to applicants from this group. To disown a brave and loyal people who deserve our gratitude, or to show indifference towards them, is morally wrong and, as importantly, a symbol of our lack of concern in Hong Kong.

I move on to the status of the BN(O) passport. On the day of our last debate on this subject, I understand that the Hong Kong Government gave assurances that BDTC passports in the future, and those of the special administrative region, should state, albeit indirectly, the holder's right of abode in Hong Kong. Doubts remain over this and it is essential that the Government take action to ensure that the new passport is as fully acceptable as present BDTC passports are for foreign travel. We were all reassured by what the Minister had to say about the progress of those negotiations. I hope that he will carry them through with full energy, and take such opportunities as he can to report progress to the House. If he does not, I hope that he will be questioned by hon. Members about the progress.

As to entry into the United Kingdom by people from Hong Kong, they must be given assurances that the new BN(O) passports will give freedom of entry for visits. At best, this should be operative for the period of validity of the passport and at the very least for a specified period. We should understand the position of Hong Kong well, because Hong Kong survives, as Britain always has, on its trading capacity. The future of the colony will be terribly threatened if international contacts are in any way inhibited by the status of the new passport. This matter goes into the heart of the survival of Hong Kong itself, and it is up to the British Government to take action to make sure that their rhetoric about wanting a secure future for the colony is honoured by their action. I was reassured to discover that the Minister is thinking seriously about this.

The greatest issue in this debate is the position of the minorities. There are about 10,000 BDTC passport holders in Hong Kong who are not ethnically Chinese and who, therefore, unlike the vast majority, are not entitled to Chinese nationality. Many of these have been in Hong Kong under British rule for many generations. One family arrived with the British in 1842 and set up the first ferry service between the mainland and the island. Nearly all have served Britain over the years in one capacity or another. The Minister's proposals will, quite simply, leave these people stateless.

The Minister is frowning, so I shall describe their situation. They will have a citizenship for one country —Britain—in which they are not entitled to a right of abode, and they will have a right of abode in another country — China — in which they will not have citizenship. I ask any hon. Member how he would feel if, for example, he had the citizenship of Britain but was not entitled to live here but was entitled to live in France while not having citizenship, even in the stability of the European position. We are thrusting 10,000 people into a hybrid insecure position while their future is worrying and somewhat opaque.

I am not in any way undermining the ability, strength and determination of the Chinese Government to honour their agreement. However, some of the rights enshrined in the Chinese national status are not honoured, and that must worry people living in Hong Kong. The future is unclear and it would be an abandonment of Britain's right to be called a civilised nation if we did not do something to correct this. We cannot provide assurances into the distant future, but we must provide some for the interim period between now and the time when we see how the new arrangements for Hong Kong are developing.

The non-ethnic Chinese do not wish to flood into Britain — why should they? In most cases they run highly successful businesses in Hong Kong and are happy. However, they want the right of abode somewhere and feel justifiably aggrieved that they are being denied it. They should be granted full British citizenship. There are few enough of them, and it would be disgraceful to leave them out in the cold or in a precarious position for our convenience.

There is no point in the Minister saying that this would encourage others, for the Hong Kong Chinese population agreed that the minorities should be regarded as a special case.

The matter of Vietnamese refugees was mentioned by other right hon. and hon. Members. In the past, I have spoken in strong terms about the conditions of the Vietnamese refugees. I visited the refugee camps in Hong Kong just before Christmas and I found a vast improvement in the conditions under which they are held. However, the existence of the camps is an affront. The refugees' only crime has been to flee from tyranny to what they believed to be freedom. We can imagine their anger at finding themselves, as a consequence, incarcerated in barbed wire camps. However humane the inner regimes of those camps, they are still barbed wire camps.

We cannot solve the problem immediately, but it is up to Britain, as several hon. Members have already said, to take a lead in resettling those unfortunate people. I hope that the Minister will give the assurance that it is the Government's policy to solve the problem before 1997.

9.5 pm

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your excellent timing in returning just in time to call me. However, this is a serious debate. I was reminded of its seriousness for the people of Hong Kong by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), who spoke yesterday about the problems of his constituents. Even the hon. Gentleman would agree that those problems pale into insignificance beside the fears of the people of Hong Kong. In some ways their fears are unreal, but in certain instances, as has been mentioned already this evening, they are whipped up and generated by a variety of people for their own ends.

The hon. Member for Yeovil said that the people of Hong Kong are being handed over to China. We must recognise that that is inaccurate. Hong Kong is being returned to China. Unless we understand the historic context within which the British-Chinese agreement has been reached, we are in danger of making a range of allegations, assertions and assumptions that do nothing but harm to the prospects of the Hong Kong people.

I am glad to be following my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) and my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Sir P. Bryan), as I always seem to be doing in discussions about Hong Kong. I echo the crucial point that they made. The agreement is an historic one. The future of the people of Hong Kong does not depend on the immigration legislation of this

[Mr. Robert Adley]

House. It depends on the willingness and ability of the British and Chinese Governments to do what they can to maintain stability and prosperity in Hong Kong. I reject the use of such phrases as "if all else fails" and "fallback position". They are not only pessimistic but deeply offensive to the Government of the People's Republic of China. Each time that people comment about the need for the people of Hong Kong to have a "fallback position" that demonstrates implicitly not only our mistrust of the willingness and ability of the parties to the agreement to make it stick, but our mistrust of the motives of the Government of the People's Republic of China.

I echo strongly the words of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South. There is no evidence to suggest that the Chinese Government have anything but the strongest desire to ensure that the agreement works. It is vital that the people of Hong Kong receive the message of the House that our first priority is to do everything that we can to ensure that the agreement sticks and works. That is our primary responsibility and it is the best guarantee that we can give to the people of Hong Kong of a secure future in the land of their birth and abode.

The hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) referred to the excellent letter from my old friend Hari Harilela. Page 3 of his letter states:

"Very few ethnic Indian BDTCs would want to leave Hong Kong under the present circumstances."

I am sure that that is true. We are not dealing here with what I might paraphrase as a Bangladeshi immigration-type debate, because we are not dealing with large numbers of people who deliberately want to come to this country to better themselves. I am thus delighted to see my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on the Front Bench. This is not a normal immigration debate.

If we were merely talking about numbers I would have no objection to welcoming with open arms large numbers of the citizens of Hong Kong who might wish to come and take up permanent abode in this country. I say that in the light of a rather aggravating and unpleasant conversation on this subject that I had with one of my constituents as recently as last Friday evening. But that is not the proposition that we are discussing. Even to discuss the matter in such terms is to set the debate's context incorrectly.

I hope that we recognise that we have priorities this evening other than to discuss the position as though it were an ordinary immigration debate.

There is a direct conflict between the ambition to maintain stability in Hong Kong and the demand of people in Hong Kong to have the right to live in the United Kingdom. Fundamental change in Hong Kong was always inevitable. Now it is on the horizon. We must now deal with the obstacles to the maintenance of stability.

I believe that the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) used the phrase a "few colonial types". There are a "few colonial types" in Hong Kong, deliberately seeking to stir up discontent in Hong Kong, whose ambition is to sow dissent between Britain and China to achieve their rather weird objectives. Such people are not restricted solely to ex-colonial types, as he rather quaintly put it.

In the previous Hong Kong debate I intervened in the speech of the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) and mentioned the lovely lady, Miss Emily Lau, who shelters behind the comfort of a British passport through her husband to make a series of innuendos from her position as a journalist on the *Far East Economic Review*. They provide a classic example of the misuse of a journalist's position not to report news but to put forward one's own political views.

We in this House have an obligation to point out to the people of Hong Kong that there are some people—few — who for their own political motivations want the agreement to fail. It is essential that we point out who they are and what they are doing.

I do not care whether the editor of the *Far East Economic Review*, who refused to publish my letter when I wrote to him, proceeds to attack me in his column about a letter that he has not published. People in the far east last week said to me, "What on earth was Derek Davies going on about attacking you in his article?" Not surprisingly, Mr. Davies had forgotten that if he refused to publish my letter and then attacked me for what I said in it, the people who read his magazine might be a little confused. I can take his criticism lightly. I am amused at being accused of McCarthyite tactics and such allegations, but Mr. Davies is not worth wasting time on and I do not propose to do so.

I intervened in the speech of my hon. and learned Friend to ask about the position of the non-Chinese ethnic minorities in so far as they face the possibility of citizenship of the People's Republic of China. It would be unfair in the short time available to read the question that I posed to and the answer that I received yesterday from my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I refer all hon. Members to it.

First, it is wrong to assume that the ethnic minorities would be stateless. I reject that proposition, which was put forward by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and others. Secondly, it is wrong to assume that their only alternative to staying in Hong Kong is citizenship of, and the right of abode in, this country. The People's Republic of China is reacquiring Hong Kong. It is to it that the British people and Parliament properly have turned and should continue to turn to see what alternative citizenship might be available to those people.

When my hon. and learned Friend is winding up this debate, I should like to hear him say that, as events unfold in the months and years ahead, this option will be pursued with the Chinese Government, and that information on it will be made available regularly and openly to the people in Hong Kong who might be involved. I asked my hon. and learned Friend about that before. It would do great credit to the Government of the People's Republic of China if they opened their minds very broadly to the fact that non-Chinese might want to be entitled to citizenship of the People's Republic after this agreement comes into force.

Our responsibility is clear, and it is not just a responsibility to the rich and powerful people in Hong Kong, many of whom already have the right of access to the United Kingdom. We have a responsibility to the millions of Hong Kong citizens who have neither the desire nor the intention ever to come within thousands of miles of the United Kingdom. If they are to have a secure future, they have one overriding priority, and that is to see that the agreement between our two Governments works and that nothing is said or done that so aggravates and annoys either of the parties to the agreement that there might be a wish to wonder whether it is all worthwhile.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South that the British-Chinese agreement is a remarkable one. Let us spend a little less time worrying about what will happen if it goes wrong and a little more time making sure that it goes right.

9.16 pm

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): This is too important a debate to be dealt with in just over two and a half hours. That fact was mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs). Therefore, I will endeavour to be brief.

I must declare an interest, because I lived for some 18 months in Hong Kong. That is not as long as some of my hon. Friends lived there, but as a former middleweight boxing champion of Hong Kong perhaps I should again do battle for it on this occasion. Perhaps the only thing on which I agree—not generally but in this debate—with the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) is that it would be churlish and stupid in the extreme for any hon. Member to say that the Foreign Secretary and his team did not conclude by the joint agreement a mighty achievement, because it was a mighty achievement by any standard. I start from that premise, and I do not want to do anything to undermine that agreement.

On 5 December 1984 the Foreign Secretary said:

"It would be too much to expect that this document"——

that is, the draft agreement—

"which has emerged from extremely complex and sometimes difficult negotiations, could provide the whole answer to every problem".—[*Official Report*, 5 December 1984; Vol. 69, c. 397.]

I certainly concur with that. We are debating the order in that context. Certainly it is far from perfect. To their credit, the Government have said that they will withdraw and revise the order if necessary to take account of the views of hon. Members and of their Lordships in another place and, of course, the views of the people of Hong Kong. In the *Official Report* of the other place on 19 February last year, Baroness Young said just that. She said that this was an "order with green edges" and that, if necessary, the Government would withdraw and revise it.

We know that on one important aspect at least there is no doubt that the people of Hong Kong speak with one loud voice, and that is on the problem of the inequities contained in the nationality provisions and their effects on a relatively small number of people in the colony, the non-Chinese ethnics. I refer to a small number deliberately, because Home Office Ministers in particular become paranoid when one talks about large numbers of potential immigrants. We are talking about 10,000 or so. The Minister of State is well aware that it is rare for both the Official and Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council ever to reach a unanimous agreement, but they did so by means of the resolution that was referred to by a number of hon. Members.

The three points that are contained in the resolution have been agreed by both the Official and the Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council. Those who follow Hong Kong affairs know that this is very rare. I was in Hong Kong in October, not as a guest of the Government but because I was on my way to Australia as a member of a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association delegation. I spent about 10 days in the colony. I was told that these modest demands were the least that the British Government could accept.

I have already praised the members of the joint declaration and its authors. However, what is being advanced by both the non-elected and the elected representatives of the Legislative Council will in no way —I am sure that the hon. Member for Christchurch agrees with me — undermine that declaration. No negotiations are required. It is a British problem. That is acknowledged by the Chinese. I refer those hon. Members who can read Chinese to the pro-Communist Chinese newspaper *Wan Wei Po*. In a recent editorial, it makes it very clear that this is a British problem. It says:

"To deal with this question, one cannot cut adrift history. One should not depart from reality. These people have always held British passports. If the result of these several changes causes them to lose their nationality, then, to them, this would be hard to accept."

I return to the numbers game. Of the 10,000 or so non-Chinese ethnics, most of whom are members of the Indian community, very few intend to leave Hong Kong. However, if they did leave Hong Kong, what an enterprising lot they would be. They would fit very neatly indeed into the mould that the Prime Minister is for ever saying we should have in British industry. However, they do not wish to depart from the spirit of the joint declaration. They helped to build Hong Kong into the very strong economic unit that it is today. When the Minister replies to the debate, I hope that he will make it clear how the ethnic Chinese can become Chinese nationals. That point is not clear to me.

Article 6 of the Chinese nationality law state:

"any person who is born in China whose parents are stateless or of uncertain nationality should have settled in China as Chinese nationals".

These people are not stateless. They have British National (Overseas) passports. They are not of uncertain nationality, so how do they qualify? Article 7 says:

"Aliens or stateless persons who are willing to abide by China's constitutions and laws may acquire Chinese nationality upon approval of their applications, provided that
(i) they are close relatives to Chinese nationals, or
(ii) they have settled in China, or
(iii) they have other legitimate reasons."

Article 14 says:

"The acquisition, renunciation or restoration of Chinese nationality shall go through the formality of application".

It is true that it is grace and favour. Nobody can be certain about it, so clearly it is a uniquely British problem.

It is as much a British problem as the fate of those who lived in Gibraltar or in the Falkland Islands when the British Government took a decision that was not very different from the one that they are taking now. These people, or their ancestors, went to Hong Kong, as was made clear by my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) because it was part of the British empire. As my hon. Friend said, they served the Crown loyally as soldiers, policemen and civil servants. They expected to be treated then, as now, by the British in the way in which the British were accustomed, so we are told, to deal with those who went to the colonies. I do not have time to dwell upon that point, because I might disagree with certain right hon. and hon. Members, especially Conservative Members, about it. I do not wish to dwell, because of the time, either, upon the fate of the Vietnamese refugees in this country, or former service men. I am sure that other hon. Members will do so.

I wish to conclude with someting that is a little flowery, in line with the words that I have used about the colonies. It is from a recent editorial in the *Hong Kong Standard*:

[Mr. Tom Pendry]

"The sun has long set upon the British Empire. What remains to be seen is whether an obligation going back 150 years and honour have sunk below the distant mountains."

I hope that at the end of this debate it will be clear that honour and obligation will remain intact as far as this country is concerned. It is not just the non-Chinese ethnics that we are talking about; it is the entire people of the colony of Hong Kong who believe that this group of people is being wronged by this Government.

It is good that this is a draft order and that we can alter it. We plead that the Government will heed this message from hon. Members who feel strongly about Hong Kong and especially about its minority groups, and will amend the order before too long.

9.26 pm

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): I rise with some humility after the eloquent and deeply knowledgeable speeches by right hon. and hon. Members who know Hong Kong far better than I. It is nine months since the Hong Kong Act received the Royal Assent and about a year since it went through the House in record time. As the Bill went through its various stages, great concern was expressed about nationality, particularly the vexed question of the transfer of British nationality by way of BDTC to the new BN(O) nationality. Since the passage of the Bill, there seem to have been a number of hiccoughs in the morale of the people of Hong Kong. The way in which we deal with the question of nationality is most crucial for morale in the colony at present. The arrangements which we make when the order is confirmed and comes to us as a firm order will be absolutely vital in determining the way in which the passage towards 1997 continues.

It is clear from the speeches made during the LegCo debate on 4 December that there was a great deal of concern about the three questions mentioned so frequently tonight: the integrity of the BN(O) passport, which seems to be on the way to being resolved in the joint discussions with the Chinese; the ex-service men so eloquently referred to by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker); and the non-Chinese ethnic minorities.

There is a clear cynicism about the status and currency of British overseas citizenship, and with some reason. Whether this somewhat nebulous concept has any validity has to be proved to us by the Government. The greatest concern in this regard is the position of the succeeding generations of the non-Chinese ethnic minorities, about which so much has been said this evening. I would like to add to the plea that a particular concession be granted to the ex-service men. Those who have served king and country in this way have every right to our most sympathetic consideration, and I am sure that those words are unlikely to fall on deaf ears.

I do not want to go over ground which has been covered very well throughout the debate. *[Interruption.]* Nor have I time in any case, as I am being reminded by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) sitting below me. I believe that there should be no question about granting the right of abode in the United Kingdom to the ex-service men.

That brings me to the question of the non-Chinese ethnic minorities, some 10,000 people, mostly Indian. They or their forebears came to Hong Kong, for the most part, before India received its independence and they have served Britain in the colony for many years. As we have already been told by several right hon. and hon. Gentlemen, very few of these people would actually wish to come to live in the United Kingdom at present, but it is incumbent on Britain to look at their claims with due consideration and sympathy, for at several times during their lives it is quite likely that they have had a right of abode here. It would be churlish if we forgot that.

It also seems that the statelessness which the draft order seeks to avoid could result from our treatment of the matter. These people have no chance of emigrating to India or Pakistan because they have not lived there for many years. Indeed, few speak the language, and in any case some would return to Pakistan as Hindus, which would be a particularly unattractive prospect. We have a responsibility to the minorities which is special and apart from our responsibilities for the vast majority of Hong Kong people who are ethnically Chinese. The small minority would have almost no impact on our general immigration policy, and I feel certain that the necessary steps can be taken — there is plenty of time — to encompass their desire for British citizenship as opposed to BN(O) or BOC status within the regulation when it is drawn.

Several hon. Members have said that Hong Kong is in a unique position. It is unique in the history of decolonisation. We are handing it back to the Chinese, as my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) said. It behoves the House and the Government to pay special attention to the wants of two small minorities— the ex-service men and the non-Chinese ethnic minority.

9.31 pm

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): I agree completely with the hon. Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman), and wish to express my anxiety about the draft Order in Council. It is not right and the Government need to change it before it is generally acceptable, most importantly in Hong Kong, and in the House. It is a pity that the Front Bench spokesmen were not spokesmen on foreign affairs —I say that with no disrespect to the Minister or my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs)— because we are talking not about the immigration policy of Britain, but about the future of Hong Kong. Although at present Hong Kong has the status of a colony of the United Kingdom, it is governed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and we must always have that at the front of our minds. Indeed, that is obvious to the people of Hong Kong.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) and I paid a visit to Hong Kong earlier this year, and we were struck by the knowledge that all sections of society had of the matter, and by their feeling that the United Kingdom had completed a deal with the People's Republic of China which was the best deal in the circumstances, and that it now wished to wash its hands and let the matter go quietly away. I do not think that that is true, and no hon. Member will wish that to happen. If that is the case, we must consider what is best for a smooth transition so that the people of Hong Kong can continue to prosper, and life can go on as they wish it to do. We must not worry about judging matters in line with our general policy on immigration, as the Minister does.

Although the agreement was the best one available, it was not widely welcomed by the people of Hong Kong.

who are resigned to the fact that it has been made and that they must make it work. They may come positively to enthuse about it in years to come, but they are not doing so now.

This is an important subject, and it is a pity that we have only two and a half hours of debate on it. The legislative council decision was a unanimous one which was supported by the unofficial members and by the Government members. It must be taken seriously by this House and the Government.

If I may deal with the service men, there are 100 or 400 —it does not matter what the number is. I am sure that the Government, if they wanted to, could come to some agreement on what the status of service men should be and, if they want the right of abode in this country, they should be able to have it. It is not a question of whether 100 or 400 might be acceptable. Both numbers are very small.

With regard to the problem of the ethnic minorities, I will not repeat the points which have been made by other hon. Members. There is great concern in Hong Kong— and it will grow unless the House does something about it — about the effective statelessness of the ethnic minorities if nothing is done about their status. I realise that the Government have tried to put together a package which will accommodate the wishes of the ethnic minorities, but they have not succeeded. It is the continuing stability and prosperity of Hong Kong which is important. The Government must try again. The only answer in my view is to give the minorities, if they want it and wish to take it up, the right of abode in this country. If we get things right in Hong Kong, no one will want to come to this country in any case — perhaps a few hundred at the most. If we get things wrong, the ethnic minorities will have as a fallback position the assurance that they have somewhere to go and somewhere they can call their home. I confidently say that it is a right of abode which would be used by no more than perhaps a few hundred people.

Then there is the question of entry into the United Kingdom for Hong Kong people of Chinese origin. I came back from Hong Kong a few days ago through Gatwick airport. Only two windows were open for the passengers on the flight, who were mainly Chinese. The two queues were of seventy or eighty people each. I watched for about half an hour. Everyone had to wait a minute and a half or two minutes. The details were handled expeditiously. However, if 70 or 80 people had been in each line, I imagine that it would have been about two hours before the last person passed through immigration — hardly something to get excited about when entering the United Kingdom.

One young boy appeared not to have his papers in order, he was led away fairly early and I did not see him again. This has been called hassle, and so it is. We have to do something about it. People from Hong Kong who come to this country not to stay but on business, to visit friends or on holiday should be able to do so without having to go through many formalities and feeling that they are being hassled. I know that it is dangerous to generalise on the basis of just one visit, but this has been not only my evidence but that of other people. Something needs to be done about it. I support fully the legislative council decision to put into the passport the right of entry to the United Kingdom. That would be straightforward.

In this issue it is not right for the Government or Parliament to take all the decisions without paying attention to what might happen after the next general election or the one after that. We have until 1997. I suggest that the Government would be wise to discuss the matter with my hon. Friends on the Front Bench and see whether some common agreement might be attained. I am sure that my right hon. and hon. Friends would be more than happy to do this. Perhaps we can have a bipartisan policy. We are all on the same side. We want Hong Kong to prosper, and we want there to be stability in Hong Kong. We want the changeover in 1997 to go as smoothly and as quietly as possible. If the Government pay attention to what has been said in the debate, I am sure that that will happen.

9.40 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I am confident that the people of Hong Kong and hon. Members would prefer to listen to the Minister than to me, so I shall be brief. I feel strongly that we have a duty to take care of the non-Chinese ethnic minority in Hong Kong. They have made their money, created their lives and brought up their families in Hong Kong. They owe their prosperity to Hong Kong. It would be wrong, when the future of Hong Kong seems to be moving more brightly than expected, and when things are getting better, to say to them that the need for a fallback position is so urgent and imperative that we should create it now. We should see whether the Chinese will move towards a clearer statement of the right of those people to Chinese citizenship in 1997 before we feel bound to take any action.

I have no way of knowing what electoral fortune will bring, but I hope that I shall still represent Mid-Kent in 1997. If I do, I shall certainly bring the issue to the attention of the Government of that day. If the non-Chinese ethnic minority are in danger of being harassed or persecuted, I shall say that we should pick up the obligation that we have incurred over the centuries. That will be the time to act, and I hope that we shall do so.

9.42 pm

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): Like all hon. Members, I support the three proposals by the Legislative Council in Hong Kong. I spent some childhood years as part of a tiny ethnic minority in inland China as well as in Hong Kong. We were happy there, but I am sure that the safety valve that we had increased the harmony among the foreigners who worked to contribute to China.

The order is important for current political reasons within Hong Kong and for its relations with Britain and China. It is necessary to build substance into the joint declaration and the British and Chinese memoranda which it contains. That needs the support and confidence of China and, most important, of the people of Hong Kong.

The changes will cause little difficulty in Britain, but if we are half-hearted in our commitment to the agreement, that will encourage China to be half-hearted in fulfilling its more important commitments. It will lead the people of Hong Kong now — not in 1997 — to doubt the substance of the agreement, particularly about the positive contribution that they have to make to the future running of the special administrative region. The vital building up and the capacity of Hong Kong's peoples to look after the special administrative region will be set back at a critical stage. We must do everything that we can to build the

[Dr. Jeremy Bray]

people of Hong Kong's confidence and that of their elected representatives, so that they can speak and expect to be listened to by the sovereign power.

Britain exercises that power today. Tomorrow it will be exercised by China. To concede the point will cost Britain little, but it will count for much in Hong Kong and, through Hong Kong, in our relations with China.

The Minister has been far from hostile. I think that he will consider further the views expressed in the House. I hope that he can be more positive in his acceptance of our arguments.

9.45 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): The debate on the treatment of non-ethnic Chinese has swung between two points of view. One is that that group including prisoners of war and service men should be allowed to become full British nationals but the Government have proposed that those groups should not be allowed in because we will upset the Chinese Government by not trusting their promises and it may open a gate to 3 million people who want to come in.

In my last half minute may I suggest a middle way—to treat applications for full citizenship on a case-by-case basis and on their merits. This is precisely the approach that the Government have adopted to stateless British citizens who no longer opt for citizenship of China. It is also the approach that is covered by section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 and exercised at the discretion of the Home Secretary.

If our hopes about the future of Hong Kong are fulfilled and China, as we hope and expect, honours its obligations, few people will be making applications. The procedural problems in judging each case on its merits would then not arise. I ask my hon. and learned Friend who has listened to this debate on behalf of the Government to take this suggestion of the middle way.

9.47 pm

Mr. Dubs: I have confined myself to two or three minutes because I wanted to give as many hon. Members as possible the chance to have their say, although I realise that there is still much to be said.

There has been much criticism of the Order in Council regarding passports and their acceptability in Britain and other countries. The position of prisoners of war and the position of the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. I believe that the overwhelming opinion of the House is to ask the Minister to look at all this again.

Whatever the Minister decides when the Order in Council comes back to use the Labour party, when next in government, will certainly look at it again. May I remind the Minister that the Labour party is committed to the repeal of the Immigration Act 1971 and the repeal of the British Nationality Act 1981. We would replace both of those measures with non-discriminatory legislation. In that context we would sympathetically review the claims of the ethnic minorities as well as claims from other groups in Hong Kong and elsewhere. We would thus arrive at a policy of nationality and immigration which is just and honourable.

The least the House can do is to ask the Minister to look at the claims of these people as a Labour Government would do as soon as we had the chance. We shall press this to a vote tonight to keep pressure on the Minister. It may be that Government Back Benchers will support us in the Division Lobby. Whether they do or not, we wish to make it clear to the people of Hong Kong and the people of Britain that we are not satisfied with the Order in Council and we ask the Minister to think again before he brings it back to us.

9.53 pm

Mr. Waddington: This has been a good debate, although the beginning of the finale was rather odd. I do not propose to dwell on the undertaking just given by the hon. Gentleman. It is a most irresponsible undertaking, and it did not help the House to understand how the Labour party's proposals have anything to do with whether we should admit 400 or 500 ex-service men, or whether we should admit those in Hong Kong who are not of Chinese ethnic origin.

The House is indebted to the right hon. and hon. Members who have spoken, some with a close knowledge of Hong Kong, but all with concern for its future. We are here tonight because, during the passage of the Hong Kong Bill, the House asked that there should be a general debate on the draft Order in Council so that the Government could listen to and study various points of view before laying a final draft and asking the House's approval. I have listened, and we shall study.

I remind the House and listeners elsewhere that this is a debate on the Adjournment. It is not a motion asking for approval of the White Paper or of a draft Order in Council. I was therefore surprised, as no doubt were some other hon. Members, to hear talk before we came here to the effect that the Opposition were thinking of dividing the House. If that is their decision, it is odd, as the whole object of the exercise is to have an open and frank discussion so that everybody can say what he thinks about the White Paper and the draft order and we can go away and think about it.

The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) asked about those who might be at risk after the Chinese takeover. I can only repeat that undertakings have been given to some people in Government service. As for the Vietnamese refugees, I remind the House that the number of people in the closed and open camps in Hong Kong has decreased by 2,500 in the past 12 months, which is moderately encouraging. The United Kingdom has recently agreed to take some 500 family reunion cases, in addition to those who are coming here anyhow under the orderly departure programme, and the ordinary family reunion criteria. We are working hard, and with some success, to persuade other countries to help more. We strongly hope that the problem of refugees in camps will be solved long before 1997.

I should like now to consider the endorsement in the passport to make it easier for people to come here and to get through immigration control. My right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) and my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Sir P. Bryan) and others mentioned this. It is not an easy problem. It would be odd to say that a person who does not have the right of abode here must not subject himself to immigration control like anyone else. I am aware of the worry expressed in Hong Kong, and I understand that they want to feel that they are receiving proper consideration. We shall think about the matter carefully, in case we can arrive at an acceptable formula.

As for the ex-service men, there have been pleas for us to use the power in section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981. Many have already made claims under that section, and many more will do so. We have always said that we will use the power most sparingly. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development was at great pains during the debate on the British Nationality Bill to make that clear. I must also make it absolutely plain that there are service men all over the world who gave great service to humanity during the war. All over the world there are service men who suffered confinement and deprivation. There are Sikhs, Gurkhas and countless others who might feel that they, too, have a claim to British citizenship if claims under section 4(5) are granted.

Mr. Ashdown: I shall ignore the fact that such people are not in the same circumstances as people in Hong Kong. Have any claims—not just those made by service men under section 4(5)—been granted?

Mr. Waddington: No, but a number of claims are under consideration, and of course they need careful consideration.

I should like to deal now with the question of non-Chinese British dependent territory citizens. I agree with my hon. Friends the Members for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) and for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) that to grant British citizenship now would certainly be looked at by some, particularly the Chinese, as a demonstration of a lack of confidence in the Sino-British agreement. Those who have been urging that course have frankly admitted that the real argument is that there should be an escape route for these people in case things go wrong.

Non-Chinese BDTCs can, like others, apply for BN(O) citizenship. If they do not apply, there are fallback provisions and the availability of BOC status until the middle of the next century. Such people would be able to apply to become Chinese nationals. I shall try to clarify matters for the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) and for my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent, who are concerned about that.

That matter has been discussed with the Chinese Government in the Sino-British joint liaison group. The Chinese Government have confirmed that non-Chinese who meet the legal requirements under the Chinese nationality law may apply for Chinese nationality and that such cases would be dealt with by the appropriate authorities. People will not, of course, be compelled to apply for Chinese nationality.

The right of abode provisions agreed with the Chinese Government provide the best possible guarantee that those people established in Hong Kong and their children can continue to live there. There is no other satisfactory or reliable way to provide people in Hong Kong with what they want—the right of abode there. In the unlikely event of any British nationals being forced to leave Hong Kong and having nowhere to go, we have made it clear that we would expect the Government of the day to consider sympathetically whether to admit such people on a case-by-case basis in the light of particular circumstances.

In trying to identify particular groups, one immediately runs into trouble. Of course, one never finds two groups in the same position. An examination of a group's composition shows that people within a particular group are not all in the same place.

That is a valuable reminder to the House that it is always possible for the Home Secretary to exercise his discretion to allow someone to enter the country and later qualify for British nationality if there is exceptional hardship. In the case of a minor, somebody under the age of majority, section 3(1) of the British Nationality Act 1981 allows the Home Secretary to grant British nationality as a matter of discretion.

Hon. Members are concerned that we should act as quickly as possible to ensure that the BN(O) passport, when it is issued, will be recognised by other countries and be as acceptable as the present BDTC passport. The Government will not forget the advice that has been given. That advice is in accordance with the plans already made by the Foreign Office in that regard. I was able to tell the House earlier that great strides have already been made, and it is very encouraging indeed that certain countries have made it plain that they are happy to acknowledge and recognise that passport.

The debate was an opportunity for the House to express its views. We have had a most interesting debate, and some of the matters mentioned go wider than the draft Order in Council. Of course, on the question of the endorsement of the passport, the Government cannot be indicted for not dealing with that in the order because that——

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) *rose in his place and claimed to move*, That the question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to*.

Question put accordingly, That this House do now adjourn:—

The House divided: Ayes 99, Noes 144.

Division No. 39] **[10 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Anderson, Donald	Ewing, Harry
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Fatchett, Derek
Ashdown, Paddy	Faulds, Andrew
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*	Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Barnett, Guy	Fisher, Mark
Barron, Kevin	Flannery, Martin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret	Foster, Derek
Bell, Stuart	Foulkes, George
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Freud, Clement
Bermingham, Gerald	George, Bruce
Blair, Anthony	Godman, Dr Norman
Boyes, Roland	Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Bray, Dr Jeremy	Hancock, Michael
Buchan, Norman	Haynes, Frank
Campbell-Savours, Dale	Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Canavan, Dennis	Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*	Home Robertson, John
Clarke, Thomas	Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Clay, Robert	Lamond, James
Clelland, David Gordon	Leighton, Ronald
Clwyd, Mrs Ann	Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*	Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*	McCartney, Hugh
Corbett, Robin	McDonald, Dr Oonagh
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*	McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
Craigen, J. M.	Maclennan, Robert
Crowther, Stan	McNamara, Kevin
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*	McWilliam, John
Deakins, Eric	Madden, Max
Dewar, Donald	Marek, Dr John
Dixon, Donald	Maxton, John
Dormand, Jack	Maynard, Miss Joan
Dubs, Alfred	Michie, William
Eadie, Alex	Mikardo, Ian

Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Neillist, David
O'Brien, William
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin.
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. Ray Powell.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Best, Keith
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Forth, Eric
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral, W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David John
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rowe, Andrew
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thurnham, Peter
Waddington, David
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Archie Hamilton and
Mr. Michael Neubert.

Question accordingly negatived.

Northern Ireland

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would confirm that the two orders are being taken together.

10.10 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): I understand that it would be for the convenience of the House if the two orders were debated separately—*[Interruption.]* I hear an echo saying that that might make for better expedition. I am not sure that I endorse that sentiment.

In that light, I beg to move,

That the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Continuance) (No. 3) Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 14th November, be approved.

This is the first debate on the Act in which I have had the privilege of speaking as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and specifically on security issues. I should like to begin by restating clearly the Government's firm commitment to the eradication of terrorism and our determination to pursue that aim wherever it is appropriate. The news that the House will have heard today will be confirmation of our determination to pursue that aim as effectively as possible.

We are determined to do all that we can to create again in Northern Ireland the conditions for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Province in which all the people can pursue their political, economic and social goals free from fear.

The essence of our policy is to pursue suspected terrorists in respect of actual offences that they are believed to have committed, and to bring them to justice before the courts. As in the rest of the United Kingdom, the police naturally take the lead in the implementation of that policy, with the Armed Forces providing appropriate support on request, where that remains necessary. That approach has achieved a substantial reduction in violence since the mid-1970s and continues to offer the best hope for the future. But terrorism and the threat of violence continue to cast a shadow over the political and economic life of the Province, so our efforts to stamp it out must continue with unremitting vigour.

When the Act was last debated in this House in June, my predecessor reported that terrorist violence during the first six months of 1985 was running at a similar level to that for the same period in 1984. He also stated that the RUC had borne the brunt of the violence. I am sorry to tell the House that this unhappy situation has continued. Although at 54 the total number of deaths during 1985 was 10 fewer than the previous year's total, the number of policemen and police women included in the figure has not been exceeded in any year since the present campaign of terrorism began. Twenty-three members of the RUC and RUC Reserve were murdered during 1985, and the first casualties, as the House will know, at the turn of the new year were also policemen. Many left behind young wives or husbands, and young families. I am sure that all Members of the House will join me in paying tribute to the dedication and courage displayed day in and day out by the members of the RUC and RUC Reserve, by the regular and UDR soldiers who so faithfully and unstintingly support them and one of whom was, sadly, so brutally murdered last night. I would not exclude the courage and dedication of the men and women of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

The small reduction in the number of deaths was paralleled by a more significant reduction in the number of terrorist incidents. That was down by more than 18 per cent. But welcome as that reduction is, it can give us no cause for complacency. There can never be an acceptable level of terrorism and violence; and the security forces, with the Government's fullest support, will spare no effort to lift the curse of terrorism and intimidation from all sections of the community.

At this moment it would also be appropriate to pay tribute to the work of the courts in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland judiciary deserves our warmest and fullest support. Over the years, in the face of intimidation and against the background of a peculiarly nasty and murderous terrorist campaign that has imposed unprecedented strains on the community it has dispensed justice firmly, fairly and impartially. It has successfully maintained the integrity of the judicial system in Northern Ireland.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): While the Secretary of State is paying tribute to the courts in Northern Ireland will he also pay tribute to the courts in Eire? There is a case in southern Ireland where it is assumed that Associated British Foods made a contribution of £1·5 million to the IRA. Is he aware of that case? In the event that it can be proven that that contribution was made does he intend to bring a case on the mainland against Associated British Foods and Fine Fare its subsidiary?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. Before the Secretary of State rises, I must remind him that our discussion must not range too widely.

Mr. King: I cannot comment on cases that are before courts in other jurisdictions. I pay tribute to any court seeking to dispense justice fairly and impartially in the face of terrorism and intimidation.

The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) may know General Order No. 7 in the IRA manual which means that those in the Republic face a different problem from those who are exposed to a peculiar threat in the Province where they are, themselves, a target of terrorism.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): Since the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) raised the position of the courts in the Irish Republic—we would all wish to pay tribute to the judiciary there—would my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State remind the House that the Special Criminal Court sits without a jury? That is worth mentioning in view of the criticisms made of trial without jury in certain cases in Northern Ireland.

Mr. King: I recognise the validity of my hon. Friend's comment. It is true that there is a court that sits without a jury, which shows all too clearly both the problems that terrorism imposes not only north of the border but south, and the need to be able to respond to it in the most positive way.

The Government are anxious to take every possible step that can help to combat the evil of terrorism and it is against that background that I mentioned the Anglo-Irish

[Mr. King]

agreement, one of the prime considerations of which is to improve co-operation between ourselves and the Republic in the fight against terrorism. We are looking for increased co-ordination of security activities on both sides of the border. The Chief Constable of the RUC and the Commissioner of the Garda Siochana have attended two of the first three meetings of the Intergovernmental Conference. As a first step a programme is being set in hand to improve co-operation and communication between the two forces. The conference is also looking at ways of simplifying the procedures for extradition between the two countries, and for mounting extra-territorial prosecutions.

One of the other benefits that we expect from the conference is that it will help us to try to remove any misunderstandings and misconceptions that may in the past have hindered the development of a better understanding of the importance of support for the security forces and a better cross-community support for their activities. Following the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement and the establishment of the Intergovernmental Conference, we look to the SDLP to give an early lead in encouraging full-hearted support from the minority community for the security forces. The RUC, as the front line defence for the whole community, deserves the support of the SDLP. It has certainly earned it, not only through the sacrifices to which I referred earlier and the tragic casualties that it has sustained, but through the professional, even-handed way in which it has carried out its duties.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): I have heard the right hon. Gentleman make this remark both in a recent conference in Oxford and tonight. Is he implying that in the past the SDLP has not given support to the RUC? If so, he should spell it out, and if not he should say so.

Mr. King: In the Province, the feeling is that the SDLP has qualified its support for the RUC. In the present situation, it is important to recognise that the RUC is entitled to wholehearted support. The RUC has shown clearly, not least in recent weeks, its determination to uphold the law and resist intimidation from whatever quarter it comes. That should be recognised by all the communities in the Province. I hope that this will be understood, because I recognise that extremists exist in both communities who are trying to undermine security in the Province and obstruct the agreement.

The enemies of peace and reconciliation have realised that the security benefits that the agreement can bring will pose a direct threat to them, so they may seek to undermine and wreck it at the start. The campaign of violence from the IRA ever since the signing of the agreement is the clearest sign of that. I make it clear to the IRA that that campaign will not succeed and that the Government will not be deterred. The Government will pursue greater and more effective security policies with increasing vigour. I make it clear that the agreement makes no change in the responsibilities of Her Majesty's Government and the Chief Constable for security in Northern Ireland. The Chief Constable's independence is quite clear—in the discharge of his operational responsibilities he is and will remain answerable only to the law. By the same token, all executive decisions about security issues in Northern Ireland will continue to be taken by the United Kingdom Government.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): In the light of the Anglo-Irish agreement will the Secretary of State tell the House whether the order was discussed with Irish Ministers? Were they consulted, and do they support the agreement? In the light of what the Minister has just said we would expect the Government to state that any matters discussed by the House are discussed previously with Irish Ministers. If that is the case, what were their views on the continuation of the order?

Mr. King: The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) may not have been able to attend the debate when my predecessor, the right hon. Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd), made clear what our proposals would be for the initial stages in response to the Baker report. Those proposals were made in June. Tonight we are implementing those proposals that my predecessor put forward following the Baker report which investigated and considered the applications of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. I will give a simple answer to the right hon. Gentleman, or he may make the amazing accusation that I am not answering his question. We had already reached decisions on the matter and we subsequently informed the Irish Government of what our actions would be.

In discharging my duties I shall of course consider the views expressed in this House by all parties, by Northern Irish Members of Parliament and by the Northern Ireland Assembly. I shall be willing also to listen to the views that may be expressed by the Irish Government through the Intergovernmental Conference. I relinquish none of my clear, distinct and sole responsibility for decisions in this matter on behalf of the United Kingdom Government. I will take my decisions in the interests of all the people of Northern Ireland and of the United Kingdom as a whole, in the knowledge that I remain fully accountable to this House.

Mr. Benn: Will the right hon. Member give way?

Mr. King: I may be able to help the right hon. Gentleman. That is not always possible, but it may be on this occasion. The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 is and must be seen as temporary, exceptional legislation. It is consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nation's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but it provides for departures, in certain circumstances from the normal procedures of British justice. My fervent hope is that it will soon become unnecessary. I wish that it were possible to allow the Act to lapse, but I am afraid that it is not, if we are to carry out successfully the security policies that I emphasised at the start of my speech. In his review of the operation of the Act, published in 1984, the late Sir George Baker endorsed this view, recording as his first substantial conclusion that there was only limited scope for amending the Act.

While the Act remains on the statute book I believe that it should continue to come under close parliamentary scrutiny, such as is provided for by this debate. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney told the House last June, the Government intend, when amending the Act, to recommend that it have a maximum life of five years,

providing the occasion for major and detailed parliamentary scrutiny within a reasonable period. In considering the amendment of the Act, the Government's concern is to ensure that it provides only for the minimum necessary departures from normal law and procedure.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Witney, during the last renewal debate to which I referred, set out the Government's proposals for amending the Act. I intend to introduce legislation on those lines as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits, and certainly within the lifetime of this Parliament.

Mr. Benn *rose——*

Mr. King: It is important that I should conclude this part of my remarks.

In the meantime, we have laid an order under section 30 of the Act which will widen the discretion of the Attorney-General to certify in respect of particular cases that offences should not be treated as scheduled offences. The implication of that, as hon. Members will be aware, is that they will be eligible and available for jury trial. That is, generally, along the lines proposed by Sir George Baker, and when we come to the amendments that I shall move when we debate the later order that by agreement we have decided to debate as a separate instrument, we shall discuss those matters.

Mr. Benn: Will the Minister try to answer the questions that I asked? He referred to a statement that was made in June, which was before the Anglo-Irish agreement was reached, so that the agreement represented a change. He then said that the Irish Government had been notified. They do not now have to be notified because they know what the business is from studying last Thursday's statement. My question—if he will lift his eyes from his text for a moment—was specific. Were they consulted, was the matter put on the agenda of the last intergovernmental conference, did they give a view, and, if they did, what was that view? In view of the new statement that the right hon. Gentleman has made, will he say whether the Irish Government will be consulted about the legislation to amend the Act before he introduces it in this House?

Mr. King: The right hon. Gentleman is losing some of the effortless charm that I normally expect from him.

Mr. Benn: All that I ask the right hon. Gentleman to do is answer the question.

Mr. King: I made it clear that the Government's decisions were announced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney in June. They had not been previously discussed with the Government of the Irish Republic. These matters were on the record and, whether or not they were aware of them, we informed them that we would be tabling these orders, so they were aware of them. They were not the subject of negotiation and discussion because they had already been announced and had been tabled in this House, as I recall, before the signing of the agreement.

Mr. Benn *indicated dissent.*

Mr. King: The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) keeps shaking his head in dissent. I do not know why he still cannot understand the point that I have made.

I have one more question of the right hon. Gentleman's to answer, but if I fail to answer anything else, he can rise and tell me. He asked whether, if there were any further proposals in respect of the Act, they would be discussed. The answer is yes, in the same way as they would be discussed with anybody else who had views to advance. We are more than ready to listen to views. I am amazed that any Opposition Member should think it outrageous that we should discuss provisions of this kind as widely as possible. As the right hon. Gentleman has stopped shaking his head, I trust that he feels that I have answered all his questions.

Mr. Benn: As the right hon. Gentleman failed to answer my first question, I will ask it again. Was there specific consultation with the Irish Government after the Anglo-Irish agreement? Secondly, in view of his statement now that consulting the Irish Government is just part of listening to everybody, will he say whether the new legislation in draft that he has promised to present to the House will be put on the agenda of the conference between the Irish and British Ministers? *[Interruption.]* Will it be put on the agenda for discussion with the Irish Government before the right hon. Gentleman brings the legislation to the House of Commons? Will he now answer those questions?

Mr. King: The answer is yes. I always respect the natural courtesy of the right hon. Gentleman and I do not want to embarrass him, but if I have to answer the question for a third time and if that helps to clear up any misunderstanding, then I will do so. The answer to his first question about whether the amendment order was discussed is no, because it was already made clear that it was announced in the House in June. I do not know if the right hon. Gentleman was here for that debate. I am sure that if he was not, it was for a perfectly understandable reason. It was announced to the House in June and therefore what we proposed to do was on the record. The Irish Government were subsequently informed. The orders were laid.

Bearing in mind his close attention to parliamentary matters, I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman knows the orders were laid before the Anglo-Irish agreement was even signed. I am sure the Irish Government were informed courteously of what was happening. I have great respect for the Irish Government and I guess they already knew these matters were before the House of Commons.

The right hon. Gentleman also asked if further matters of this kind would be discussed and could they be considered in the Anglo-Irish conference. The answer to that is yes, and I have said that absolutely categorically. The right hon. Gentleman may be under the impression that matters that come before the Anglo-Irish conference may be discussed there and that nobody else is allowed any insight into what is taking place. I have made it quite clear that on matters of this importance others can contribute as well.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): I have been listening with close attention to my right hon. Friend, as indeed have all hon. Members. Could he remind us, as it is not clear from the draft instrument now before the House, on what date it was laid before Parliament?

Mr. King: I believe it was early November, 11 November.

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. King: I have given way many times to hon. Members, and other hon. Members want to take part. The continuance order that is before the House reflects the view, my view, shared by Sir George Baker, that the Act contains provisions which are necessary in the fight against terrorism, to the eradication of which the Government remains totally committed. The powers must, regrettably for the reasons that I gave, be preserved for a further period. The House will see when we reach the amendment order that while we recognise and believe it is necessary to maintain the Act, we are determined to look carefully at it to see if we can find ways in which changes could be made, where possible, without putting at risk in any unacceptable way the lives and welfare of the people of Northern Ireland, and we are determined to wage as effectively as we can the battle fight against terrorism.

10.39 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): Twice a year the House debates an order in the terms of the order which is before us today. That has been happening for many years and those of us who took part in the earlier debates have developed a feeling of déjà vue. Time and again the Opposition have deployed their arguments and not only have the Government disagreed with us — we can understand that — but they have never engaged in the debate. They never offered any sign of comprehending what we were saying. Remembering how the Scots fought the battle of Bannockburn, I should like to try again, particularly as I shall be trying with a new Secretary of State; particularly because I sense that in some respects this debate is different; and particularly because the right hon. Gentleman has said this subject may be discussed at the Intergovernmental Conference. But I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I refrain from repeating at length all that I have said on previous occasions.

I appreciate that many demands are made upon the Secretary of State's time, but I wonder whether I may prevail upon him to read three contributions that I made to previous debates. It will enable me to spare the House a repetition of them. Let me at least give the references to him. On 5 July 1984 I traced the history of these debates from July 1980 when my hon. Friend the Member for Pontypridd (Mr. John) expressed from this Dispatch Box the Opposition's anxiety about this Act. On 20 December 1984, in the debate on the Baker report, I tried to set out in detail our concern about the Act and our reactions to the report. On 20 June 1985 I sought to indicate the issues to which the Government's approach to the Act had given rise.

Mine was not a lone voice. My hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) has pursued the theme more than once. Some of my right hon. and hon. Friends were saying it long before I was. But if I may be permitted an argument by reference, it will enable me to be the briefer tonight.

There is one proposition that I must repeat because, however often I say it, there are those who persist in misunderstanding our argument and who seem determined to misapprehend the issue. The issue is not whether we are opposed to lawlessness and violence, whether we have any sympathy with the men of violence, or whether we care about the victims of violence. I am happy to compare my record in denouncing lawlessness and violence in any context with the record of those who persist in misrepresenting us. I am rather less selective in my condemnation than they are. But that is not the issue. The issue is not whether we appreciate the difficulties of those who are charged with enforcing law and order. They have a thankless charge and they are entitled to ask that we should have their difficulties in mind when we debate these matters. We on these Benches share the horror of the Secretary of State at the loss of the life of a police officer last night.

The police in particular have been called on over the last few weeks to deal with situations not of their own making and they have responded with a degree of restraint and objectivity which deserves to be recognised. The Royal Ulster Constabulary, the Army, the Ulster Defence Regiment are none of them perfect. To suggest that they never fall below the standard of perfection would be as silly as to say that they are all part of some dishonest conspiracy, but it is no reflection upon them to insist that they cannot be better than the system they are called upon to administer.

There are two issues before the House. The first is whether there has been an erosion of civil liberties which may endanger those very values and that very way of life that our security policy purports to defend. When the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973, the first edition of the present Act, was being debated as a Bill everybody recognised that whatever the necessity for it may have been it was a wholly exceptional measure — as, indeed, the right hon. Gentleman reminded us tonight. It introduced a range of provisions which were wholly exceptional in character. That appreciation was reflected in the title of the Bill. These were emergency powers. It was reflected in the provision for review by the House at six-monthly intervals. It was reflected in the speech of the then Secretary of State, Lord Whitelaw, who said:

> "It is the Government's intention that none of the provisions of the Bill, if it is passed, should continue in force a moment longer than it is needed."—[*Official Report*, 17 April, 1973; Vol. 855, c. 278.]

It was reflected in the speech of the then Attorney-General, now Lord Rawlinson, who called it draconian.

That was more than 12 years ago. Since then it has become a standard, everyday part of prodecure, a part of everyday life in Northern Ireland. A whole generation of police officers and a whole generation of lawyers has matured with the emergency provisions Act as an accepted part of life. There are lawyers of 12 years' standing, quite senior practitioners, who have known nothing else in their professional lives.

Ms. Clare Short: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that there have been special powers ever since Ireland was partitioned and ever since that unhealthy state was created? There have been distortions of normal justice. There has not been a system of normal justice as we expect it in the rest of Britain. That is a sign and a representation of the political problems that underpin the partitioned state of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Archer: My hon. Friend is, of course, quite right. I seem to recollect that a South African Minister of Justice, commenting on the original emergency provisions Act, said that he would be prepared to forgo all the powers at his disposal for section 1 alone of that Act. There was a time, arising, I think, from Human Rights Year in 1968, when it looked as though there might be a hope of breaking away from all this. Yet, as my hon. Friend says, it remains a normal part of administration in Northern Ireland.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman entirely treat Sir George Baker's recommendations as nonsense? That is the gist of the speech that he is making at the moment. Sir George Baker, after the very distinguished inquiries that he made—I was one who appeared before him, and I dare say that the right hon. and learned Gentleman also appeared before him—came to a completely different conclusion. Does he utterly reject the Baker report?

Mr. Archer: It is true that I gave evidence to Sir George Baker, both in writing and orally. My complaint is that it is the Government who treat a substantial part of the Baker report as nonsense.

Mr. Gow *rose*——

Mr. Archer: If I may answer one question at a time, I will then happily give way to the hon. Gentleman.

One of the unfortunate aspects of Sir George's terms of reference was that he was required to accept that a measure of emergency legislation was necessary, so his terms of reference prescribed the conclusions which he was to reach.

Mr. Gow: I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman. He is a characteristically fair Member of the House. Is it not the case that the parent Act under which this draft statutory instrument is made was introduced into the House by the Labour Government of which his right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) and he were members? We are talking now about approving a statutory instrument which is being made under an Act of 1978.

Mr. Archer: If the hon. Gentleman means the second edition of the 1978 Act, that is true. I am coming to that. I fully recognise what happened in the past and I am not even suggesting that we were necessarily wrong at that time. If he will allow me to make my speech, I shall try to answer his point.

A whole generation of lawyers have passed their professional lives in Northern Ireland with this as a normal part of their background, and knowing nothing else. Worse, a whole generation of lay people have grown to adulthood who, when they think of policing and of the law, think of the powers that we are discussing today. We, heaven forgive us—it is obvious from tonight's debate—have become inured to it. It no longer seems exceptional. We no longer use the word "draconian"; and, of course, because in the Northern Ireland context it has a ring of familiarity we are less shocked when its spawn appears in Great Britain. This week we have seen in the Roskill report one more proposal for paring away the right to trial by jury, and it does not smite us with the impact that such a proposal would have made 12 years ago. Quite well-informed people say to me, "Well, they don't have a jury system in Northern Ireland, do they?" They are wrong; it is a total misapprehension, yet it is all part of a perception which has spread over a very long period but especially over the past 12 years.

The second issue before the House is whether the measures which have been adopted to maintain law and order and preserve security are counter-productive, and whether they make the task of the police and of the courts harder. Probably the greatest single factor in securing observance of the law is a recognition among local communities that the law is fair and that it protects them from injustice. The greatest deterrent for a potential lawbreaker is the disapproval of his peer group because it believes that the law should be observed. But wherever a young person is stopped by a police officer in circumstances where he believes he is being victimised, wherever a family sees one of its members charged with an offence on what it sees as unconvincing evidence, and detained in custody awaiting trial for a long period the whole bedrock of public confidence and support on which the law rests is undermined.

These are the issues which we urge on the Government time and time again, with no indication that we are getting through; and they are the issues which I seek again to place before the House tonight.

I will not rehearse our anxieties at length today. In the past we have discussed the admissibility of confession evidence under section 8(2) in circumstances where that evidence would not be admitted in any other part of the United Kingdom. We have discussed the fact that section 12 still provides the Secretary of State with the power to detain without trial, although it has not been used since 1975. We have discussed the power to arrest without warrant under section 11 which was clearly intended simply as a prelude to detention under section 12, which is no longer used. I note that today three American girls were arrested whose activities are said to consist of making a film about joy riding. It would not be right for me to say more because I know no more about the facts, but perhaps the Minister could tell us more about that tonight.

It is understandable that when an arrest is made it is perceived as referring back to the power in section 11, and that people ask why that power is needed when there are other powers in other legislation, and when section 11 was never intended for that purpose. We have discussed the delays in bringing cases to trial, and the restricted right to bail under the Act. Sir George Baker made representations about all those matters because he was troubled about the position.

We make no secret of the fact that we were disappointed by the Baker report and hoped to see more radical recommendations, but on those matters Sir George Baker expressed himself to be unhappy. His review was announced by the then Secretary of State on 30 June 1982. It was not until 5 April 1983 that Sir George Baker's appointment to undertake it was made known. He reported in March 1984, and here we are in 1986 with no idea when we may expect the legislation to implement the representations.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) asked a perfectly relevant question: what consultations had taken place or were expected to take place under the procedures in the new intergovernmental agreement? The debate is to be followed by the introduction of an order to amend the Act. I accept that that was announced before the intergovernmental agreement, and could not have been discussed under those procedures. We welcome that amendment as a fish in a desert welcomes a solitary raindrop, but it does not begin to dispose of our anxieties about the Act. It is not even a significant move towards implementing the report. If I say a word about it now, it will enable me to invite the Secretary of State to think about what is probably the central issue relating to the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978—the system of trial without jury. It will have the additional advantage of enabling me to keep my speech on the next debate brief.

[Mr. Archer]

On previous occasions I have tried to remind the House of the arguments which persuaded Lord Diplock to make the original recommendation. He thought that juries would be subject to intimidation, but accepted that he had no evidence to support that proposition. No member of the Diplock commission except Lord Diplock even felt it necessary to visit Northern Ireland, and his meetings there appear to have been restricted to members of the security forces on the ground. The argument advanced by the commission which dominated the debates on the Bill in 1973 was that prejudiced juries were likely to acquit people who should be convicted.

Ms. Clare Short: They were Unionists.

Mr. Archer: My hon. Friend has anticipated me. At that time, before the Juries (Northern Ireland) Order 1974, the property qualification ensured that juries were predominantly Unionist. So the problem was about Unionist juries acquitting Protestant paramilitaries. Those debates belong to a different world from that of today. The whole argument was openly and avowedly a means of increasing the conviction rate.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has not overlooked the fact that the conclusions of the Diplock commission were considered and upheld by the committee of Lord Gardiner, the former Labour Lord Chancellor, in 1975.

Mr. Archer: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I was coming to the events following the 1973 Act. I can appreciate the hon. Gentleman's desire to blacken the record of the Labour party, but I am quite prepared to put our record against his personal record.

I come now to the question that I have been asked. In 1973 we on these Benches said that we were not persuaded by those arguments. But, when the provision was on the statute book, it seemed sensible to see how it worked. For some years it did not appear to give rise to any serious anxieties. Perhaps that was precisely because it did not seem to be achieving its stated purpose of increasing the conviction rate.

More recently, three factors have emerged which have compelled us to look at it again. First, there has been a significant fall in the acquittal rate in Diplock trials. In 1973 it was 57 per cent. By 1979 it had fallen to 35 per cent. In 1981 it was 33 per cent. That was happening at a time when the acquittal rate in jury trials in Northern Ireland had increased. That was bound to raise the question whether judges were becoming case-hardened. That is not a criticism of the judiciary. It is a danger which they fully recognise themselves, and they expressed it to Sir George Baker. It is the very reason why we in the United Kingdom have for hundreds of years recognised the value of jury trials.

Secondly, it has become apparent that a system which is avowedly designed to deal with offences associated with terrorism was being used in cases which clearly had no connection with terrorism. Listing the offences which are sometimes committed for political reasons and providing that anyone accused of any of those offences should be tried under this procedure clearly casts the net too wide. We are all familiar with the study carried out by Mr. Dermott Walsh for the Cobden Trust which concluded that 40 per cent. of those convicted under the Diplock procedure had no connection with terrorism.

Thirdly, over the last few years there has emerged the phenomenon known as the supergrass. Again I will not repeat today what I have said on other occasions about the problems of supergrass trials, but they have inevitably been associated with the Diplock procedure, because it is the Diplock procedure which is in issue, and they have rendered it more urgent that we should look at it again.

Various proposals have been made as to what the Government might do. The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights suggested making a significant reduction in the number of scheduled offences and enlarging the powers of the Attorney-General to certify out, which is what is being proposed tonight. Sir George Baker recommended that the Attorney-General should have a much wider discretion to certify out. There have been proposals to replace the single judge with a panel of three judges, possibly one of them chosen from the Republic. One suggestion, which I confess I find attractive but which was rejected by the Secretary of State's predecessor last June, is the suggestion made by Sir George Baker in paragraph 151 for what has been called "contingent jury trial". He said:

> "It would be possible to provide for the judge, if he is satisfied that there has been any attempt to intimidate, harass or otherwise interfere with the jury, amounting to an interference with the course of justice, to discharge the jury and continue the trial himself or direct that it is to be heard by another judge sitting alone."

That would at least enable us to begin every trial with a jury. He went on to point out that such a provision might itself discourage attempts at intimidation.

There really is a need for the Government to address themselves to all this discussion and all these proposals. We ought to be told their thinking in much greater detail than we have been told it up to now, and perhaps we ought to have a further debate on the subject devoted specifically to the non-jury trials.

What the Government have done in the order which is to be discussed in the next debate is to propose a minor extension in the number of offences where the Attorney-General is to have a discretion to certify out. Clearly it is a move in the right direction, although it could not by itself begin to persuade us to support the renewal of the law in its present form. But the order misses the mark.

We are indebted to the National Council for Civil Liberties for information which illuminates that figure of 40 per cent.—the proportion of Diplock cases which, as Mr. Dermott Walsh found, had no connection with terrorism. The majority of them were connected with robbery involving real or imitation firearms. The offences are robbery, aggravated burglary and the possession of firearms while committing other offences.

To be technical, the offences which should have been in the order and are missing are offences under sections 8 and 10 of the Theft Act and articles 17, 18, 19 and 23 of the firearms order. If the Government had included those in the order, we should have been happier that they were making substantial inroads on these problems. These are the offences where frequently there is no connection with terrorism and so no justification for the fears which led to the passing of the Act. The new order fails to deal with those offences and they remain excluded from the Attorney-General's power to certify out.

That does not mean that the Opposition have any sympathy with armed robbery. All the offences which I listed are serious, but for that very reason it is important to ensure that people are not convicted of them unless they are found, to the community's satisfaction, to be guilty. We do not combat lawlessness from political or other motives by risking convicting the wrong people. Unless there is good reason to deny jury trial to people accused of such offences, they should have the same right to jury trial as anyone else accused elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

The provision for a six-monthly review of the Act was included so that the House could address itself to such matters from time to time and to review each of the provisions against the background of what is known at that time. It is an obligation which we have tried to take seriously. As the Secretary of State said, it might now be subject to discussions in the Intergovernmental Conference. But it is no safeguard unless the Government listen to what is said. They must at least engage in the debate. We have seen no sign that the Government are listening, and that compels us to divide the House.

11.3 pm

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): When the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) and I had an exchange about the Baker report, he said that Sir George was unhappy about the emergency powers in Northern Ireland. Everyone in the House is unhappy about the emergency powers and about anything which infringes human and civil rights. The greatest human right is the right to be alive.

Sir George was not circumscribed by his terms of reference when he came to his conclusions. He certainly was not circumscribed when he said in paragraph 32 of the report:

"I have become increasingly more convinced that any provisions of the EPA which may save even one life or bring one guilty terrorist to conviction and sentence should be retained until the paramilitary forces forswear terrorism unless there is a powerful convincing reason for repeal or amendment."

Sir George did not find any such convincing reason for repeal or amendment.

I find the Opposition's attitude not that of an alternative Government who might become responsible for the Government of Northern Ireland, or a responsible party. Their position is indefensible, save by excuse of ignorance of the brutal and bloody realities of life in troubled Ireland. I say Ireland because, as I ventured to remark during the Secretary of State's speech, there exist in Ireland not only Diplock courts, but the special criminal court.

There is a difference. The difference is that the special criminal court in the South is a court of three judges but no jury. It is frequently pointed out that the Diplock courts have no jury and are presided over by a single judge. There is a difficulty here. If it is desirable—I believe it is—to add to the single judge assessors of some kind, whether they be judges, resident magistrates or others, the difficulty is that there are none willing to come forward from the Northern Ireland Bar to accept the wish of the Lord Chancellor that they become judges. I understand that the reason is the peculiar risks to which judges are subjected in Northern Ireland. My hon. Friend referred to the murder of judges and magistrates, notably Catholic judges and magistrates, in the Province.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my hon. Friend agree that it is highly satisfactory that a Catholic has recently accepted nomination to this court? Is that not correct?

Sir John Biggs-Davison: It is correct, and I do not believe that it arises in any way from the Anglo-Irish agreement. I am delighted that this courageous person has come forward to take up that dangerous task. It is still difficult to find barristers who are willing to serve. It is the risk of murder and intimidation of judges and magistrates and jurors that made the Diplock courts regrettably necessary. I repeat regrettably necessary—and I warmly welcome the second order that we are to consider.

I spoke of the realities of life in troubled Ireland. In *The Times* of 4 January the first leading article said:

"the Hillsborough Agreement can only work if Dublin ministers at the intergovernmental conference can combine their role as representatives"—

I quarrel with this phrase, but I shall not go into that now—

"of the north's minority Catholic population with support for properly conducted security operations."

What the House and many in Northern Ireland are looking for are tangible results from the new arrangement with the Republic in terms of improved cross-border security.

Ms. Clare Short: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir John Biggs-Davison: This is a short debate and I want to give other hon. members a chance to speak. We have come a long way since 1962 when Mr. Sean Lemass so crushed and harried the IRA that, in the words of one of the historians of the Irish Republican Army, he destroyed

"the hopes of a generation".

The present Fine Gael Government in Dublin are weaker than that Fianna Fail Government. Even so, the present Taoiseach expressed the intention, as recorded in the communiqué — it is not in the agreement — after the Hillsborough meeting that the Government of the Irish Republic intended to adhere to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism.

I should like my hon. Friend the Minister to say whether any steps have been taken in that regard. We still need a change in the extradition law. Progress in that direction might be of comfort to the estranged majority and the frightened minority in Northern Ireland today.

11.9 pm

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): This is a regular process of renewal which the House has had many times. The difference is that this is the first time since the Anglo-Irish agreement. That is why I put some questions to the Secretary of State.

There was no specific consultation where everyone would have expected it. The Irish Government, for example, have expressed views on the super-grass trials. The Irish Government apparently gave no view on this order, which may be a subject of interest in Dublin. As for the future, there is no exclusive relationship in any way with the Irish Government. As the Secretary of State said, anyone can come in. The intergovernmental ministerial conference will, therefore, have no special role. Continuing the order—even with some amendments—is a continuation of the present policy.

I want to take these events to underline why the policy that the Government are following will fail. That policy was intended to do four wholly incompatible things. First,

[Mr. Tony Benn]

it was intended to de-fuse opposition in the Republic by involving its Ministers. Secondly, it was intended to isolate the Republicans in the North by making them look as though they alone stood out against the Anglo-Irish agreement. Thirdly, it was intended to reassure the Loyalists. Of course, they are not here, because they are busy campaigning against the policy anyway. *[Interruption.]* We do not know the outcome, but at least it is unlikely that they will return to the House without majorities, showing that opinion in Northern Ireland is not, despite their Loyalist protestations, as much in favour of United Kingdom parliamentary control as they claim. Fourthly, the Government's policy was intended to bring in the Common Market and the Americans with cash and endorsement — there were also defence overtones — by persuading them that it presented a real break.

With the agreement, the Government have tried to internationalise the status quo. The order proves this. No one could have doubled that after the Secretary of State, in his first speech after appointment, said that, as far as he was concerned, nothing would ever change. I suspect that there will be growing disillusionment with the agreement. The order will result in the first stage of that disillusionment among significant groups. Those who put their faith in the agreement will discover that what they have actually endorsed is an official Anglo-Irish licence for the continuation of partition and British repression in Northern Ireland, which will solve nothing.

The Anglo-Irish agreement made a fundamental change in the relationships between Britain and the North. The by-elections are occurring because some people have seen that, when one licenses a foreign Government to share responsibility with a part of the so-called United Kingdom, there is a fundamental change. There has been a fundamental change, but no solution to the problem.

The war will continue. The Diplock courts will continue. The super-grass trials will continue, despite the protests from Dublin. The strip searches and the plastic bullets will continue. This policy of the Secretary of State will fail, as all the others have failed. Reference has been made to the Labour Government. I could go back further, to when I was in the Cabinet in August 1969 and we sent the troops in. We were told that that would solve the problem. We were told that Sunningdale and direct rule would solve the problem. We were told that power sharing would solve the problem.

People will be suspicious of tonight's meticulous textual address by the Secretary of State because they have heard it all before. The Secretary of State may not like the change, but when it comes, the Government will be seen to have begun the process by recognising—although that does not entitle us to support the agreement which will fail like everything else—that the United Kingdom does not have an exclusive right to govern Northern Ireland.

In joining my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) and voting against the other, I think that those in the Republic and in the North who study this debate can draw a certain conclusion about it and perhaps even some comfort from it.

11.13 pm

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): It is a tragedy that the Labour party intends to divide the House on this statutory instrument. I warmly approve of the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and of the order.

This is a short debate, and I know that hon. Gentlemen want to participate——

Ms. Clare Short: What about me?

Mr. Gow: And hon. Ladies, too. I shall, therefore keep my remarks short.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State rightly said that it was the Government's policy to pursue the campaign against terrorism in Northern Ireland with unremitting vigour. My right hon. Friend also referred to the Anglo-Irish agreement of 15 November. It is of first importance, as my right hon. Friend acknowledges, that the promise of the increased co-operation between Her Majesty's Government and the Republic of Ireland should become a reality so that a more effective campaign may be waged by both Governments and the security forces of both Governments against terrorism throughout the island of Ireland.

I want to reinforce the question that was put to my right hon. Friend by my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison). Not, alas, in the treaty—I wish that it were in the treaty — but in the joint communiqué that was issued on 15 November the Prime Minister of the Republic gave notice of the intention of the Government of the Republic

"to accede"—

these are the exact words—

"as soon as possible to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism."

Ms. Clare Short: Is this in order?

Mr. Gow: It certainly is in order. I point out to the hon. Lady that my right hon. Friend referred in his speech to the benefits which he believed would flow from the agreement on co-operation.

The question that I want to put to my right hon. Friend or to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, if he is to reply, is what, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, was meant by the words "as soon as possible" when in the joint communiqué, the Taoiseach gave that undertaking about the accession of the Republic to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism? It would be of the greatest importance if "as soon as possible" really meant in the very near future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I say to hon. Members that the Front Bench would like to catch my eye at half past eleven.

11.16 pm

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Some of us have opposed the various pieces of legislation on the prevention of terrorism since their inception for the very reason that the Secretary of State, when he became Secretary of State, was fatuous enough to say that Northern Ireland would be there for ever. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) implied, if the border is there for ever this legislation will be in force for ever because it is the border that led to the legislation. We go through this melancholy six-monthly ritual. Some of us have never missed it throughout the years, unlike the Secretary of State who is new to it.

The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 is virtually unamended. The Government have no intention of amending it. It is draconian and unjust on a grand scale, and it solves nothing. It actually deepens and intensifies the crisis in Northern Ireland. There was a time when some of us got no help from the Labour Government. In the bi-partisan years, they were as bad as the Tories and we had to struggle against them as well. Now officially the Labour Front Bench is with us, although the vote has not increased very much.

When Sir George Baker made his report, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) said, he could not make a proper report. He began with a conclusion; it came from the terms of reference, which began as follows:

"Accepting that temporary emergency powers are necessary to combat sustained terrorist violence".

What could he do with that? All he could do was produce a draconian report on a draconian Act. I have heard people praising that report. I was appalled at it because it did not do anything to help.

The Government did not follow the ritual he went through. Out of 72 or 74 recommendations they paid slight attention to two, I think. When there are three judges instead of one, that merely means that there are three case-hardened types dealing with a case instead of one. If there are only 10 judges in Northern Ireland they must be case hardened. How could they be anything else? They would be inhuman if they were not. That is the reality. There is no justice in Northern Ireland to do with anything concerned with what is called terrorism.

Let us be quite clear about this — it means long periods of detention without charge, admission of involuntary confessions in court and uncorroborated evidence from supergrasses. A year ago I led a delegation to Northern Ireland, which it split into two halves. Half went to Long Kesh and the other to visit the women in South Armagh. We spoke to all 34 women, some of whom had been there for two years without trial. Can the Secretary of State tell me whether they have now been there for three years without trial? Is that the sort of justice that we are meting out in Northern Ireland? I want to know. That is the sort of behaviour that intensifies the conflict and makes people fight against a draconian regime.

The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I shall write to the hon. Gentleman in answer to his question. Perhaps he will answer my question. What does he mean by his assertion that there is no justice in a Northern Ireland court hearing a terrorist case? How does he equate that assertion with the fact that over the years, and certainly today, the rate of acquittal in Diplock courts is within 1 or 2 per cent. of the rate of acquittal in jury trials?

Mr. Flannery: The reality is that all sorts of people are not getting a proper trial because of the position in Northern Ireland. Can the hon. and learned Gentleman tell me how a convicted murderer, who has committed crimes of terrorism and already been convicted of perjury, can go into court — as one did recently, I think that it was Kirkpatrick — and denounce 27 people, without corroborated evidence, who were then gaoled for life? That is perhaps what the hon. and learned Gentleman calls justice, but I believe that many people, especially young men, are stirred to join the IRA when they see the travesty of justice in Northern Ireland.

The Solicitor-General: Does not the hon. Gentleman recognise that there is no difference between the law of admissibility of uncorroborated evidence of an accomplice in Northern Ireland and that in the law in England and Wales? If he does recognise that, perhaps he will acknowledge it.

Mr. Flannery: I say with respect to the hon. and learned Gentleman that he can enmesh me in a web of lawyer-like talk if he wishes, but the reality is that there is a lack of justice in Northern Ireland, as there always has been as long as there has been occupation of any part of Ireland. He can quote whatever he wants from the law books, but that is the reality.

The Act hovers like a rain cloud over the people of the minority Catholic community in Northern Ireland. It constantly has them in turmoil. It solves none of the problems that it was intended to solve. I shall cite two aspects, which I have mentioned already but which are worth repeating. First, on the question of detention without charge, I hope that the Secretary of State will tell me what has happened to the women in South Armagh. Are they still being dragged out—*[Interruption.]* Yes, it is true. We went over the track that they take after they have been strip searched once a week. We discovered that not all the strip searches were being recorded in the book. The Secretary of State may smile about these serious issues, but they are the issues with which we must deal.

This appalling Act should be taken off the statute book. It does nothing to solve the problems. Ireland under British occupation, especially Northern Ireland, has never been ruled without military control over the people and a total lack of democracy. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West mentioned property qualification, and it is only one aspect. There are many people on the Tory benches who I have watched smiling and laughing as those points have been put to them. There is no hope for Northern Ireland from those people. The only hope for peace in Northern Ireland is for the election of a Labour Government and the abolition of the border. There is no hope unless that happens.

11.25 pm

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): I should like to put a question to the Opposition spokesman, the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer). If he were the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, would he be recommending to the House tonight that we should reintroduce jury trials for all terrorist charges? Could he put that to the House in all seriousness? In my worst moments, I wake up at about 3 o'clock in the morning and dream that I am the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in an alliance Government. That will not happen, not because an alliance Government will not be in power next time, but because I shall not be there. I understand that the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West is saying from the Opposition Front Bench that he would do away with the Diplock courts and have a jury trial for all cases.

The reason why I support the renewal of the legislation is that I realise that it is early days in the life of the Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference. It has been in operation for only about six weeks, and I am prepared to recommend further patience to my colleagues in connection with the renewal of the order.

I welcome the statement by the Secretary of State about tabling new legislation in the life of this Parliament. That

[Mr. Stephen Ross]

should be taken on board. It is with great reluctance that we accept the impossibility at this time of providing a jury trial for terrorist offences. There is no foolproof method of safeguarding the anonimity of jurors and therefore avoiding intimidation. As I understand it, they have to give their names and addresses. If the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West can say that he will put those people's lives at risk, I cannot agree with him.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Is the hon. Gentleman telling us that the official position of the once great radical Liberal party is that in one part of the United Kingdom there should be a standard of so-called justice which is grossly inferior to the standards of justice that prevail elsewhere in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Ross: Of course I am not saying that. I remind the hon. Member of the judges who have lost their lives and been maimed trying to carry our justice in Northern Ireland. He may be prepared to put those lives at risk, but I am not.

Ms. Clare Short: Intern them.

Mr. Ross: No, I shall not intern them. Our joint report of July 1985 contained words to that effect and was accepted by both the Social Democratic party and the Liberal party at their assemblies this autumn.

I agree with much of what has been said by Opposition Members. We also think that it should be possible to deschedule cases where there is no apparent connection with serious terrorist offences. The accused should have the right to apply to the court to have his or her individual case descheduled, with the right to appeal to a higher court. The amendment seems to leave everything in the hands of the Attorney-General. I do not accept that.

I think that there should be jury trials unless a challenge is made. We would like to see a move to three judges. I should like to see Garret FitzGerald's suggestion followed up, so that we swap judges between the North and the South. I want to see the use of tape recorded interviews as evidence and a limit on the number of defendants in any one supergrass trial. That was a Baker recommendation. He recommended a maximum of 20, we recommend six.

Above all, new legislation should now be drafted, the provisions of which would be acceptable and applicable to both the North and the South. We regard that as an important step towards the harmonisation of British and Irish law and practice in the fight against terrorism.

I refer to the time spent on remand, which was referred to by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery). In 1983 the average time spent on remand was 322 days. That is outrageous, and we must move to the Scottish practice of 110 days as quickly as possible. Above all, a Bill of Rights is needed in the Province, but we must leave that issue to the more persuasive powers of Lord Scarman.

11.29 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): We welcome the presence of the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross), a Liberal Member. He asked my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) what a future Labour Government would do. He went on to make a series of recommendations on the legislation that we are debating. He even went so far as to say that entirely new legislation should be drafted. A future Labour Government would have no difficulty in pronouncing that they would move towards jury trials as quickly as they could in the context of the situation in Northern Ireland. We make no bones about that commitment.

The hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) fell into the same trap. He spent the first part of his speech criticising Labour policies, and the second part saying that there should be three judges in the Diplock courts, resident magistrates or assessors. Therefore, it is clear that there is an all-round agreement in the House that there is something wrong with this legislation, and that it should be looked at with care. That is what the Labour party is doing, and is therefore rendering the House of Commons and the people of Northern Ireland a service in opposing the legislation.

The hon. Member for Isle of Wight is joining the Tories in his acceptance of TINA—there is no alternative. He seems to be saying that in this, as in other legislation, nothing else can be done. Our party is the one being creative in this matter of Northern Ireland. We are looking seriously at the Diplock courts, and are constantly pushing and prodding the Government to move towards the Baker report. Tonight, two of the report's 72 recommendations are being implemented, and the Secretary of State has said, as did his predecessor in June, that there would be implementation of the Baker recommendations during the lifetime of this Parliament. That commitment was given as a result of the pressing and prodding of the Labour Opposition, and tonight's commitment was given as the result of the same pressure. The Labour party is the effective Opposition in the Chamber in the interests of the people of Northern Ireland and of justice.

We are grateful for the presence of the Solicitor-General. It must be a great relief to him to come to our debate after the other matters with which he has had to deal over the past few weeks.

Mr. Gow *rose*——

Mr. Bell: I have only three minutes to make my speech, so, with the utmost respect to the hon. Gentleman, I shall not give way.

We are grateful to the Solicitor-General because he has put into the context of the law the admissibility of evidence. We are saying that there is something wrong with a Diplock court with a single judge linked to a trial where one witness is able to give uncorroborated evidence. That is the great problem, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West said.

The situation has changed since 1973 because of the uncorroborated evidence of a single witness before a single judge, who has not only to establish what the law is, but to establish what the facts are. He must then do the work of 12 good men—and women—true, in place of the jury. A judge in a Diplock court does the work of 13 people.

For all the reasons that I have given, we feel an obligation to divide the House. The Under-Secretary said last year that the legislation was:

"in the interests of security, and indeed justice". —[*Official Report*, 20 December 1984; Vol. 70, c. 651.]

That is the curious dichotomy of this legislation. It is supposed to be used for justice, but it is used for security. That is where the ambivalence, the erosion of civil rights, the uneasiness of the people of Northern Ireland come in, and where there is an addition to the sense of alienation.

That is why this legislation is an obstacle to bringing the two communities together. We have no conscience about drawing the attention of the public of Northern Ireland and that of Great Britain to the curious inadequacies of the current legislation. The people of Northern Ireland put up with a system and administration of justice that we in Great Britain would not tolerate.

I was in a Diplock court during a supergrass trial when Mr. Kirkpatrick was the witness. I had the uncanny feeling that I was being cast back a century or so to the Chancery courts of old. There was a plethora of lawyers and security guards and dotted around the court were the accused, none of whom, as far as I could ascertain, could hear a word of what was being said. Although their future was at stake, they had to fall back to chattering among themselves while their relatives and families looked on haplessly behind bullet-proof glass, being unable to follow the proceedings.

It is not surprising that there are those of us who are aghast at the judgments that are reached and the verdicts that are entered in the Diplock courts. We have a sense of indignation that the current legislation remains on the statute book. I have no hesitation in commending my right hon. and hon. Friends to divide the House on the issue.

11.36 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Nicholas Scott): In the few minutes that remain of the debate, I wish to deal with a number of issues that have been raised.

First, I take up the opening remarks of the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer), who accused us of not being prepared to enter into an argument. I have about five minutes in which to reply and it will be difficult to address the arguments in depth, but I can assure him that successive Ministers—Secretaries of State and others bearing responsibility for Northern Ireland—have concerned themselves with the arguments and worried deeply about whether they had the balance right. They have had to move away from the practice of the law on this side of the water in the special circumstances of Northern Ireland, but only to the minimum degree that is necessary to ensure the life, the security and the safety of the general public within Northern Ireland. We have worried about it ourselves and have sought the best advice available to us to ensure that we have the balance right.

I shall refer to three matters that are raised by Sir George Baker in the opening part of his report. In paragraph 50, he stated:

"I am driven to the sad but inescapable conclusion that despite the undoubted improvement and optimism which I noted during last summer . . . there is little room for manoeuvre"

in amending the legislation. He went on to make a point that I wish had been taken up by one or two of those who have contributed to the debate. At the end of paragraph 50, he said:

"The remedy is squarely in the hands of those who say they are waging war. Let them forswear violence and respect the right to live."

If that were done, we would not need emergency provisions in Northern Ireland. Sir George concluded the opening part of his report in paragraph 51 by asking:

"'Is it reasonably foreseeable that repeal or amendment may deprive yet another man, woman or child of the right to life or to live free from fear?'"

That was the question to which he rightly addressed himself, and that was why he rightly concluded that there was little room for manoeuvre in amending the legislation.

I understand that there is a down side to the existence of the powers that are set out in the Act, and that there is an extent to which they are bound to be counter-productive. When an innocent person is arrested and released without charge, or when a person is stopped in the street and searched, it is possible—on this side of the water and elsewhere—for resentment to build up and a wish on the part of those concerned to distance themselves from involvement in the processes of the administration of justice and policing. That is a factor that must be taken into account. However, that must be balanced against having the present powers of the police and the security forces and a law that enables the courts to operate free from the intimidation that would, but for the Diplock courts, be a manifest part of the administration of justice in Northern Ireland. There must be that balance to ensure that the lives of the people of Northern Ireland are given the protection that they deserve.

I do not accept lightly the need for the current powers to continue in existence. In many ways, it is with regret that I have again to argue that the House should renew them for a further period. However, I must tell the House that, as one who has considered the issue carefully, I am convinced that we need the powers. As I told the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West when we debated these issues previously, if he were on the Government Front Bench he would learn very quickly that he, too, would need the powers.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) asked about the intention of the Government of the Republic of Ireland to accede to the convention on the suppression of terrorism. They have reiterated on several occasions their intention to do so as soon as possible. It has become apparent that they will need primary legislation in the Oireachtas to carry their accession to the convention into existence, and they are still investigating the timescale for doing that. They have reiterated their intention to do so it soon as possible.

The message tonight is that the Government are convinced that the fight against terrorism can be won without draconian security policies and without departing from the rule of law. But it will be necessary to provide the security forces for another six months with the powers that are included in this instrument.

We shall later deal with an amendment to the legislation. My right hon. Friend has reiterated our determination to introduce new legislation in the lifetime of this Parliament following many of the recommendations of Sir George Baker, and the House will welcome an opportunity in due course to discuss those issues. We are convinced——

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3 (Exempted business).*

The House divided: Ayes 116, Noes 62.

Division No. 40] **[11.40 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard	Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Amess, David	Blackburn, John
Arnold, Tom	Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Ashby, David	Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Aspinwall, Jack	Boscawen, Hon Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Bottomley, Peter
Batiste, Spencer	Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bellingham, Henry	Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*

Brinton, Tim
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Fenner, Mrs Peggy
Forth, Eric
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hancock, Michael
Hanley, Jeremy
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, J.
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral, W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David John
Maclennan, Robert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Moate, Roger
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Raffan, Keith
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Scott, Nicholas
Thurnham, Peter
Waddington, David
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Donald Thompson and
Mr. Tim Sainsbury.

NOES

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Barnett, Guy
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Crowther, Stan
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Godman, Dr Norman
Haynes, Frank
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Nellist, David
Parry, Robert
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Strang, Gavin
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. John McWilliam and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Continuance) (No. 3) Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 14th November, be approved.

Northern Ireland

11.52 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Nicholas Scott): I beg to move,

That the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 14th November, be approved.

The order we are considering tonight gives us an opportunity to amend schedule 4 to the Act on roughly the lines proposed by Sir George Baker, as this can be achieved by order under section 30 of the Act and does not require a Bill to introduce the amendment. The amendment order will in effect widen the discretion of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to certify in respect of particular cases that offences should not be treated as "scheduled" offences. This extends the range of offences which could potentially be tried before a jury and is intended to make it possible for more cases to be tried by jury in Northern Ireland. However, the Government share Sir George Baker's view that unfortunately the time has not yet arrived at which jury trial could be restored for all cases involving terrorist-type offences in Northern Ireland.

Nevertheless, I hope that the House will agree that this amending order marks a small step in the right direction and provides, I hope, an answer to those who question the sincerity of the Government's commitment to dismantle the apparatus of emergency legislation as soon as it is safe to do so. This is something to which we have long been committed and the order is a direct result of Sir George Baker's review, which was completed in 1984.

I am very conscious of the fact that the order may not go as far as many right hon. and hon. Members and the Government would like, but it goes as far as we can in the present circumstances. I hope, therefore, that everyone, both in this House and elsewhere, will recognise in this measure, limited though it must be, our readiness to match our actions to our understanding of the importance of building and maintaining public confidence in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland.

In essence, the order meets virtually the whole of Sir George's recommendations 12, 13 and 15, which were that kidnapping, false imprisonment, offences under the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and all scheduled offences which are triable summarily, or carry a maximum sentence of less than five years, should be capable of being certified out. The exceptions are those offences under the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and those scheduled offences which carry a low maximum penalty but are, in practice, only likely to be committed by persons associated with terrorists. In my view, it would be pointless to give the Attorney-General discretion to certify out such offences when he will almost certainly never be able to exercise that discretion.

The amending order does not extend the Attorney-General's discretion to cover robbery or aggravated burglary, as Sir George Baker had recommended, but it is worth emphasising to the House that this does not mean that all cases involving robbery or aggravated burglary will, in practice, be tried in a Diplock court, as under note 4 to schedule 4 such offences only come within the definition of scheduled offences "where it is charged that an explosive, firearm, imitation firearm or weapon of offence was used to commit the offence". In circumstances where such weapons are used, it is usually very difficult to tell whether the alleged offence was committed for domestic or terrorist purposes. If such offences were capable of being certified out, the Attorney-General's decision in particular cases might be perceived as an indication that one accused person had terrorist links while another did not. That could prejudice the outcome of certain trials and make my right hon. and learned Friend's decisions in such matters a matter of public debate. Where the decision cannot be clear-cut, I believe that it is better not to confer discretion and to leave the mode of trial to be determined on objective criteria by reference to the nature of the offence.

For completeness, I should record that the Government do not intend to accept Sir George Baker's recommendations 16 and 17. He had recommended that the power to certify out offences in particular cases be given to the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland. However, my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General believes that it would be right to reserve this important power to himself. He can then continue to be directly answerable to the House on the way in which he exercises that power.

Sir George Baker also recommended—and this is a particular point raised by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) in the last debate—that if a case had been certified out and was being heard by jury, and seemed likely to result in a wrongful verdict as a result of intimidation, harassment or whatever, the trial judge should have the power to discharge the jury and continue the trial alone or to direct that it be heard by another judge sitting alone. The Government disagree with this recommendation, because any such decision would risk bringing the courts into disrepute. Critics would argue that judges exercised such powers only where they disagreed with the likely outcome of a jury trial, and that it was a device for setting the judge's views on matters of fact above those of a jury. We believe that, where a jury is believed to have been intimidated, the correct course would be to abandon the trial and to order a retrial. It would then be for the Attorney-General to use his discretion to judge whether the offence should be certified out or not.

I believe that this amending order represents a modest step in the right direction, and I commend it to the House.

11.58 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): The House will be grateful to the Minister for that explanation.

As to the matter which he has just mentioned, the proposal of Sir George Baker for conditional jury trial, this is obviously not the occasion on which we should enter into a debate on it, but I hope that we can properly infer from what the Minister has said that the Government at least intend to introduce the amendment in the form in which he has just described it, so that we will then have an opportunity to discuss it.

The measure which the Government propose today is a very modest one, but it is a move in the right direction and, as far as it goes, we welcome it. I have already indicated the reason why we believe that it misses the essential point. For the record, I will try to say it again in one paragraph.

The whole justification which is suggested for non-jury trial is that it is designed to deal with offences connected with terrorism. We know that at present some 40 per cent.

[Mr. Peter Archer]

of those convicted under that procedure have no connection with terrorism. The schedule, as it is drawn, catches allegations of offences committed from motives which are in no way political. This order extends the discretion of the Attorney-General to certify out of the provisions some offences additional to those already in the schedule. We know that the large percentage of charges which are not connected with terrorism relate to robbery involving the use of real or immitation firearms. The order does not give the Attorney-General power to certify out the offences under the provisions that I listed in the previous debate. I do not find it easy to understand the Minister's reason for that. It seems to be that discretion is not to be given to Law Officers because their decision might be misunderstood. We may have an opportunity to discuss that at greater length on another occasion.

This is one further example of the frustration that arises from legislating for Northern Ireland by unamendable orders. This is essentially an order on which we would have liked to table amendments to include those provisions. Then we could have discussed them, and we would all have known where we were. We can only make that point and hope that in due course the Government will hear and respond to it.

We accept the order, modest as it is, as what we hope will be the beginning of more effective reforms.

12 midnight

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): I shall not speak at length, because the general views of Social Democrat and Liberal Members on the order were adumbrated during the previous debate by my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross). However, the view of the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) that it is possible to conduct criminal trials in Northern Ireland by jury seems completely unsustainable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. The hon. Gentleman will realise that we are discussing changes proposed to schedule 4 to the 1978 legislation. He must not speak to the last debate which was concluded.

Mr. Maclennan: The changes are being made to the 1978 Act, but they relate directly to jury trials and non-jury trials. It seemed that I could comment in passing on the general principle which the right hon. and learned Gentleman supported in his speech on this order. I do not seek to do more than that. I seek briefly and cogently to point out that the reason why we must stick to the Diplock trials and cannot move towards descheduling on a larger scale is that there is no guarantee of justice being done and jurors not being intimidated in the present position.

How do the Government view the difficulty of descheduling? It is not entirely clear from the nature of an offence whether it is associated with terrorism, for example a bank may be broken into to enrich the robber or to finance the IRA. It must be extremely difficult on the face of it to determine whether it is a terrorist offence which it would be appropriate to schedule, or whether it is not and appropriate for the Attorney-General to deschedule. It must be necessary for the Attorney-General to err on the side of assuming that offences capable of being terrorist offences are such.

Our anxieties about the continuance of the Diplock courts is to some extent alleviated by information which the Solicitor-General gave in tonight's debate and in the summer, in which he pointed out that the rates of conviction in Northern Ireland were not substantially greater for scheduled offences than for unscheduled offences where trials are conducted by juries.

Another point which has been overlooked is that, in trials of scheduled offences, certain additional rights are enjoyed by the accused, including the requirement that the judge give his reasons for his findings of fact as well as his sentence. Secondly, there is an automatic right of appeal against the judge's findings to the Court of Appeal which does not follow in the case of unscheduled offences.

These balancing factors, in my view, are reasons why it is right to move with caution towards descheduling. I hope that that view is shared by the Government. I think that the alliance would accept the reasons which were advanced by the Minister in opening the debate for not proceeding further or faster, and for rejecting those recommendations of Sir George Baker which he indicated the Government did not accept.

12.6 am

Mr. Ernie Roberts (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): I have a few observations only which I make because I understand that there is unlikly to be a Division at the end of the debate.

I am opposed to the so-called temporary seven-year old Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. Even with the amendments proposed, it will not comply with the European convention on human rights. Furthermore, it will still not compare with the level of justice which exists in this part of Britain. I am advised that the Government are proposing these amendments based on the fact that they were the sort of amendments recommended by the Baker review.

However, Baker also put forward some other important recommendations for the Government to put into effect to make the Act a little more just. Among those was that the power of internment should be totally removed from the statute book. It was also recommended that all arrests should be on the basis of reasonable suspicion and not just suspicion; the army's powers of arrest should be confined to terrorist-type offences, the initial onus for opposing bail should be on the prosecution, and bail should be automatic for anyone held on remand for more than 12 months without committal for trial. Furthermore, confessions obtained by violence or the threat of violence should be inadmissible in court. Baker recommended that a limit should be placed on the number of defendants in any one trial. I maintain that the amendments so suggested will not make the emergency powers legislation any more just than it is at present.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): This is the expurgated version of the speech that I might have made but for the lateness of the hour and courtesy to the House.

I welcome to our debate my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Mr. Roberts). I listened with interest to his brief remarks.

We waited with some eagerness to hear the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan). I had hoped to hear a definitive description of the alliance position which would have been of some assistance to the people of Northern Ireland. I regret that the message from

the hon. Gentleman is that the people of Northern Ireland have nothing to hope from the SDP/Liberal alliance other than half-baked, half-thought out, ill-advised and ill-conceived ideas. I am sure that that message will be clear.

The order extends the list of so-called scheduled offences in schedule 4 of the 1978 Act. They are not to be treated as scheduled offences unless the Attorney-General so certifies. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) said in his short but cogent speech, the order does not go far enough, but earlier the Secretary of State said that he would take into account the wider and more positive recommendations in the Baker report and that legislation would be introduced in this Parliament.

The Opposition do not intend to divide the House on this order.

12[illegible] am

Mr. Scott: With the leave of the House, may I say that we have covered briefly some interesting matters.

I must tell the hon. Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Mr. Roberts) that the order has to be seen against the background of the Government's declared intention further to implement the Baker recommendations by introducing legislation in this Parliament, as the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) recognised. We were conscious that this limited progress could be made through an amending order without primary legislation. We thought it right to demonstrate the Government's commitment and to respond to pressures by taking this modest step. The Government are determined to legislate further during this Parliament.

The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act is fully consistent with the European convention on human rights and the United Nations international covenant on civil and political rights. It is a distortion to imply that it is not.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) mentioned the distinction between different types of robbery. We have come to the conclusion that there is a difficulty in deciding, when firearms are used to rob a bank or post office, what the motive is—whether it is for paramilitary purposes or for private gain. To give the Attorney-General the power to decide whether it was a terrorist or domestic offence before the case comes to trial would prejudice the trial and we decided not to go down that road. But I have noted the hon. Gentleman's comments.

I am glad that the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) agrees that this order is a modest step in the right direction. I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985, which was laid before this House on 14th November, be approved.

Orders of the Day

CROWN AGENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 69 (Second Reading Committees), That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 42 (Committal of Bills).

Crown Agents (Amendment) Bill [Money]

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

12.14 am

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Timothy Raison): I beg to move,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Crown Agents (Amendment) Bill, it is expedient to authorise any remission of interest on the commencing capital debt of the Crown Agents for the period 1987-1991; and in this resolution "commencing capital debt" has the same meaning as in the Crown Agents Act 1979.

The money resolution is straightforward. It reflects the narrow and specific purpose of the Crown Agents (Amendment) Bill on which we had a full debate in Second Reading Committee last month. There is nothing of substance that I can add, and I commend the resolution to the House.

12.15 am

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): I do not want unduly to detain the House at this hour, but issues were raised in Committee concerning the special estates of the staff of the Crown Agents pensions division at East Kilbride. The Minister assured us that he would seek to settle the matter by the end of December. Has he done that? If he has not, why not, and when can we expect a decision? We are prepared to anticipate that we shall get a better decision by waiting, but the Minister will appreciate the great anxiety of staff about their future and we should like to know when there might be a decision.

Mr. Raison: With the leave of the House, I should like to reply. I am afraid that I have to tell the hon. Gentleman that the matter is still under consideration. We have not yet been able to make a decision and I cannot say what the likely outcome will be. I realise the need to get on with it. I also realise that there is interest in it in East Kilbride.

I am anxious that we should make a decision as soon as possible. It has proved quite a complex matter—there are several interests that have to be taken into account, including the interests of my Department that pensions work is most effectively done, the interests of the Crown Agents and the interests of those concerned. I assure the hon. Gentleman that we are keen to get the matter settled as soon as possible, and I shall do all that I can to that end.

Question put and agreed to.

Urban Deprivation (Liverpool)

Motion made, and Question proposed, that this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

12.15 am

Mr. Robert Parry (Liverpool, Riverside): I am pleased to have this opportunity to raise the subject of urban deprivation and housing problems in the inner-city areas of Liverpool.

In the debate initiated by the Opposition on a Supply Day on 11 December, I sat in the Chamber for more than five hours without being called. The debate covered the increasing poverty and deprivation in our inner-city areas and the Government's failure to deal with the serious pproblem of widespread disrepair in urban areas, the need to regenerate Britain's cities and the need to reverse the deliberate reduction of rate support grant and investment in housing which is leading to a major housing crisis and more homelessness among the more unfortunate members of our society.

I do not apologise for detaining the House so late, as I want to put on record my views and the problems facing my constituency and inner-city areas in Liverpool. According to figures supplied by the House of Commons Library, the estimated level of male unemployment in my constituency is 41 per cent. That is the highest in Great Britain, not just on the mainland. Of that number, 40 per cent. are under 25 and 61 per cent. have been unemployed for more than one year. Of the under-25s, 47 per cent. have been unemployed for more than 52 weeks. In areas such as Vauxhall, Everton and Toxteth, the true figure is well over 50 per cent.; more than one in every two people is on the dole and the scrap heap cannot be tolerated in any caring or civilised society or by any Government, including this most heartless and cruel one. The tragedy of long-term unemployment, especially among youth and white people is bad enough, but it is far more serious among black youth in Toxteth and other inner-city areas such as Handsworth, Brixton, Tottenham and Moss Side, which have witnessed horrific riots, violence and civil disturbances.

The Merseyside Manpower Services Commission has recently published a survey on ethnic minorities which shows that a disproportionate degree of unemployment is experienced by the black population of Liverpool and that, on average, black people need to be submitted for 25 vacancies before finding a job as compared to 15 for white people. I suggest that the figures are on the conservative side and can be multiplied throughout our urban areas. Mass long-term unemployment is, I believe, the major root cause of discontent in our inner-city areas.

I shall now consider the critical housing situation. I firmly believe that the right to life is the first basic human right but that the right to work and live in dignity with a roof over one's head follows closely behind. The right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin), when he was Secretary of State for the Environment, and the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), when he was the Minister for Housing and Construction, visited my constituency, at my request, and both publicly stated after the event that they saw some of the worst housing they had ever seen. In spite of seeing pre-war slum tenements and appalling tower blocks, like the infamous "Piggeries" and the "Ugly Sisters", their response was to cut further Liverpool's allocation for the housing investment programme. The cuts have averaged 15 per cent. each year since 1979. Last year, Liverpool bid for £132 million to deal with its critical housing problems but was given only a miserly £31 million.

Then there were the central Government's cuts and the dereliction of responsibility by the Liberal-Tory coalition on the city council: few houses were built for rent for nearly a decade, the maintenance and repair departments were deliberately run down with job losses and the repair backlog reached epidemic proportions — the elected Labour city council, on a mandate given to it by the Liverpool people in two successive elections, kept its promise. It embarked on a crash programme of demolition of the old pre-war slum tenements and rat-infested tower blocks, maintenance of jobs within the council and provision of services. For that initiative, the democratically elected councillors will later this month face a court threat. This action may banish them from public office and make them bankrupt and even face imprisonment.

I have always supported the city council. I salute its brave councillors, its men of honour. Most of the 17 priority areas which are designated to be built in Liverpool are in my constituency. This is the most imaginative house-building programme in Britain. Where there were old slums, there are new building programmes. People are moving out of the slums to semi-detached houses and bungalows. There is sheltered accommodation for the aged and disabled. People, sometimes for the first time in their lives, are in a house with a garden in the back and front. I know people who are grandparents and great-grandparents who moved out of Victorian dwellings into the pre-war tenements and have never had a house. For the first time, they have a house in the community with a garden at the back and front. They are very happy about this.

According to the official figures, Liverpool, Riverside has 19·5 per cent. owner-occupiers compared with 55·7 per cent. for Great Britain. Rented council accommodation in the area is 53 per cent. compared with 31 per cent. nationally. On overcrowding, 8·5 per cent. of households in Riverside have more than one person per room, which is nearly twice the national average of 4·3 per cent. This is the highest in the north west. The last census shows that 6·2 per cent. of households in Riverside lacked or shared the use of a bath, which is nearly twice the British average of 3·2 per cent.

I must declare an interest in that I am a sponsored member of the Transport and General Workers Union and a member of its construction branch. Liverpool, despite its house-building programme, still has a waiting list of more than 20,000 people. It has the highest unemployment level in the construction industry in the United Kingdom.

It is crazy that, in areas of mass unemployment in the building industry and where there is a dearth of good housing, we witness the Government robbing the city of badly needed resources and finance. The "Group of Eight" in the construction industry, of whom the national secretary of my trade union, Mr. George Henderson, is one, has lobbied the Prime Minister, without success. Recently, the chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities housing committee stated that it would need an injection of £19 billion just to keep the present housing stock in both the private and the public sector in a decent state of repair. In Liverpool alone, for every £1 spent on housing in 1979, when the Conservatives first came to

power, only 26p was spent in 1985. Since 1979, more than 450,000 jobs in the building industry have gone. None of those statements has been refuted by the Government.

Last January, I tabled an early-day motion on unemployment in the building industry, which was supported by 123 right hon. and hon. Members. The Motion called for a massive increase in public investment to build badly needed new homes, to construct new roads and improve existing roads, and to overhaul our decaying sewerage and water system. It also called for a programme of public works to be carried out as suggested by the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress, the National Federation of Building Trade Employers, the building trade trade unions, the National Home Improvement Council and others to get the 450,000 building workers back to work and to help the companies which supply materials, thus creating more jobs and putting more life into decaying inner city areas. Those areas are stinking ghettoes suffering much deprivation. Thousands of our citizens are homeless or are living in dirty, squalid conditions. The unemployed are living in misery and despair, without any hope for the future.

I wish to quote from a letter which I received from the National Home Improvement Council:

"The NHIC is deeply concerned regarding the depressed housing of Liverpool and believe that this is reflected in many other inner cities. It is time the Government made positive steps to encourage new initiatives before the crisis becomes a national disaster."

I agree totally with that.

To complete the picture, now that public transport is under attack by the Government and the metropolitan councils are being abolished services will be further affected in inner city areas. Official Government figures in the 1981 census showed that in Riverside, my constituency, 79·3 per cent. of all households had no car. That was a higher percentage than in any other constituency in England and Wales and the third highest in Great Britain. The United Kingdom average was 39·5 per cent.

When the Minister replies, I hope that he will not put on the old record which we have heard so many times in the past when we have raised the question of deprivation. The Government keep repeating talk about investment in Merseyside in the international garden festival, the Merseyside development corporation, the enterprise zone or the freeport. The garden festival was a success for nine short months. The 500 jobs that were created by it have gone unfortunately and those people are back on the dole. Very few new jobs have been created by the freeport or by the Merseyside development corporation which is looking after the Albert docks.

Recently the Government were warned about what is happening by the Church of England in its report "Faith in the City". The Church of England, which was once called the Conservative party at prayer, and the leaders of the Catholic Church, the Methodists and the Free Church have expressed deep concern, as have the League of Friends, the Quakers. They cannot all be wrong.

In a Quaker survey a newcomer to Liverpool, who was a former social worker, said:

"They're really friendly, really warm. They go out of their way to help. It's as if there's a war on and we're all in it."

An NSPCC official said:

"One of the most awful things about unemployment is the loss of the individual's self-esteem and value in society. Our materialistic society rates success in terms of the kind of job and size of salary that a person has, rather than on who people are and what they do for each other—their personality and caring.

We need to change how we value people. We need to recognise that we have bred a generation of young people who may never work—may never have the opportunity to attain success as we now measure it."

Even this uncaring, heartless Government cannot ignore a city's cry for help. I represent Toxteth and before redistribution I represented the Granby area in which there is most civil disturbance. I warned the Government before the 1981 riots that things would blow up, but I was ignored.

Unfortunately, in 1981 there were the worst civil disturbances on the British mainland in our history. In 1985 there were even more serious incidents in Birmingham and London. I warn the Government that if they ignore the problem they will be responsible for any further civil disturbances, not only in Liverpool but in other inner-city areas.

We are sitting on a volcano ready to erupt. The time bomb is ticking away. The answer lies with the Government, and I sincerely hope that they heed the warning.

12.30 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sir George Young): The hon. Member for Liverpool, Riverside (Mr. Parry) made a moving speech about the real problems that face his constituency in Liverpool. He is honest enough to acknowledge that the problems have not simply emerged over the past six years. They derive from the long-term economic decline of Liverpool, which has brought with it high unemployment and associated problems of physical dereliction, poor housing stock and a high proportion of disadvantaged groups.

The problems in Liverpool have built up over the past 25 years. It has been subjected to massive economic changes over that period, and it has lost about 30 per cent. of its population. Many of those who have left have been young people with skills. Changes in the national economy since the war have also led to the rundown of the port of Liverpool and the port-related activities. That, in its wake, has brought substantial losses in manufacturing capacity.

The hon. Gentleman would be wrong to suggest that there had been a massive reduction in Government spending on Merseyside. Since 1979-80, Government expenditure in that area has risen from £718 million to £1,041 million — an increase of 45 per cent. The Government are spending a great deal of money on the city of Liverpool. A massive £28 million was allocated through the urban aid programme alone last year. The initiatives have included the creation of a new maritime museum, a revamp for Lime street station, improvements to the city centre sites and buildings and access routes related to the international garden festival.

We are doing what we can with derelict land in Merseyside. We spent £6 million on derelict land grant, and there was a major land reclamation exercise costing £6·5 million to create the Wavertree technology park. Some £12 million has been spent on housing and historic buildings. The Anglican cathedral precinct is the most significant initiative under that heading, but we are also upgrading housing in Princes boulevard, preserving the

[Sir George Young]

18th and 19th century houses in Canning street and helping the Weller street and Brownlow hill co-operatives provide homes.

The hon. Gentleman spent some time discussing housing and homelessness. There are a large number of vacant dwellings in Liverpool—2,178 in 1984, which is 3·35 per cent. of the housing stock. It is essential to bring back into use existing dwellings that are unoccupied, before we indulge in a major new house building for rent programme.

Mr. Parry: Is the Minister referring to houses awaiting demolition? A number of pre-war tenements are boarded up and cannot be used for housing.

Sir George Young: Those are the figures given to us by Liverpool city council, and they are vacant dwellings in its area. Any district council will have some houses that are empty because tenants are changing or the properties are awaiting refurbishment, but the percentage in Liverpool is 3·35. That is relatively high. In Birmingham it is 2·15 per cent. and in Gateshead it is 2·59 per cent. The first point that I want to make on housing is that, before the city council engages in a fairly expensive programme of new buildings for rent, it should realise that it is cheaper and quicker to bring back into use some of the dwellings that are unoccupied.

The hon. Gentleman spent much time on housing, I would not dispute the proposition that Liverpool's housing problems are among the worst in the country. The reasons for housing decay and the appalling problems of some of the post-war housing are well known. It is common ground between us that much money will have to be spent to give the people of Liverpool the opportunity to live in decent houses. The Government's view is that we must get the best value out of every pound of public money spent.

The Government believe that the response should not be rooted in the replacement of unpopular municipal stock. The aim should be to find the most cost-effective approach which provides housing choice and uses all available resources, including the private sector and the resourcefulness of local communities. The city council's reliance on a physical solution underplays the social problems on estates and ignores the desirability of giving people responsibility for their own homes. The municipal solution to which the council is committed is very expensive and rides roughshod over people's aspirations to own a home of their choice or to be involved in the management of their own housing.

There are many examples of improved council estates in other Merseyside authorities which have not relied on municipal action. Through the Merseyside task force, initiatives have been set in hand covering more than 10,000 dwellings. Housing choice has been widened through the privatisation of estates in Wirral and Sefton.

Through a package of urban programme and MSC funds, improvements to rundown estates are being secured by tenants themselves on community refurbishment schemes. Twelve such schemes are now under way, covering 6,500 dwellings.

The private sector is taking part in an initiative to develop sites which would not normally have attracted private funds, as a result of which over 800 new homes are being provided. However the sad fact is that none of those initiatives are taking place in Liverpool. They are taking place elsewhere in Merseyside. The opportunities for making more rapid progress in tackling the problems raised by the hon. Gentleman have been sacrificed by the city council on the altar of dogma.

The need to develop a varied and innovative approach to the problems was emphasised when my Department's urban housing renewal unit visited Liverpool in October. The unit explored the scope for involving the private sector in renewing the city's rundown estates. Both the task force and the unit have encouraged the city to decentralise its key management functions to a local level to improve services for the tenants. I hope that Liverpool will respond positively to these initiatives. They are not inspired out of political dogma, but have at their heart a commitment to improve the difficult conditions in which many tenants find themselves living in Liverpool.

The hon. Gentleman was critical of the Government's response to the issue that he has raised. I think that there is a feeling between us that much needs to be done to regenerate Liverpool. Government expenditure on Merseyside is running at about £1 billion a year, but we can see from the problems associated with post-war housing that committing resources is not by itself enough. Measures have to be taken to rebuild confidence as well as bringing about physical improvements. The Government are tackling the deep-seated economic and industrial problems of Liverpool on many fronts. The Department of Trade and Industry's grants and expenditure towards industrial investment in the area exceed £50 million in 1985-86. Since May 1979 Liverpool has received over £155 million in regional aid.

A concerted effort has been made, through MSC programmes, to improve the skill levels of the community, with some £78 million being spent in that area in 1985-86. Overall there has been an increase in adult training opportunities in Merseyside from 3,500 in 1984-85 to about 11,000 in 1985-86. Urban programme resources have been used in conjunction with MSC programmes to set up training projects. The designation of the Merseyside development area, the Speke enterprise zone and the freeport in Bootle have also improved the climate for investment in Merseyside. That joint approach is vital if real progress is to be made.

The hon. Gentleman was somewhat dismissive of the Merseyside Development Corporation, which we established in 1981. It has a remit to regenerate some 900 acres of massively derelict and disused docklands at the heart of the Merseyside conurbation. We have made good progress, and substantial reclamation and infrastructure programmes are under way. They already include notable successes such as the international garden festival and the restoration of the Albert dock, which will include the Tate of the North from 1988. In the current year, the MDC has resources of some £30 million.

The hon. Gentleman was again somewhat dismissive of the garden festival. It was the first ever garden festival to be held in this country. It attracted over 3·3 million visitors in the six months that it was open during 1984. It represented a major boost to the reclamation programme in the area and a stimulus to the Merseyside economy. The corporation has moved on to restoring the Albert dock warehouses — an outstanding group of grade 1 listed buildings in the Liverpool south docks. A joint restoration project with the Arrowcroft Group is now under way to provide commercial and residential accommodation. Two major blocks of development opened in August 1984,

including the highly successful Maritime museum. A further block opened in July 1985, and a further development, to open in 1988, will include the Tate of the North gallery.

Other substantial projects include the restoration of the water system to the south docks, and the British American Tobacco project to convert disused dock sheds into small industrial units.

The MDC has adopted a tourism and leisure strategy for the Liverpool waterfront which builds on the success of the international garden festival, Albert dock and Martime museum. For the dock system between Albert dock and Toxteth dock a "shopping list" of key projects has been identified from which a successful mix of schemes will be drawn. These will include national tourist attractions as well as local and regional sports and leisure facilities.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the need for central Government to play their part in stimulating investment. The Merseyside task force has been active in promoting development projects and bringing together different agencies. Particular emphasis has been placed on interdepartmental co-operation and esablishing good links with the private sector, including the secondment of staff on specific initiatives. The main job of the task force is to work with local authorities, Government agencies such as English Estates, and with the private sector to carry forward initiatives and projects which help regenerate the area. There are considerable achievements to the credit of the task force.

A number of vacant sites have been brought back into use through the efforts of the task force — the most important being the Anglican cathedral precinct site. Others are the former Exchange station, which has been redeveloped for offices, the Wavertree technology park, where 64 acres of derelict land are being transformed into a centre for high technology industry. Public parks at Everton and Speke are being created out of derelict and neglected land. The Government have also co-operated with the private sector in land reclamation—examples of such schemes are Minster court, Kingsway loop and Mathew street.

The Government have been doing what they can, and it is legitimate to question the approach of the city council. The municipal approach of Liverpool city council has not been helpful in the regeneration process. It has largely ignored the potential of the private and voluntary sectors and has been patently wasteful of resources. It has helped to camouflage financial inefficiency. The council's housing strategy is almost entirely oriented towards municipalisation. It has embarked on an extensive new building programme, but has consistently refused to support self-help initiatives such as co-operatives, shared ownership schemes and building for sale.

Mr. Parry *rose——*

Sir George Young: With respect to the hon. Gentleman, I must finish my speech, so I shall not give way.

The city council has been at best indifferent and at worst hostile to the private sector and has withdrawn much of the support and encouragement given by the previous council. It has disbanded the Liverpool development agency, whose job it was to assist existing businesses and encourage new investment.

The council has failed to make use of Government money, provided through the urban programme, to assist firms. It has abandoned the industrial improvement areas set up by the previous Administration. It has made next to no use of urban development grants from my Department, which are specifically designed to enable investments to go ahead which would not otherwise be viable.

It has refused to co-operate with major Government-led initiatives to improve Liverpool's image and generate new activity, including the international garden festival and the Speke enterprise zone.

Mr. Parry: Will the Minister give way?

Sir George Young: No. With respect, the hon. Gentleman took 15 minutes to present his case and I have only half a minute left of my 15 minutes.

The council has tried to undermine and take over the traditionally strong voluntary section in Liverpool by refusing to support new voluntary sector proposals, and it has attempted to municipalise existing activities.

That is a formidable catalogue of missed opportunities by the city council. I know from my own experience as chairman of the London partnership committees, which are run by Left-wing Labour councils, that it is possible to work with the Government to tackle problems of urban regeneration. There is still the possibility of a consensus on the need to encourage business, create jobs and promote self-help. All too often, Liverpool has slammed the door on this type of co-operation. I very much hope that the hon. Member for Riverside will use what influence he has with the city council to persuade it to change its posture for the better in the coming year.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at fifteen minutes to One o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 17 January 1986

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

Breast Cancer

9.34 am

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask leave to present to the House a petition concerning breast cancer. The petition has been organised by the National Association of Ladies' Circles of Great Britain and Ireland. It is appropriate that it is being presented today, because the association will celebrate its 50th anniversary tomorrow. It has been signed by 12,855 women in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and it includes names from every one of the association's 55 areas. I pay tribute to the work of the association's secretary, Mrs. Daphne Fowler, who organised the petition.

The petition concerns an extremely serious matter, as 20,000 women a year are diagnosed as suffering from breast cancer. The condition leads to the death of about 12,000 women a year. A similar petition was presented 12 years ago, and since then over 140,000 women are estimated to have died from the condition. If earlier diagnosis were possible, many of these tragic deaths could be avoided. The petitioners believe—I agree with them whole-heartedly — that there is a desperate need to remedy the deficiencies in the system of dealing with this problem.

The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House urge the government to promote further research into the early diagnosis of breast cancer and stress the need for a screening programme to be more readily available.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

BILL PRESENTED

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. Secretary Fowler, supported by Secretary Sir Keith Joseph, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Secretary Edwards, Mr. Secretary Baker, Mr. Kenneth Clarke, Mr. Peter Brooke, Mr. Tony Newton and Mr. John Major, presented a Bill to make provision in relation to personal pension schemes, to amend the law relating to social security, occupational pension schemes and the provision of refreshments for school pupils, to empower the Secretary of State to pay the travelling expenses of certain persons, and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Monday 20 January and to be printed. [Bill 59.]

Orders of the Day

Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

9.37 am

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I am extremely grateful and profoundly privileged to have the opportunity to present the Bill on behalf of my sponsors. I acknowledge the tremendous assistance that I have been given by right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House. I especially thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) and his all-party disablement group for endorsing the Bill and showing that they feel that it represents a priority when set against the problems that face us.

I accept that the coverage for this important event should, perhaps, be as distinct as that of other events—for example, the meeting that is taking place in the Royal Albert hall today. The implications of the Bill will perhaps have an influence on many more people than those whose causes are being debated at the Royal Albert hall. I regret that the interests of the disabled—of ordinary people—have not as yet captured the imagination of the media in a way that I consider to be important and which might be helpful to the progress of the Bill.

This is the first full debate on disability in the House for some time. If the Bill is enacted in due course, I hope that it will prove to be as major an advance as the Disabled Persons Act 1981, a measure which was piloted through the House by the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, which was introduced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris).

The Bill is firmly based on what has now become known internationally as the "Alf Morris Act". I pay tribute, as I think hon. Members would wish me to do, to my right hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe for his unstinting work for the disabled — [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]—as a Back Bencher, as a Minister, and, for the time being, as an Opposition spokesperson.

I want to quote from the significant speech that my right hon. Friend made on 5 December 1969 in his Second Reading debate. He said something then which matches the test of time:

"if we could bequeath one precious gift to posterity, I would choose a society in which there is genuine compassion for the very sick and the disabled; where understanding is unostentatious and sincere . . . where, if years cannot be added to the lives of the chronically sick, at least life can be added to their years". —[*Official Report*, 5 December 1969; Vol. 792, c. 1863.]

If I can emulate that today in only a minor way, I am delighted to echo those sentiments.

I hope that the Bill will add to the "Alf Morris Act" and to the principles of the International Year of Disabled People — principles which show that we should be searching and seeking for full participation and equality for disabled people and giving those words genuine and true meaning.

Seen in its proper context, the Bill will give increasing recognition to the rights of disabled people to have a full say in decisions which concern them. It recognises that

[Mr. Tom Clarke]

decisions are usually taken for, not with, disabled people; that disabled people have rights as well as needs; that disabled people are uniquely qualified to contribute to determining their needs; and that disabled people represent an untapped resource for society, offering great potential not just for their own individual achievement but for the enrichment of the whole of society.

I have received many letters from organisations, individuals and families from all over the United Kingdom. I know that other hon. Members have had that experience as well. At this stage I would simply like to quote a letter which I received from a parent of a mentally handicapped person in Lanarkshire who said:

"My son now aged 22 years suffers from cerebral palsy and is both mentally and physically handicapped. As parents we have always treated him as an equal to his three younger sisters. Therefore, he is very much part of our household, giving us the love and affection that only a son like he can give. They have a stabilising effect in a household that only persons with these disabilities can have."

I quote that to show the affection and genuine commitment in every sense to disabled people and in the knowledge that it is reciprocated in a way that all of us accept and welcome.

The people covered by the Bill are clearly defined and I want to repeat the definition because there have been some misunderstandings elsewhere. The definition is clearly stated as :

"Any person to whom section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948 applies"—

namely, people who are blind, deaf or dumb, substantially disabled by illness, injury or congenital deformity, or who are suffering from mental handicap or mental illness.

The Bill is intended to cover England, Wales and Scotland. In my recent travels in many parts of the United Kingdom, from Manchester to Edinburgh to Glasgow, some doubt has arisen on that point. When I visited the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mr. Craigen) that point was raised and I hope that I assured those who were present that Scotland has in no sense been forgotten. Incidentially, I saw the excellent Maryhill central halls and the splendid work of voluntary organisations and individuals.

Mr. Jim Craigen (Glasgow, Maryhill): I am grateful for that. I know that my hon. Friend's visit was much appreciated, but did he find, as I have in the recent past, that while there is more scope for and call on the time of voluntary bodies they are now even more strapped for cash than ever because of the cuts in Government backing?

Mr. Clarke: I am sure that my hon. Friend makes a valid point. I am equally sure that not only will that be pursued in the course of the debate but in the many other debates when we come to argue about the priorities that we attach to these important matters.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the problems just referred to could equally well be solved if the Government would heed the campaign led by my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) on VAT and charities?

Mr. Clarke: I am sure that the House will take on board the hon. Gentleman's comments. I am delighted to take interventions, but, if there are too many, some other legislation that might have been considered may not be reached.

My hon. Friend the Member for Maryhill referred to the voluntary organisations and that point is important. But I wish to develop my remarks to embrace the dedication — I use that word after great thought — of local authorities and health authorities in the way in which they deal with these important matters. I hope that they will accept that the Bill is an attempt to improve the situation of millions of disabled people and that that can indeed, be done, especially with the co-operation and commitment of such bodies, which have themselves a great deal to gain from improved administration, co-ordination, co-operation and efficiency. Therefore, I look forward to even more support than perhaps has been expressed so far by the various local authorities and people involved in health administration.

There will be improvements indirectly for the disabled, for example, over the right to be consulted on the planning of services. But perhaps more importantly there will be direct requirements that will be of assistance to the disabled among three special priority groups — young persons leaving special education, people leaving mental handicap or psychiatric hospitals and people whose carers can no longer cope.

I recognise that the timetable for considering the Bill is inevitably short, but I have endeavoured already to implement the basic thrust of the Bill's approach by seeking to consult as widely as possible, not just by way of correspondence—there has, as I have said, been a lot of that, and welcome it is too — but in meeting organisations representing disabled people and organisations of disabled people and listening carefully to what they have to say.

I want to acknowledge the assistance that I have had from the three Ministers on the Front Bench today—the Minister for Health, the right hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Mr. Hayhoe), the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay), and the Minister for Social Security, the hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton). The right hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth and the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute will expect me, and rightly, to thank them for their contributions. Older hands in these matters have advised me that at the various ministerial meetings that took place, formal and informal, I should remember that in meeting two Ministers I should be ready to face Mr. Nice and Mr. Nasty. My problem, without wishing to make any comment on the attributes of both Ministers, is to decide which of those labels applies to which Minister. I think that the compromise is to distribute them fairly between both and to tell them that I shall suspend judgment until I see their performance in Committee.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Who took the notes at the meeting?

Mr. Clarke: We shall come to that later.

Whatever our differences, we have all-party support and support throughout Britain for this measure. That must be an important consideration for us all, whatever our personal views. There comes a point when we cannot simply ignore public opinion or the views of those who deal daily with these problems. There needs to be continued consultation.

I understand from the Secretary of State that amendments will be submitted in due course, and I hope that they will strengthen the Bill. I accept that the Bill is

a framework for progress. If the Government table amendments, I think that the British people will clearly say, "Do not weaken this legislation, for which we have been waiting for many long years. Give strength and conviction to it." I think that the Secretary of State would be well advised to do what they say.

The Bill's main principles are clearly determined by its short title. The Bill is about the services to and for disabled people which they receive individually or collectively. It is about consultation — the right of individuals to be consulted about services to them and the right of organisations of disabled people to be consulted about general services. The Bill is about representation — principally the right of disabled people to appoint a representative to speak for them. Above all, it is about crisis prevention. There will be a duty on local authorities to intervene before, rather than after, a crisis arises for the three key groups—children needing special education, people leaving mental handicap or psychiatric hospitals and people whose parents can no longer cope.

It might be for the convenience of the House if I refer briefly to each clause to explain my position and that of the Bill's sponsors. Clause 1 deals with the right to be represented. It builds on the successful advocacy schemes which are already in operation. It converts a concession into a right. This measure is of special concern to the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill. I draw the attention of Ministers to the 1980 DHSS review of mental handicap services, which specifically said:

"The most important factor in safeguarding the position of vulnerable patients and ensuring that their rights are upheld is personal contact between the patient and someone whose job it is to explain the position from the patient's point of view".

Clause 2, on assessments, will extend existing good practice. Information will be made available in booklet form. The right of disabled persons to present their views will be acknowledged. A written record of decisions will be made available to the disabled person or his representative.

Clauses 3 to 7 concern the move from crisis management to crisis prevention among the three groups I have identified. Clause 3 especially deals with young persons needing full-time education. Of all the clauses in the Bill, clause 3 is the one on which I have received outstanding support. I hope that, whatever the amendments that appear in due course, the Government will bear in mind that many organisations throughout the United Kingdom support this measure and believe that it is long overdue.

Often people leave school and fall into a trap not of their making. This frequently imposes a great strain on aging parents trying to cope full-time with a difficult domestic situation. With clause 3 we want to ensure that the social services departments and, in Scotland, the social work departments, are asked to act as the one door to all services. I know a young widow in my constituency with three children. Her son, who is approaching 19, is profoundly mentally handicapped. He is having difficulty in coping with plans for the future. Much more help should be available in such circumstances. I hope that the clause will strengthen the position of that young woman who has coped magnificently, and similar families.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that people who are considering adopting handicapped children are especially concerned about cases such as the one he mentioned and what is to happen to such a child when he reaches 19? Will there be sufficient care, and will there be sufficient help for the carers?

Mr. Clarke: I am delighted that the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), with his knowledge and experience of these matters, has made that point.

The main thrust of clause 4 concerns discharge from hospital. Individuals and public bodies have made many representations to me on this. On 4 December, an interesting debate on the mentally ill occurred in the other place. Time and again, speakers of all political complexions and of none pointed out that many mentally handicapped people—I accept that the debate was about the mentally ill — are finding themselves in prison because the courts have decided that there is nowhere else to send them. That is all the more reason why we should look closely at these matters.

I have not plucked the 28-day provision out of thin air. The Mental Health Act Commission in its biennial report stated:

"Discharge of a patient should be regarded as a process, rather than an event—a process of stages leading up to the event of physical discharge. Sudden discharge should be a thing of the past."

The Bill's sponsors and I have borne that recommendation in mind in making this provision.

There is appalling evidence of the lack of co-ordination on these matters, leading to a great deal of hardship and mental anguish for the people who are least able to cope. They are discharged from mental hospitals and no assessment of their needs is made. If no such assessment is made, it becomes more difficult to make adequate provision for them.

I know that we shall, in due course, have a debate on resources, but this is an opportunity to avoid wasteful expenditure, caused when patients go in and out of hospital like yo-yos, and to assess and deal properly with long-term needs.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists in a letter to me has said that it

"is very concerned that run-down of mental hospitals is already occurring up and down the country without adequate alternative provision being made by Local Authorities. In many areas there are no plans to accommodate vulnerable and dependent patients following their discharge into the community after many years in hospital."

I am sure that the House would wish to bear those points in mind.

Mr. Canavan: I support my hon. Friend's comments. Does he agree that the health authorities should not be allowed simply to pass the buck to the social work departments, bearing in mind the severe financial constraints that all local authorities are suffering because of Government policy? Does my hon. Friend agree that the National Health Service should have a continuing dominant role in the provision of community care for patients discharged from mental hospitals? Does my hon. Friend agree that the NHS and local authorities need much more generous funding from the Government if community care is to be a success? This is needed instead of community care on the cheap, which would mean that patients suffering mental handicap or mental illness would be wandering the streets, as happens in some countries such as the United States?

Mr. Clarke: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. I hope that in due course the House can address itself to that serious problem.

Clause 5 deals with carers. This country owes an immense debt to carers, who do first-class work. They could never be paid for their dedication all round the clock, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. The least we can do for carers is to offer them the right, when they feel that they can no longer cope, to a fresh assessment of their own position. I hope by that assessment to encourage local authorities to make reasonable provision for respite leave in recognition of the tremendous work that carers and often parents are doing.

I have had numerous representations on that point. One theme that shines through letter after letter in respect of carers is the question from elderly carers or from those worried about elderly carers, as to what will happen to the handicapped child after the parent can no longer cope or, perhaps, has gone. I hope that the clause, if it is endorsed by the House, will give reassurance to some extent about that important point.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): That clause is one of the most important in my hon. Friend's Bill. Does he agree that one element of support that can be given to carers, which provides immense relief, is that of a break from caring—the provision of a holiday relief for such people each year?

Mr. Clarke: My hon. Friend has made an extremely good point. The assessment that we wish to see would mean that much more attention is paid to the important matter that he mentions.

Clauses 6 and 7 are an extension of the Education Act 1981, but no new statutory duties are involved. The procedures are based on existing best practice and on good administration which, I hope, saves time and money and emphasises the need for the full involvement of the disabled persons in decision making.

Clause 9 deals with advice to disabled people. It is a minor extension of the desire and the request for local authorities to provide information. I am sure that the House will be reassured by the knowledge that provision has been in force in Northern Ireland since 1978.

Clause 10 deals with public bodies. We ask that people appointed to committees should represent the views of disabled people. Times are changing. In the overwhelming majority of cases, disabled people can articulate their own views. When appointments are made to public bodies, I hope that that point will be borne in mind and that when the Bill becomes an Act it will give statutory backing to that principle.

Clause 11 deals with the role of this House. When my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) intervened, he reminded me that this clause, if approved in due course, will ensure that this Parliament will have information about people in mentally handicapped and psychiatric hospitals, and, what is even more important, it would know what happens to them after they are discharged. Although I am not asking for something like "War and Peace" to be presented to the House every second week, I believe that it is right that the House should know the global position. It would therefore be better informed when we have debates on this subject and about the resources which have been mentioned.

That would avoid the nonsense—worse than that: the unacceptable practice—of people being discharged from mental hospitals into community care which, hon. Members on both sides of the House know, in many cases does not exist.

Clause 12 deals with planning. I pay tribute to the Ministers involved for the measures that they have already introduced in respect of building regulations and access to buildings. The clause extends those principles to development plans. There is a need for disabled people to be involved at an early stage if provisions are to be right and money, again, is not to be wasted.

I have received representations from Scotland where a strong view is held that the principles contained in the clause might be adapted to meet Scottish needs. That matter will be raised as the Bill is debated.

Clause 13 is regarded by many people as controversial. I hope that in due course that will not prove to be the case. It relates to co-operation in planning services in Scotland. We are behind England and Wales, where health authorities are required to set up joint consultative committees and to include representatives on them from the voluntary sector.

The clause does not establish new bodies, but requires co-operation on joint planning, consultation with voluntary organisations and the need to publish joint plans. I know that the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland who has responsibility for health is aware of the many views that exist on that issue. It is right to remind him that of all the clauses this is the one which received most tepid response—if I can put it that way—in Scotland. As I understand he does, I look forward to the discussions that we will have in Committee. I hope that we can give profound consideration to that clause and perhaps find ourselves able to reflect what is, I believe, the overwhelming view of the people of Scotland—that the planning of these matters should not be left to a few people on health boards but that the consumers should have a meaningful say in how these matters are being dealt with.

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): My hon. Friend is talking about Scotland. I wish him well in his endeavours, but I hope that he will learn from the many mistakes that, unfortunately, we have made in England, especially in local government, where often social services departments do not liaise with housing departments. There is utter confusion. I hope that he will bear that point in mind and try to avoid the pitfalls that we experience week by week with many of our authorities.

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making that point. I welcome what he said. I am sure that the Minister responsible for Scottish health matters was listening even more carefully and will find that such a comment will encourage him to take a view different from the one that he has so far.

Clause 14 deals with financial provisions in respect of the Bill. I recognise that there are not just limitations, but profound limitations, on a Member seeking to introduce a measure of this kind. I thank the Minister for Health, because I understand that he intends to introduce a money resolution.

I have been involved with local government, so may I make the request and express the hope that the Minister will also put money into the rate support grant settlement for any initial extra cost? Then, when the Bill is enacted, we can debate the resources which might be required.

If we have genuine consultation and co-ordination, accept that there are people who know much more about

these matters than we do, and if we take that expression of opinion into account and have a genuine democratic input into the decision-making process, I believe that money will be saved. I must admit, however, that that is not the Bill's major intention.

Clause 15 deals with phasing. It gives to local authorities, public bodies and others the right to express their views as to when each section of the Bill should be applied, in consultation with the appropriate Minister.

As the Bill makes its way through the House, a great deal of public interest will be expressed. I believe the support which is already known to exist among hon. Members will grow and will influence our deliberations. I am delighted that organisations such as the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Association of Scottish Local Health Councils, Care in the Community—the Scottish working group—the Association of Directors of Social Work in Scotland and numerous voluntary organisations and individuals throughout the country have expressed their support for the principles of the Bill. I am delighted that we are reflecting the opinions of people who have done so much for the disabled and with the disabled and, above all, the disabled themselves. Disabled people within our society represent enormous potential for themselves, for the community, for their environment and for the nation. That is something that the Bill seeks to acknowledge.

Over 10 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a declaration on the rights of disabled people and called for national and international action to ensure that it would be used as a common base and frame of reference for the protection of those rights. The declaration said:

"Disabled persons have the inherent right to respect for their human dignity. Disabled persons, whatever the origin, nature and seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities have the same fundamental rights as their fellow citizens of the same age which implies, first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life as normal and full as possible."

I believe that the Bill represents a small step in that direction. Given imagination and positive support, I believe that it represents a major beacon which, in time, the rest of the world may wish to copy.

10.12 am

Mr. John Hannam (Exeter): I apologise for the fact that I have a bad cold, so I will keep my comments brief. I am an extremely enthusiastic supporter of the Bill and am proud to be one of its sponsors. I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) for his choice of legislation and the way in which he has presented it to the House. He was fortunate to draw such a high place in the ballot but the disabled in Britain are more fortunate in having such a good champion of their interests.

I was not so lucky in the ballot. I drew number 19, but I am endeavouring to secure a second Reading for my Corneal Tissue Bill which will help with the increased provision of eye transplants. I am celebrating today because I have just received a letter from my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security stating that the Government are able to give full support to that Bill. Therefore, I hope and trust that it will start its passage later today.

This Bill is a very good one. As the hon. Member for Monklands, West has stated, it has received little publicity in the press as it is not an eye-catching Bill. It is not as eye-catching as some of the other matters that are taking place in London today. However, it is important for disabled people and has been strongly supported at local level. Its effect will be to pull together much legislation and Government policy concerned with the provision of services for disabled people.

The Bill will make all the difference to the quality of decision making and the provision of services affecting disabled people. It is built out of years of experience of the provisions of such services. It picks out aspects of good practice and puts them into legislation. It does not put any additional duties on local authorities to incur extra expenditure. In some ways, as the hon. Member for Monklands, West stressed, it will streamline much of the bureaucracy involved in assessing the needs of a disabled person. I warmly welcome the Bill and I hope that it receives its second reading today.

The Bill is about better assessment procedures and the involvement of the disabled person and his or her representative in that assessment. I should like to highlight a few areas which I believe are particularly important.

Clause 3 is of particular interest to me. It deals with young handicapped people leaving school. The Education Act 1981—on the Bill for which I served—has done much to improve education for disabled children although there is still much to be done. However, for many reasons the Bill did not cover young people moving out of the school system at the age of 16 or 19. That has meant, as we have found through many of our constituency cases, that many children, having received appropriate education and care, are suddenly faced with an array of bodies all of which are reluctant to take responsibility for their needs. That has led to a waste of good resources and practices established during that person's school years.

The Bill builds on many of the practices established under the Education Act 1981, under which the local education authority has a duty to assess a child with special educational needs and to produce a statement of special educational needs. That should take into account the views of the parents and should outline the education authority's view of the needs of the child and how it intends to meet those needs. The Bill provides that the education authority responsible for a child or young person should inform the social services department, at least a year before the person is going to cease to receive full-time education. Not later than three months before that person's education is due to cease, the local education authority will inform the social services department of what further education or training is appropriate for the young person or child. The social services department will then make an assessment of that person's needs within the three months.

I believe that that will bring many advantages without incurring any additional cost. The local education authority already has assessments of the person involved and the social services should, under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, be making an assessment of the person. It will mean that the local authority is aware of a person's needs before he or she requires their services. It will ensure improved communication between the local education authority and the social services department which is most desirable in the provision of good community care. It will help to ensure that resources are targeted where they are needed, when they are needed. Local authorities frequently have to spend more at a later stage because of a failure to identify needs in time. It will

[Mr. John Hannam]

encourage forward planning of services and, most important of all, the assessment will involve the young person and his or her representative.

That process must seem like good common sense to most people, but it is not carried out in many authorities. Some do carry out such procedures, but the Bill will ensure that such good practice is universal across the country.

Clause 10 highlights the central principle of the Bill, which is that the needs of disabled people are most efficiently and effectively met if the disabled people themselves are involved in the planning and decision making. It builds on sections 9 to 15 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. That Act provided that a number of specific committees should include at least one person with experience of the needs of disabled people. To a large extent that has been achieved. We have all seen great progress in our constituencies in the involvement of disabled people on various committees. However, it has often led to a token disabled representative being nominated to a committee who is not truely accountable to disabled people. Clause 10 will ensure that such appointments are made only after consultation with the organisation of disabled people. I believe that that is important.

Clause 12 builds on existing practice on access for disabled people. We have made considerable progress in that area in the past few years. In 1985, regulations came into force that will ensure that all new offices and shops and one-storey buildings provide access facilities for disabled people. That is to be extended to cover all new buildings. We hope that it will also be extended to include alterations and extensions. It has now been established that access for disabled people is a genuine planning issue. That took many years to achieve. It was a long battle, but an important result was achieved.

The Bill amends the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. It will ensure that the local planning authority takes into account the needs of disabled people when it reviews or examines matters affecting the development of the area, that it also includes in its local structure plans measures to improve access to the environment for people with disabilities, and that disabled people are provided with adequate information and opportunities to make representations on those matters.

Once again, the Bill is doing no more than building into legislation what is already carried out in some local authorities as a matter of course, and has proved to be good practice. For example, one such matter on which local authorities should be consulting disabled people is pedestrianisation, which is taking place in many of our towns and cities. The Access Committee for England has been particularly concerned about some pedestrianisation schemes failing to take into account the needs of disabled people. What tends to happen is that, when an area is turned over to pedestrians, disabled people lose the facility to park outside the shops in which they wish to shop. It is factors such as that which planners must look at before finalising new schemes.

It is on such matters and on the whole issue of community care that improvements can be made without the local authority incurring any additional costs. Time and again, we hear of decisions being taken that have not accounted for the needs of disabled people, and of bureaucracy ploughing on and not stopping to think about the implications of a particular decision on disabled people. The local authority then has to pick up the pieces; in the meantime, considerable frustration has been caused to disabled people.

Like other hon. Members here today, and as the hon. Member for Monklands, West said, I have received letters of support from a wide range of local and national organisations, for example from the Devon Association for the Blind, which says that everything in the Bill adds up to good housekeeping. I received a letter from the Spastics Society drawing attention to the fears and worries facing elderly parents about the future of their disabled sons and daughters after their death.

I should like to quote from a letter that I received yesterday from the chairman of the Exeter and District branch of the Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults. It is a wonderful MENCAP branch of which I have the honour to be president. The chairman, Mr. Randall, expresses concern in his letter about the number of mentally handicapped people coming out into the community without proper assessment and preparation of facilities. He writes that in Exeter and District, where we have a good relationship between the health authority and the local community,

> "Occupation in leisure hours, evenings and weekends is at a premium. There are three clubs operating each on one night a week—they are overloaded already and are invaluable to the community and to the authorities who depend so heavily upon their existence, yet they receive no financial help from those authorities."

Therefore, we must make sure that there is proper co-ordination between our various statutory authorities—between the health and social services departments, and the education and leisure committees. Clause 4 will help immeasurably in achieving that end.

Disabled people and their carers will at last be brought within a working framework, which began in 1970 with the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act. Since then we in the all-party disablement group have helped to secure much progress. We are proud to help to secure the Second Reading of this excellent Bill.

10.24 am

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): It is now virtually an annual custom for the House to debate one or more private Members' Bills on the problems and needs of Britains's 5·5 million disabled people and their families. Yet it is not by any means an old custom. In fact, before the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, there were entire Parliaments in which the claims of disabled people were never debated at all.

It seems outrageous, even incredible now, but in the Parliaments of 1959-64 there was not one debate on disability in the House of Commons. Going further back, there was not a single mention between 1945 and 1959, in the manifestos of either of the main political parties, of anything that might be done specifically to help people with disabilities.

In congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on his choice of Bill, I also most warmly thank him for so strongly maintaining the important new custom of this House. At the same time, I recall with gratitude today the generosity, among many others over recent years, of the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) and of my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing), who

unhesitatingly used their good fortune in the ballot for private Members' Bills to advance the claims of disabled people.

The new custom of which I speak owes much to the work of the all-party disablement group in the House and, in particular, to the untiring endeavours of my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) and the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam), as its officers. It was the all-party disablement group, in its early stages, which made my task much easier than it would otherwise have been in securing the enactment of my Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Bill in 1970. The group's officers helped to build a unity of purpose in the House which, against very daunting odds, vouchsafed the Bill's enactment. In the entirely new climate which the measure created, spending on services and benefits for chronically sick and disabled people rose in the Act's first decade and, under successive Governments, from £330 million in 1971-72 to £3,030 million in 1981-82. That, too, in no small part, was the all-party disablement group's achievement.

Mr. Alexander Eadie (Midlothian): My right hon. Friend has given a chronology of the events. I hope that he remembers the legislation that I introduced, the Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act 1974. It was readily taken up by the present Lord Gray of Contin and it made a tremendous difference to the mentally handicapped, as it meant that children in Scotland were no longer deemed ineducable.

Mr. Morris: I well recall my hon. Friend's important initiative in 1974. There are many other Bills that pressure of time makes it difficult for me to mention today. I am grateful also, of course, to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), among others, for the very important Disabled Persons Act 1981. May I just say, too, that it will be wrong for me to give way to right hon. and hon. Members this morning, as much as I would like to. This is because I know that the Minister is under pressure of time. I naturally want him to have full opportunity to reply to the debate.

In referring to the influence of the all-party disablement group in all that has been achieved for chronically sick and disabled people, I must also briefly mention the untimely recent death of the right hon. Sir Neil Marten. He was a distinguished member of the group over many years and was of enormous help throughout the proceedings on the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act. He was fearless, incredibly industrious and a strongly principled man of the highest integrity. I mourn his passing, as I feel sure will the House as a whole.

My hon. Friend's Bill aims to ensure fuller and more humane implementation of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act in the conditions of today. It is a private Member's Bill eminently worthy of the name. Many such Bills are, in fact, Government Bills masquerading as private Members' Bills. They are sponsored by hon. Members who win high places in the ballot for a reward of the whole range of help available to Ministers in promoting legislation. Not only their Bills, but often their speeches, are wholly drafted for them. They are briefed by civil servants on every aspect and detail of the legislation and its effect, and, among other favours, are guaranteed not just the benevolence but the practical assistance of the Government Whip's Office. That was not the primrose path chosen by my hon. Friend. He has opted for the hard and hazardous road of presenting a private Member's Bill properly so-called and richly deserves the reward today of achieving a unanimous Second Reading for his Bill.

My hon. Friend opened the debate with a speech that was at once well-informed, persuasive and characteristically sincere. He was strong on issues of principle and flexible about the means of giving them effect. The content and manner of his speech will have won him support on both sides of the House and, from this Opposition Front Bench, I pledge our full support for the aims of this Bill.

There will be many technical and drafting points to consider in Committee and all of us know that the Bill will not solve all of the problems to which it is addressed. Yet it provides a new framework for progress and we, on this side of the House, will play our full part in detailed discussions on the Bill upstairs. The only real issue today is whether the Bill should go to Committee and we have no doubt whatever that it should so proceed.

Over the years since 1970, millions of people with disabilities have been helped by the provisions of the 1970 Act, but the emphasis in many localities has too often been on what the providers thought best, with little if any attempt to consult disabled people or their representatives. The single most important aim of my hon. Friend's Bill is to give disabled people a much bigger say in the making of decisions that crucially affect their own lives. It asserts the right of disabled people to an active involvement in the assessment of their needs and is strongly endorsed by their organisations.

There can be few hon. or right hon. Members who have not been moved by the extent of the support for this Bill among the voluntary organisations that work to make life better for disabled people. The Bill's recognition of the importance of assessing the needs of carers is very widely welcomed in the voluntary sector, as is the call for an annual review of community care plans for children and adults in long-stay mental handicap and psychiatric hospitals. It is a Bill about trying to bring representation into rehabilitation which can do much, given the support it merits, both to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and to ease the strain on families.

The Bill is wholly consistent with some of the major aims of the world charter for disabled people, the international drafting committee of which I had the honour to chair as the first ever Minister with responsibility for the disabled, and which the Prime Minister "warmly welcomed" on behalf of the British Government at 10 Downing street on 11 November 1981. That alone entitles the Bill to the Minister's approval and I hope that, when he speaks today, he will do so in full support of its provisions—indeed that he will pledge himself to help in strengthening the Bill, wherever possible, when we come to discuss it in more detail in Committee.

When this Government came to power, they promised to single out disabled people for special help. Yet all of us know, on both sides of the House, from our mailbags, as from our meetings with disabled people, that they complain today of being singled out for special hardship. They insist, with total justification, that they have been pushed to the back of the longest and most heartbreaking queues in Britain, those for jobs and homes, and of being the victims of some of this Government's unkindest cuts of all. I was given last week, by Peter Large of the

[Mr. Morris]

Disablement Income Group, who is held in the highest respect in all parties, a list of 12 very damaging actions by the Government against disabled people since they came to power. It is an indictment as formidable as it is authoritative.

The disabled and their families suffer disproportionately from cuts in social spending. Special housing provision for the disabled has slumped disastrously since 1979, while housing adaptations have also been much more difficult to secure. For many, the tragic cost has been to lose their independence and their reaction is often one of anger when people in authority talk piously of community care. If anyone doubts the seriously adverse effects for disabled people of the sustained assault on local government spending over recent years, let them look at the published statistics of help made available under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act since the Government came to power.

This debate gives the Minister an opportunity to make some amends. I hope that he will put to shame the Ministers who responded for the Government to the important Bills of the right hon. Member for Western Isles and of my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, West Derby, both of which were defeated by procedural manoeuvring of the shabbiest kind. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will also take the opportunity that this debate provides to deal as conclusively as he can with questions of current concern which, if unanswered today, are bound to recur in Committee.

First of all, there is the question of charging for home helps. It is the Government's policy, confirmed by one DHSS Minister after another, that local authorities should not charge people who are provided with home helps, under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, if they are in receipt of supplementary benefit. Yet many such people are still charged for their home helps. Take the case of the London borough of Barnet, whose policies affect the Prime Minister's own constituents in Finchley. That local authority still imposes home help charges on disabled people in receipt of supplementary benefit—including disabled constituents of the right hon. Lady—and I approached her about it on 1 December last to see whether she could help to have the policy urgently reviewed. I told her of the very deep concern, among organisations of disabled people, that the Government's policy is being flouted in the Prime Minister's own constituency and at the expense of the most needful of her electors. Seven weeks later I have still not had her reply.

The rationale of excluding people on supplementary benefit from home help charges is, of course, that very often the only alternative to helping them to live at home is to admit them to hospitals or other institutions at far greater cost to the taxpayer and/or ratepayer than the cost of providing a home help. That is why it is against their interests and is self-defeating to charge disabled people for their home helps if they are on supplementary benefit. I hope that the Minister will now strongly reprove Barnet and the other authorities which still force disabled people into making the choice of paying for their home helps or economising on food and warmth. It is a grossly reprehensible policy that amounts to kicking people when they are down. I implore the Minister to speak out against it loud and clear today, since it makes no sense whatever to threaten the independence of people who, if they are forced into institutional care, involve central and/or local government in far more public expenditure than the cost of help in the home.

Home helps are unquestionably one of the most cost-efficient of all sources of assistance to disabled people. Yet in most localities there are now fewer home helps than the DHSS's own recommended minimum of 12 per 1,000 of the population. The Liberal-controlled Isle of Wight provides less than one quarter of the Government's minimum. With one exception, all of the councils at the top of the league are Labour-controlled or built up their home help service during a recent period of Labour control. All of the councils at the bottom of the league, with the exception of the Isle of Wight, are Conservative-controlled.

Newcastle upon Tyne has 16·25 home helps per 1,000 of the population, compared with Barnet's 3·96; and Lewisham has 15·25, compared with Surrey's 3·47. Ironically, the reward for the caring councils is to be branded by the Government as overspenders and they are financially penalised for refusing to cut the provision they make. How can that possibly be justified by Ministers who profess a commitment to community care?

The Minister will know, from his colleague the Minister with responsibility for the disabled, of the concern expressed to the Government by organisations of disabled people about the effect on the most caring local authorities of the Government's proposals for changing the social security system. In particular, there is concern about their ability to cope, even with their legal responsibilities to disabled people, if the present system of single payments for exceptional needs is abolished.

Many voluntary organisations see the Government's proposal to replace these payments by a cash-limited social fund as a step towards passing the "final safety net responsibility" for claimants in urgent need from the DHSS to local authorities. At a time when brutal cuts in the Government's rate support grant already involve agonising choices for councils, that is a deeply worrying prospect. In fact, as described in the White Paper, the social fund is akin to sealing the valve on a pressure cooker while keeping the heat going. Sooner or later, as compelling needs are no longer met, there will be an explosion. The social fund is, as Action for Benefits has said:

"a disaster waiting to happen that will have grave social consequences."

In the week before the Christmas recess, on 17 December, the Minister with responsibility for the disabled met the all-party disablement group to discuss the Government's proposals in the White Paper. He was told in detail of the anxieties of the organisations of and for disabled people. The Spastics Society had commented on the proposals in a paper headed

"Programme for Disaster for Disabled People",

while the Disability Alliance described them as:

"pernicious proposals which will hit the poorest and most vulnerable groups in society."

Is there any likelihood that the arguments put to the Minister with responsibility for the disabled on 17 December will soften the Government's proposals as they affect disabled people?

I raised with the Minister with responsibility for the disabled the case of Jennifer, a severely disabled person who is also housebound and incontinent. The Government's proposals will, in the Spastic Society's

view, create for her "a major crisis". Jennifer also has renal failure and is treated by dialysis. She now receives £23·30 in additional allowances as follows: heating addition—she is housebound—£5·45; diet addition for her renal failure, £10·65; laundry addition because of her incontinence, £1·80; bath addition because of her incontinence, £3·90; and special wear and tear on clothing, £1·50.

According to the White Paper's illustrative figures the disabled person's premium is to be pitched at £12·25, or only half of what Jennifer and other severely disabled people like her now receive. If she is put under pressure in that way, there may be no alternative to institutional care, and the whole purpose of my hon. Friend's Bill will be shamefully subverted. It is a matter of some urgency, therefore, for the Minister to say whether the criticisms we raised with the Minister with responsibility for the disabled before the recess have had any effect on the Government's thinking.

Ministers are never slow to pay tribute to carers. As the number of very elderly people in the population goes on rising, the extent to which we depend as a community on the unpaid labour of their friends and relatives also increases. As the cared for grow older, so do the carers, which is why clause 5 of my hon. Friend's Bill is so essential. If the carer breaks down, either physically or emotionally, the state has two disabled people to look after instead of one.

Over recent years we have seen how failure to provide adequate community care involves higher costs for the community in the long run. I refer to the sharp upsurge in supplementary benefit payments to support people in private residential homes. The early intervention that the Bill proposes will, in the view of many experts, actually save resources. The Government must in this debate clarify their social security policy for carers. I appreciate the Minister's problem, and that his hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland may respond later in the debate where he himself cannot do so.

Are the Government willing to face further humiliation in the European Court over extending invalid care allowance to married and co-habiting women? Again, how can they possibly justify cutting the supplementary benefit entitlement of carers in their White Paper proposals? Today carers may receive the long-term rate of supplementary benefit after a year, but in the White Paper they are treated in the same way as an unemployed person. I ask the Minister to comment on that when he replies, and must remind him that it is just not good enough for the Government to ask us to await the results of their prevalence study of people with disabilities, which will not be available for several years.

By definition of the word "family", if one member is disabled the whole family will probably be involved in the problems of disability. That is why it is the merest mistake to think that the problems of disability affect only the 5·5 million disabled people in Britain today. As I argued when commending my own legislation to the House, the mother of a disabled child is affected, like the child of a disabled mother. With millions more they, too, are involved in the problems of disability, and the involvement of family is nowhere stronger than it is in the case of disability caused by mental illness. When mental illness strikes, as in the case of schizophrenia, the family as a whole can be devastated by its consequences, and it is the beginning of wisdom in any discussion about disability to realise that very often one can only help the disabled person in the context of family.

I most warmly congratulate *The Times* and, in particular, Marjorie Wallace on her superb series of articles on schizophrenia, for which she richly deserves a major journalistic award. In a powerful leading article on 19 December, *The Times* put some very important questions to the Government, which deserve the Minister's attention today. I ask him to respond, in his speech, both to that leader and the eloquent message of the articles by Marjorie Wallace. I hope also that he will acknowledge the relevance of the Bill to many of the issues that were raised.

In its leader of 19 December, *The Times* said:

"The policy of making care in the community available is the right one. It is the execution which is proving weak."

it sought a closing of the gap, as my hon. Friend's Bill does, between precept and practice and, under the very apt heading

"Ease a Tragedy, Stop a Scandal"

it challenged the Government to recognise both the urgency and compelling importance of ensuring that people with schizophrenia, like other victims of mental illness, receive the right help, in the right place at the right time. It was worthy of the attention of everyone in positions of responsibility for the mentally ill.

Through lack of clear ministerial guidance, many needful families have been unaware that the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act applies, where appropriate, as much to the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped as to people with physical and sensory disabilities. As the Minister will know, under section 28 of the Act the Secretary of State, where it appears to him to be necessary or expedient to do so for the proper operation of any provision of the Act:

"may by regulations made by statutory instrument, . . . make provision as to the interpretation for the purposes of that provision of any of the following expressions appearing therein, that is to say, 'chronically sick', 'chronic illness', 'disabled' and 'disability'."

Activating section 28, to make it absolutely clear that the mentally disabled are covered by the legislation is one positive step open to the Government that could have an immediate and beneficial effect for many families now trying to cope with the problems of mental illness who are unaware of their statutory rights under the 1970 Act.

Like other right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House I am concerned about the special educational needs of children who suffer from dyslexia. Late last year, there was a High Court ruling which ought to improve the educational opportunities of many thousands of such children. It was held that the Hampshire education authority's refusal to recognise that a 13-year-old boy with dyslexia had special educational needs—and to make special provision for him—was based on an error of law. That case prompts me to say that it is perhaps timely for section 27 of the 1970 Act, which deals with special educational treatment for dyslexic children, to be reviewed when my hon. Friend's Bill reaches Committee. The Minister may wish to discuss this with his colleagues at the Department of Education and Science as consideration of the Bill proceeds. Meanwhile it will be helpful to the House, as to the parents of all dyslexic children, to know what study the Government have now made of the implications of the ruling in the Hampshire case and what action they propose to take.

[Mr. Morris]

The parents of dyslexic children are not alone in wanting to see the Government's rhetoric matched by realistic action to relieve their anxieties. My friend Peter Mittler, the professor of special education at the university of Manchester, with responsibility for the training of teachers of children and young people with special educational needs, told me only this week of the daunting difficulties he and his colleagues are facing. They are involved in a programme of teacher re-education in consequence of the Education Act 1981, and their centre at Manchester university is a world leader in the field of special educational needs. They provide a wide range of courses, both part-time and full-time, in which large numbers of teachers and psychologists are being trained for positions of responsibility in meeting special educational needs in ordinary schools. Yet, although they are at the sharp end of implementing the Government's policy in this field, their work is constantly undermined by crippling shortage of resources.

Professor Mittler writes:

"To give you just one example, we had to abandon one of only four courses in this country in the education of children with social and emotional difficulties. Only London University now has a course on working with what used to be called maladjusted pupils—surely a high priority, since ordinary schools are not succeeding in retaining and teaching these pupils, with the result that increasing numbers of them are being sent to special schools, contrary to national policies and professional advice. We have tried to retain some aspects of our teaching in this field by buying in part-time help, but there are no funds to continue this work next year."

In a strongly compelling passage in his letter, Professor Mittler goes on to say:

"The education of the children of this country, and the training of those who teach them, is a higher priority than spending more than £1 million a day in maintaining a presence in the Falklands, not to mention the billions of pounds we spend without question on nuclear armaments."

He believes, as I do, that politics is fundamentally about priorities and the allocation of resources, and that this country cannot afford to neglect the education of its handicapped children. He makes the point, as I have done in many recent debates on disability, that the problem of meeting the legitimate claims of disabled people, not least of disabled children, is basically one not of resources but of political will and priorities. The right hon. Gentleman may like to comment on Professor Mittler's deeply disturbing statement to me.

I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will also comment on the case for reconsideration of the provisions of section 22 of the 1970 Act, which requires a report to Parliament each year on progress made in research and development work carried out, by or on behalf of any Minister of the Crown, in relation to equipment that might increase the range of activities and independence or well-being of disabled persons and, in particularly, such equipment as might improve their indoor and outdoor mobility. The annual reports which have been presented under section 22, many of them of high quality, are of the first importance to disabled people and their organisations. They are all too often unplublicised and unread, which is why many informed people feel that there should now be a requirement for them to be debatable by Parliament. The necessary amendment to section 22 is one that we could perhaps consider in Committee. If we can do so, it will be seen as a positive step by disabled people and by many right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House.

The very sharp differences in what different local authorities now provide under section 2 of the 1970 Act alone justify the main provisions of my hon. Friend's Bill. The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation is to be congratulated on its work in producing a code of practice for use by local authorities in implementing the Act. The code gives valuable guidance on both assessment of need and the provision of services but, in supporting my hon. Friend's Bill, the royal association now appeals with all of the other main organisations for a strengthening of the Act itself.

In this regard, I was pleased to note a point made by the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi), speaking as a former Minister with responsibility for the disabled in the present Government. He made plain his dissatisfaction with the way in which section 2 of the 1970 Act is now too often applied when, in July 1983, he said:

"Local authorities are both 'judge and jury' regarding assessment of need and there is no right of appeal; perhaps a disabled person should have recourse to the Courts instead of having to work through the Secretary of State for Social Services."

My hon. Friend's Bill does not go that far, but, if the present Minister feels that his predecessor's view should be looked at in Committee, I am sure that my hon. Friend will want to respond sympathetically and that he will be pleased to look at any proposition that is put to him, from either side of the House that can strengthen and improve the provisions of his Bill. As of now, the former Minister's statement strongly underlines the moderation of my hon. Friend's approach. He wants to work closely with everyone who can assist him and the House for the sole purpose of helping some of the most needful people in this country.

The Act which this Bill seeks to amend, and whose 15th anniversary was marked by our debate last June, reached the statute book entirely without party animus. Everyone who spoke, whether here on the Floor of the House or upstairs in Committee, seemed to know the value of things as well as their cost. It was a rare parliamentary moment when unity of purpose, in an important cause, triumphed over every other consideration, and when innumerable people and organisations outside parliament worked with us to achieve lasting progress for disabled people.

In their thousands, those people and organisations helped to transform the whole climate of parliamentary and public opinion from one of, at best, benign charity to one of acceptance that disabled people are entitled to live independent and dignified lives as full members of the community. Their 'Word Charter' asserts that disabled people have the same rights as all humanity to grow and to learn, to work and to create, to love and to be loved. That is the philosophy of my hon. Friend's Bill, which is why he deserves all possible support and success in his endeavours.

10.55 am

The Minister for Health (Mr. Barney Hayhoe): I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on his good fortune in coming first in the ballot—that is the essential element—and on his choice of subject. There are notable precedents for using private Members' Bills to legislate on services for the disabled. Indeed, the Bill before the House builds very much on the foundations laid more than 15 years ago by the Chronically

Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. I am glad to follow two sponsors of that Act—my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam), whose work in the all-party group is well known, recognised and respected on both sides of the House, and the right hon. member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), who has a distinguished record of concern and action on behalf of the disabled.

The right hon. Gentleman paid a rightful tribute to Neil Marten—someone whom I first met at a conference on developments for young people in 1946—which will have been warmly welcomed on both sides of the House. However, I am not sure whether I can say the same about some of the right hon. Gentleman's other comments in his wide-ranging speech. He took advantage of the traditions and procedures of the House, which do not confine a Second Reading debate to matters precisely relevant to the Bill and which permit hon. Members to range as wide as they wish, but within the limitations that you impose, Mr. Deputy Speaker, across other areas. Many of the right hon. Gentleman's points will be more relevant to the Social Security Bill, to which we gave a First Reading earlier today, and I have little doubt that the right hon. Gentleman will return to them during the Second Reading debate on that Bill, if he is fortunate enough to catch the eye of the occupant of the Chair.

A notable absentee from our debate is my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for the disabled. He has explained to the hon. Member for Monklands, West why he is not standing at the Dispatch Box speaking on behalf of the Government. But he was able to hear the opening speech in the debate, and I shall have the advantage of his advice when further consideration is given to the Bill. My hon. Friend is bound up with the Social Security Bill, and, as the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe will readily acknowledge, it is difficult to be involved in the Committee stage of a complicated Bill on Tuesdays and Thursdays and then to give adequate attention to the Committee stage of a private Member's Bill, which will normally be considered on Wednesdays.

Although regretting the absence of my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for the disabled, I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland with responsibility for health is here. If provoked, he may intervene on particular Scottish matters, although I know that he wishes to give hon. Members as wide an opportunity as possible to participate in the debate.

I make it clear at the outset that the general philosophy that has inspired the provision of the Bill is, by and large, wholly in line with Government thinking on services for disabled people. A more open style of communication between disabled people and those who provide services for them, better communications between authorities and better co-ordination of services, proper regard for the needs of informal carers are all principles that, in one way or another, the DHSS and the health departments and Scotland and Wales have tried to promulgate and encourage among those working in this sector for many years, and under successive Governments.

I quote just two examples of recent DHSS activity to illustrate the point. On the co-ordination of services, I published only a few weeks ago—at the very end of November—a report entitled "Progress in Partnership" on ways of improving collaboration between health and local authorities in planning and delivering health care and social services. I have agreed with the local authority and health authority associations about the need to follow up the report as soon as possible with guidance to authorities on joint planning.

With my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, I participated in a meeting with the local authority associations and others earlier this week.

On informal carers, I remind the House of the recent project of the Department's social work service—now the social services inspectorate—to draw attention to the needs of informal carers and to encourage policy makers, managers and front line workers to consider how support for a dependent person's informal carer could be made an integral part of the range of services needed for effective community care. A number of elements in the centrally-funded programme which is called "Helping the Community to Care" are also specifically concerned with support for informal carers. I join in the tributes to the work that they do and the crucial and vital contribution that they make towards caring and coping with the disabled within the community.

The general principles that the Bill seeks to enshrine are ones that, for the most part, the Government wish wholeheartedly to endorse. This is a Bill whose heart, if I may put it in this way, is very much in the right place. However, when one turns from general principles to specific provisions, I am afraid that my enthusiasm for the Bill becomes rather less glowing. This is despite the fact that the hon. Member for Monklands, West was kind enough to show me and my hon. Friend the Scottish Minister with responsibility for health the early draft of the Bill, before it was published. Subsequently, he incorporated a number of changes that were suggested to him into the published version. I think that he will agree that many of the suggested changes made a significant improvement to the Bill. I am grateful to him for the action that he has taken. However, from the Government's point of view, the changes do not go far enough, and some substantial further changes will be needed before the Bill can become a workable measure that the Government can support.

One objection to a Bill such as this, which lays specific and detailed duties on local authorities and others in respect of particular client groups, is that it must inevitably put pressure on local authorities to concentrate some of their effort and resources on one kind of client rather than another. I do not want to make too much of this argument. Physically and mentally disabled people are of course priority groups in terms of Government policies, and much existing legislation—including of course the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act to which I referred earlier—could be described as "client-group specific".

On the other hand, I remind the House that, given the need of all local authorities to control their overall expenditure—and I make absolutely no apologies for the fact that there is such a need—any extra pound that a local authority has to spend on services for disabled people as a result of this Bill could well mean a pound less for other groups which hon. Members might feel should be given at least as high priority—elderly people, the frail, or children at risk. If the resources are constrained, there is no increase and the effect of the Bill is to direct more of those resources to the particular groups with which the Bill is concerned, that inevitably means, as a matter of mathematics rather than a matter of policy, that there are fewer resources available for other groups.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): I appreciate the point that the Minister is making, and that it poses a difficulty for him. However, does he agree that one of the crucial aspects of this Bill which should recommend it to the Government is that it is cost effective and will not cost the Government a great deal of money? Will he endorse that general principle of the Bill?

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall continue to make the point that I was making, because I shall deal, at least to a limited extent, with the resources problem that is linked with the Bill.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): Does the Minister accept that the Government, in giving certain priority to the needs of the mentally handicapped and mentally ill, must inevitably imply that there should be a resource allocation deserving some priority? If there is no additional priority in resource allocation, surely the Government's words towards these groups are meaningless.

Mr. Hayhoe: As the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe said, in the past decade substantial extra resources have been allocated by consecutive Governments. My point is the narrow but important one that if legislation such as this leads merely to a change in the direction to which resources are deployed, it can have the effect of reducing resources for other groups not covered by legislation such as this but which have an equal, or at least some similar, claim upon available resources. Surely my point commends itself to the House. We have to be careful to recall that there are other groups within society—I mentioned the frail, the elderly and children as examples—at risk that also have claims upon public resources.

Mr. Thurnham: Does not the pressing need for resources for the disabled, to which the Bill points, emphasise the need for local authorities to use all their resources with the greatest efficiency? This is only a small part of their total revenue, and there need be no need for a diminution of other resources if local authorities use their resources efficiently.

Mr. Hayhoe: I agree with my hon. Friend. He knows that this has been the thrust of Government policy on the National Health Service, and much more widely. We are seeking the efficient use of resources. We want to deploy them in the best possible way by delivering care and services where they are most needed. I am glad that at least on this part of my speech I carry the whole House with me.

There is no doubt that to give local authorities new duties of the sort prescribed in this Bill—in particular, duties as to precisely when and how the assessment of a disabled person's needs should be carried out—will have quite substantial resource implications, although I am not in a position to attempt to quantify them at the moment. However, I and, I am sure, all right hon. and hon. Members have seen the briefing that has been provided by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. One paragraph of its letter states:

"The Bill, as it stands would increase expenditure on service provision very significantly indeed. Additionally the administrative structures and staff to support the formal assessment and appeals system which the Bill seeks to introduce would be a costly business. We do not object to the Bill in principle but we believe that the expenditure implications are formidable."

May I now say something about the Association of County Councils, because it is wise to get the views of both of these major local authority associations clearly on the record. The ACC says:

"There is a further point which causes concern, that of over-bureaucratisation . . . Indeed, at a time of scarce resources, it could be argued that the money which might otherwise have been spent on administrative processes to the benefit of no one."

I take into account what my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) said a moment ago—that very few right hon. and hon. Members would argue that resources ought to be diverted away from care and services for the disabled to administrative purposes.

Mr. Tom Cox: Is the Minister for Health aware that what he is saying will be received with utter disbelief by the very people who are looking to my hon. Friend's Bill for help? There are two old psychiatric hospitals in my constituency. If we are to get people out of them, financial resources are needed in this area, otherwise they will remain there and all this talk will be meaningless.

Mr. Hayhoe: If the hon. Gentleman is arguing in favour of the Bill because it will lead to a significant extra flow of resources into the areas with which the Bill is concerned, he is making the same point as I am making—that as it stands the Bill can lead to an extra flow of resources. But it will not go necessarily to the client groups to which the hon. Gentleman has drawn attention but to the bureaucratic processes. I should have thought that nobody would want that to happen.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hayhoe: I should prefer not to do so at this stage, because the sharp criticisms that I have made of the Bill's provisions are not my words but those of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and of the Association of County Councils.

Mr. Wareing: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. A number of right hon. and hon. Members have received the AMA's briefing, and the Minister for Health is perfectly correct in saying that it points to the serious financial implications of the Bill. However, if he looks at the last paragraph of the AMA's letter I am sure that the Minister has to admit that it is not true that the AMA is saying that what is needed is simply a movement of resources from one priority area to another within the existing budget. In its last paragraph the AMA says:

"It is for the government to decide whether or not to give effective support for this Bill and we hope that you will be able to urge the necessity for such support."

As the Minister for Health has responsibility for disabled people, it is for him and for his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services to use their muscle in Cabinet to get such resources for local authorities. I am sorry to intervene at this point, but I understand that the Minister has to leave the House, which will probably be before I am able to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Hayhoe: I do not think that I misrepresented the AMA's position in any way. I quoted the points that it was making. The record will show, I think, that in no way did I misrepresent what the AMA said. The hon. Gentleman must have misunderstood me. When he looks at the record I think he will find that that is so. The Bill's sponsors may well reply—indeed, this is implicit in one or two of the comments that have been made—that the Bill requires

all authorities only to do what the best of them are doing already. But local authorities must have the right to order their own priorities within the broad framework prescribed from the centre. If this Bill were enacted, it would be bound to inhibit them to some extent from doing so.

The basic difficulty here, I suggest, is not the general principle of legislation relating specifically to disabled people. As I say—and I pay tribute to those concerned—there are distinguished precedents for that. However, the detailed nature of many of the specific provisions in the Bill are, in the Government's view, a recipe for inflexibility, bureaucracy, legalism and waste. We are sustained in that view, to some extent at least, by the briefing we have had from the local authority associations.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I am sorry to intervene, but I understand that the Minister for Health will be leaving the Chamber at a later stage.

Mr. Hayhoe: Perhaps I can clarify this matter. Many hon. Members seem to be wholly misinformed—I think inadvertently — by the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe. I said merely that I hoped, as is not abnormal in these circumstances, to be able to slip out of the Chamber for a brief time during the course of the five hours that might be devoted to this debate and I thought that it would be useful to make the Government's position clear before doing so. I intend to leave the Chamber, but of course I shall return to listen to and take note of what is said later in the debate.

Mr. Clarke: Will the Minister for Health accept from a former president of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, which supports the Bill, that there has hardly been a measure introduced by any Government of whatever political complexion upon which local authorities have not said precisely the kind of thing that they are saying in those briefings and that there has hardly been a time when Governments of all political complexions have not dismissed the representations and said that the local authorities ought to try to make better use of their resources?

Mr. Hayhoe: There is something in what the hon. Gentleman says. However, one needs only to look at the detailed prescription that is contained in many of the Bill's clauses—a matter to which we shall return if the Bill is given a Second Reading—to see that in many areas it imposes a new bureaucratic burden upon the local authorities and, indeed, upon others. This detailed and over-prescriptive approach appears throughout the Bill. The worst offenders are clause 6 — procedures for assessment—and clause 7 which seeks to transplant a procedure from the Education Act 1981 and transform it into a provision for adult disabled people, a proposal about which the Government have already expressed scepticism in their response to the recommendations relating to community care of the Select Committee on Social Services.

There are other examples. In the Government's view, legislation should provide a framework within which services can be developed locally, not the sort of detailed prescription which is set out in the Bill. Potentially, the Bill could provide a basis for building some modest extentions to the existing strategic framework within which services for the disabled are provided. But if, as I expect, the House gives the Bill a Second Reading, a lot of work will be needed to remove some of the bureaucratic excesses and let the basic framework of principle emerge. But those are matters for the Committee and Report stages.

The Government applaud many of the ideas behind the Bill, but to its individual provisions our attitude is one of sceptical neutrality. I cannot positively commend the Bill to the House in its present form, but neither do I oppose its Second Reading. If the House takes the view that the Bill merits further detailed discussion, I hope that the hon. Member for Monklands, West and his sponsors will be prepared to respond constructively to amendments, some perhaps radical and substantial, which the Government will bring forward. If they do, it is likely that at the end of the day they will be responsible for a Bill that provides a useful if modest development of the present legislative basis on which services are provided for disabled people. That is a worthy achievement for any Member of this House.

11.21 am

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): I warmly congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), not only on his choice of subject for the Bill, but on the admirable way in which he presented it this morning. The fact that he was so reasonable should commend the Bill to the House. Indeed, the Minister has told us that my hon. Friend has been very reasonable in his discussions with the Department and in seeking to accommodate it so that the Bill could proceed unimpeded.

A number of people have helped in the preparation of the Bill. The all-party disablement group was only too delighted to give all the support that it could. I pay tribute to Peter Mitchell and John Healey who have made a major contribution to its preparation. We appreciate their work both for the all-party disablement group and in the preparation of the Bill.

Given the help that we have had and given the good will on all sides of the House, I was deeply disturbed by the Minister's speech. He began well by saying that the philosophy of the Bill was in line with Government thinking. That is fine—anyone can agree with a general philosophy. I suppose that Adolf Hitler could have said that Churchill's philosophy was in line with his—peace in our time. But that general philosophy led to war between our two countries when it came to the detail of interpreting the philosophies of Nazi Germany and Great Britain.

The application of the general philosophy as adumbrated by my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West and the general philosophy as explained by the Minister may appear to be the same. However, what the Minister said about the application of that philosophy shows that we are diametrically opposed in the implementation of the Bill.

The significance of that is that the Government may basically oppose the Bill. I hope that they will not do so on Second Reading today. Some influential members of the Conservative party are on record as supporting the Bill. I pay a warm tribute to the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam), whom I feel I should call my hon. Friend. He supports the Bill and I hope that he will vote in favour of it, together with his colleagues who have also expressed their support. We need the support of those Conservative Members in Committee, assuming that the Bill reaches

[Mr. Jack Ashley]

Committee. If the Bill is emasculated in Committee, we shall be left with nothing. I beg Conservative Members to support the Bill both in principle and in detail.

I understand that the Government cannot simply accept the Bill as it stands and that they will seek to amend it in Committee. However, I hope that the changes will not be so great as to make the Bill a nonentity. We need a great deal of understanding and co-operation, and the Minister's remarks upset me deeply. I hope that he will not push his points too far.

The Minister spoke of the costs of a bureaucratic burden. I think that he misunderstands what is required which is simply planning by local authorities to ensure that the disabled people provided for in the Bill have the benefit of planned transition from one stage to the next. The young disabled at school, the mentally handicapped in hospitals and the carers all need that sort of help. The whole aim of the Bill is to help them at the trigger points. We must plan those transitions. They may mean to some people bureaucracy, but to dismiss the idea as bureaucratic is the wrong approach.

We know from our discussions in the all-party disablement group that local authorities are jealous of their autonomy. We respect that autonomy, but we cannot leave this matter to local authorities alone because their provision is far too patchy. The Minister must intervene and put pressure on local authorities. He must insist that they provide resources that make it easier for the disabled to cope with their difficult periods. Therefore, there is no point in the Minister talking about the autonomy of local authorities.

The Minister quoted the AMA and the ACC, but was he doing so with approval? If he was, those words were really his words, even though he was quoting their words. his words were put into the mouths of the AMA and the ACC.

I am anxious not to make a long speech because I frown on long speeches. I shall briefly refer to my other points. The Bill confers new rights on disabled people, which is why I commend it to the House. They will have the right to information about themselves and the right to be involved in their cases. That is of paramount importance. The Bill gives a voice to those who hitherto were silent. It ensures open government for the disabled, which is something that we badly need. This Bill tackles the indifference and apathy of authorities and institutions and takes the disabled further along the road to equality. It enables them to have more control over their own destinies and helps them to make or to be involved in decisions about them. The Bill is a blow to the patronising attitude of so many people and it buttresses the self-respect of the disabled.

The Bill tackles long-standing scandals arising from society's neglect of the disabled, and my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West mentioned three groups in his admirable speech. He referred to handicapped school leavers, the mentally handicapped who leave hospital to live in the community, and carers. These groups have all suffered from an administrative failure to identify their needs, and there is no point in the Minister saying that helping them will cause bureaucracy. I hope that the Minister will change his view and his mind on that issue.

Handicapped children are protected while they are at school but they are neglected on leaving school. Their real needs should be recognised. The sad reality is that they go out in the world to face prejudice and sometimes derision. The stage at which they really need help is when they leave school.

The mentally handicapped who are leaving hospital represent the latest scandal. It is scandalous that mentally handicapped people should leave hospital, be confronted with normal responsibilities and find themselves bewildered. They go out into the big, wide and hard world without any help. They are people who can slither into miserable oblivion unless we can give them the sort of help that they need.

I pay tribute to what the Government have done for carers. I acknowledge that they have tried to help them but, unfortunately, they have not done enough. I hope that carers will be helped further.

The Government have helped to get children out of mentally handicapped hospitals but not enough has been done for them. A significant number have left the hospitals but those who are discharged find that there is no proper assessment of their needs. The Bill will ensure that they are properly assessed, which is a vital requirement.

Disability is always an individual affair and specialist and comprehensive assessment is vital. It is an individual matter and even the same diseases can have variable effects. In conferring new rights on the disabled, the Bill establishes good practice and ensures a framework for good service provision.

I have seen enough of the present Minister for Health to believe that he is a reasonable man. I believe that he is amenable to argument. I am aware of the constraints that he has to face and I know that his Department is faced with cash problems, for example, but I emphasise that the Bill is a low-cost measure. It does not demand massive expenditure. It goes a long way to provide new rights for three groups of vulnerable people and I hope that it will be given a Second Reading. I hope also that we shall all try to be reasonable in Committee. I trust that the Government will not try to emasculate it.

Mr. Wareing: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that you will agree that my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) is a respected standard bearer for the disabled and that his speeches need to be considered. Is it not a convention of the House that, when a right hon. or hon. Member has spoken, he remains in his place to hear at least the speech of the Member who is called to take up his remarks. I think that it is discourteous for the Minister to absent himself from the speech of my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): The Minister referred to his necessary absence from part of the debate.

11.34 am

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on his good fortune. I well remember the excitement of the ballot. I was present at the draw. Statements were made on how many Members would pledge themselves to introduce another Bill to follow the measure about which we heard so much during the previous Session, which fell into the trap of being highly controversial.

First, I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his good fortune. Secondly, I congratulate him on his wisdom in

choosing such an important subject to take up in his Bill. As my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health has said, it is a warm-hearted Bill which has the support of both sides of the House. It seems that it will not run into the dangers of other private Members' Bills. At least, I hope that it will not. I heard my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health say that he was sceptical about some of the detailed clauses, but, I was pleased to hear the Government say, through my right hon. Friend, that they support warm-heartedly the ideas that are behind the Bill. I hope that that commitment will come through in Committee. It is obvious that a great deal of detailed work will have to be done at that stage.

It is so important for a Back Bencher to choose a subject that will ensure the safe passage of his Bill through the House. We learned in the previous Session that a Private Member's Bill can face opposition that is 99 per cent. based on procedural matters and 1 per cent. on content. We saw some extraordinary manoeuvres during the passage of the Bill that Mr. Enoch Powell attempted to introduce. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Monklands, West did not fall into that difficulty, especially as he had been involved in Mr. Powell's Bill as a member of the Committee that considered it. He must have been subjected to pressure to bring such a Bill before Parliament again.

At this stage I should declare an interest. I am not familiar with all the details of the legislation to which the hon. Member has referred, which stretches back over many years, but I have a practical interest in these matters through having brought into my family a handicapped child, who had been in care for many years. For six years he was shuffled from one place to another, and attempts to place him had broken down. He was in good temporary care before he came to my family but he had had six years in care. He had been advertised for 18 months as needing parents while my family and I, who lived only 30 miles away, had had our name down for over two years, having stated that we were interested in fostering or adopting a handicapped child.

I drew attention in an Adjournment debate on 25 November to the need for the Government to give greater help in co-ordinating services to ensure that when would-be parents are available and a child is in need of care, the two parties can be brought together. It is no good leaving these matters to local authorities. We often find that those who are involved are confronted with a sort of pass-the-parcel exercise, with the chances of coming to grips with the problem being submerged in bureaucratic difficulties.

I wish the hon. Member all success with his Bill. I trust that it will have a safe passage through Committee and Report. I am sure that he is relieved to know that no Bill is ahead of his and that no manoeuvres can take place that threaten the passage of his measure or hinder it. I hope that the Government will show commitment and that they will ensure that individual clauses do not give rise to difficulties on the grounds of excessive expense or bureaucratic pressures.

I draw attention to the need for handicapped children to receive special care, especially those who are still in institutions. The campaign which was mounted by Exodus rightly drew attention to the fact that over 500 children are still in hospitals in England and Wales. Throughout the United Kingdom there are probably about 1,000 children in National Health Service institutions, to which we can add an uncertain number who are, in effect, in long-term care in local authority institutions. I estimate that there are in total about 3,000 children in that predicament.

I welcome the work which is done by the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering which has placed 2,000 children with special needs and has currently launched an appeal for £200,000 to help with its work in placing the next 2,000 children. The children who are now coming forward for placement are those with the most difficult needs, for whom care is most needed. If people are considering adopting or fostering a child with severe handicap they need to know what care will be available while the child is young and at the difficult stage when the child is 18 or 19 years old and falls into a gap. The Bill rightly draws attention to that latter point and it is that feature of it which I welcome most warmly. The hon. Member referred to 18-year-olds as falling into one of three key areas.

I am particularly concerned about all three of the key areas mentioned by the hon. Gentleman—the 18-year-olds, the hospital leavers and the carers who cannot cope. Adoptive or foster parents of handicapped children are most concerned about just those three areas. They are worried about what will happen to a child when he or she reaches the age of 18 and what help can be given if the child leaves hospital and the parents fall ill.

I recently received a long letter from a lady in an adjacent constituency who had seen a newspaper article. It is one of the most heart-rending cases that I have heard recently. The hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) said that this was not an eye-catching subject and that perhaps there were more eye-catching items in the news this week. But I congratulate my local paper on its treatment of the subject and I am sure that other local papers give full attention to this subject. My local paper the Bolton *Evening News* drew attention on its front page on 26 November to two forgotten children—case one, David, and case two, Ian—who have been in care, in one case for over five years, while the local authority has tried to find adoptive or foster homes. I am sure that there are people who would like to take them into care and they will be interested in the Bill and whether they will be able to do that and do it with confidence.

We have already touched on the need for respite care and that was dealt with in a recent article by Madeleine Simms in *The Lancet* on 2 November 1985. She wrote of the dreadful predicament of parents of severely handicapped young adults and she quoted the response of people whom she had been to see. It is appalling to read the remarks of some of those parents who said that they felt that they were imprisoned because of the difficulties that they were facing and the lack of help that was available to them. That shows the serious needs to which the Bill pays attention.

Some parents said that their difficulties were so great that, had they been able to consider an abortion at the time of the pregnancy, they would have opted for it and they could now see no end to their problems. The Bill should rightly help draw attention to such problems.

The Bill has been described as being cost-effective. Let me draw attention to the sort of costs that have been quoted. The latest figure that I have for the annual cost of looking after a mentally handicapped child in institutional care in the Greater London area is £19,000 a year and that excludes capital charges. If people were prepared to adopt or foster children in care, the costs would be less, so long

[Mr. Peter Thurnham]

as respite care and other services are made available. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that voluntary care is available. It is not just a question of money but of co-ordinating all the efforts of those people who are available. I am sure that many more people could be found to help children.

The British Agency for Adoption and Fostering has done a great deal to draw attention to that problem. In a recent book entitled "Against the Odds: Adopting Handicapped Children" Catherine Macaskill says that there has been a revolution. It is a revolution that not all local authorities are properly aware of. The greater the needs of a child the more people who wish to adopt or foster rise to the challenge. Years ago, such children were locked away because it was felt that nobody wanted them. Now it is more like mountaineering—the higher the mountain, the greater the challenge. The more profound the degree of handicap, the greater the child's needs and the greater the challenge to the parents. Not all local authorities are aware of that. They are inclined to think that people who offer to adopt or foster a handicapped child must be odd. In many cases a family which has taken one child is interested in taking another, but the local authority regards them as being doubly odd.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I confirm what my hon. Friend says. Many years ago, I went to the Lennox castle hospital, the largest institution for the mentally handicapped in Scotland, and was told by the medical superintendent there that he was confident that a number of staff working in that institution would not be there if there were not patients in that hospital with a handicap which most local authorities would regard as making them unadoptable.

Mr. Thurnham: That illustrates exactly the point that I am making. I recommend that hon. Members should read Catherine Macaskill's book. She says that the revolution started in America and is now here. The British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering have done an excellent job in producing a book called, "Be my Parent" which is available at nearly all local authority offices.

The right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon) is not here today, but I do not think that he would mind me referring to a parent who wrote to me as a result of the newspaper article on 26 November to describe her dreadful predicament. The letter runs to 16 pages. She has a child, Sarah, who she is barely able to look after any longer. The mother has had to go into hospital for a serious brain operation and she finds that because of the effects of that operation, and the child's growth and greater weight, she can now hardly manage. When she turns to the Thameside local authority she finds that help is not as readily available as she hoped. Her letter is most moving and I only hope that she is now able to get the help that she so desperately needs.

That is the exact predicament which the Bill will deal with. I hope that it will provide that lady and many others like her with a solution to their great problems. That lady has looked after her child for 11½ years. All this time she has assumed that, if she were not able to care fully for the child, alternative care would be available, but she now finds that there is not. The child has the mental age of a one-month-old baby and is incapable of any further development. The child is unable to move properly although she has been going to a school for day care. The mother now finds that she cannot manage at home, despite the commitment of all the years of care for her daughter. Obviously, she is most worried about what will happen if she cannot continue to care for her.

I conclude by congratulating the hon. Member for Monklands, West on the choice of such an important subject—his ideas are so good. I have not been able to go through the Bill in the detail in which it will be gone through in Committee, but I hope that the Government will be able to come to an understanding with the hon. Gentleman about the detailed provisions so that the Government can give full support not only to the ideas but to every word of the Bill.

11.49 am

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): I join the many other Members who have paid warm tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) for introducing the Bill. As we know from the people we meet in our constituencies, this matter is crucial to them.

It is significant that, in a week in which there have been so many happenings in the House, this debate shows how the House really works. It shows that hon. Members whatever their party, get together and try to work together on the crucial issues that affect so many people. This is where the House comes into its own. This is what the people we represent expect from it.

I refer to clause 4. The speech by the Minister for Health fills me with concern. To make meaningful progress in getting people out of hospitals and back into the community will cost money. I am sure that many hon. Members agree. The people who come out of mental hospitals will need specialised back-up services for a considerable period. The Minister said, "Of course, the Government are concerned. Of course, we would like to do something." That is the old record by the Government that we hear repeatedly. They would like to do things for everyone but, if it will cost anything, they say, "Sorry, nothing from us today." That seemed to be the Minister's comment.

I am sure that in the run-up to the Budget the Prime Minister and many other Ministers will make statements about how essential tax cuts will be. We all know that, if tax cuts are to mean anything, they will be given only to those who are already on high incomes, as has happened repeatedly under the Government.

We should help the people mentioned in the letter to the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) and the letter to my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West which outlined the difficult problems. Some of the Minister's comments were an insult—such as, "If if will cost money, the Government cannot give it much warm support." In the coming weeks we shall hear only, "Tax cuts are the priority." They are not. It is up to the Government to have the courage to say, "Of course, we would like to give tax cuts but we believe that sections in the community have a greater priority. We must help them." We know that we shall never get all the money that we want for the issues that interest us as individual Members, but I believe that the Minister should think again about his comments. They will be received with utter disbelief by the many people who have listened to or read the debate. This Bill will be meaningless if the right hon. Gentleman pursues that line in Committee.

Mr. Roy Galley (Halifax): The hon. Gentleman is right that the Bill and the whole principle of community care will cost more money. That must be the case if the provisions are to succeed. I am a little concerned that the hon. Gentleman's comments are a little out of balance with the actual position. Does he not accept that the increase in health resources of 20 per cent., above any allowance for inflation, in the past five or six years and the projected increase in this week's public expenditure White Paper are a substantial additional injection of funds into health? There has been also a substantial additional injection of funds into social services. The mentally ill and the mentally handicapped have priority in that injection of funds. That may not be enough—we can argue about that—but it must be taken into account. The hon. Gentleman must balance his comments about resources.

Mr. Cox: I think that progress has been made. Many hon. Members will know from their experiences in their constituencies that that progress had to be made and still must be made. What are our priorities? They are the issues we are discussing—not the tax cuts about which we shall hear in the next few weeks.

Clause 4 recommends that 28 days' notice of discharge should be given to a local authority. That is commendable. Many people in my area, especially the elderly—I cannot believe that it is just my area—complain that they are virtually turned out of hospital, often with little or no back-up services in the community, and told, "Get your neighbour to keep an eye on you and to do the shopping." Notice must be given and assessment services provided if we are to ensure that the people who come out of hospital, where they have perhaps stayed for many years, are to be helped.

I return to the intervention by the hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley). There are two psychiatric hospitals in my constituency—Tooting Bec and Springfield. The Government blackmailed us about Springfield hospital. It is an old-type mental hospital establishment. To the credit of the staff, doctors and local administration, they wanted to make improvements. The problem was that the South London hospital for women in my part of south London was closed. We were told, "If you want progress in Springfield hospital, the South London hospital must be closed." This kind of thing has happened repeatedly under the Government. To make progress in one aspect of health care, other services in the area must be closed so that the money can be reallocated. That is what is so wrong with the Government's policy. Unless we get away from that attitude we shall not make the progress we want. There has been an uphill battle in many areas to obtain the type of services—whether NHS or local authority—that are needed.

An allocation of money will mean that those services can begin to develop. We do not consider frequently enough the surplus land and buildings that belong to local hospitals. I do not particularly disagree with such sales—if the land and buildings are surplus, sell them—but I object to how that money is used. In my area, where hospitals have been closed, land has been sold off. We had an enormous struggle to obtain what we believed to be a fair share of the proceeds. The money did not go to us, as we believed it should. We could have done a great deal with it. We must look into this aspect of policy.

Young disabled people have a different attitude to their lives. They are not prepared to accept the conditions under which middle-aged or elderly disabled or handicapped people have had to live for many years. Obviously, the disabled and mentally ill have a right to say what type of role they wish to play in society. Many of the Bill's provisions will go a long way towards ensuring that their voices are heard because, far too often, they are not.

I have commented twice on hon. Members' remarks about participation. The views of the families who look after disabled and mentally ill people must be taken more account of to ensure that they are not always struggling to overcome the problems with which they live, not just for a few weeks and months, but often for many years.

There must be greater participation between hospitals and local authorities. The role of local authorities must be improved enormously. Within a local authority one department often follows one policy while another department follows a different policy. It might be thought that those departments must liaise, but one wonders how much liaison there is when one see letters about decisions that have been made. We cannot allow a debate such as this to go by without paying the warmest tribute to the staff working in hospitals catering for disabled and mentally ill people.

There are two psychiatric hospitals in my area. I go and I see the staff. I am full of admiration. I ask myself whether I could do that job. I do not know. We must obtain a genuine commitment from the Government towards the staff in National Health Service hospitals. We do not always see it. The staff should not always have to fight to obtain better working conditions and salaries. They do a job that demands the highest calibre of people. They should not be seen, as so often they are unfortunately, to be struggling to improve their conditions.

A few weeks ago MIND organised a conference called "Patients before People". That should be the aim not just of this Government but of all Governments, local authorities and those of us who have some power to make decisions. I hope that that will be the motto that we shall try to follow. We have a long way to go. As long as we can see progress and see that patients are again being treated as people in our community, we shall have gone a long way towards making life much better for many people who deserve a much better deal than, unfortunately, they have had in the past.

12.3 pm

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): I add my voice to those who have already congratulated the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke). I am pleased to be able to take part in a debate on a subject upon which both sides of the House are warmly united. I agree with most of the Bill's detail.

Before commenting on the details, I should like to lay two red herrings that have been introduced by two Opposition Members. It is a pity that the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox), in what was so many ways an excellent speech, could not resist the temptation to make some party political digs on an occasion when I might have hoped we could try for more unanimity. What he said—I suppose that I should be grateful for this—showed the fundamental weakness of the Socialists' case which has been demonstrated every time that they have held office. It can be summarised briefly. Socialists are incapable of grasping the fact that unless we can found a strong economy and have a tax system which will encourage initiative, enterprise and growth, we shall not have the

[Sir Nicholas Bonsor]

public funds available to spend upon public services such as the one that we are discussing and which we are dedicated to improving.

The hon. Gentleman attacked the Government for proposing tax cuts. He will find that the people will not agree with him, particularly if, as I hope, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduces those cuts by way of altering the tax threshold so that more people can be taken out of the tax system, and not take it off the top, but that is something we shall have to see.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): That has nothing to do with the Bill.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I do not pretend that is has, but I did not raise the point. The hon. Member for Tooting raised it, and it had to be dealt with.

Mr. Thurnham: Everyone has said that voluntary care is the most important part of care in this country. The less tax burden those people have the better. They can then care for themselves. It is no good regarding the state as a nanny to take over whenever there are any problems. People should have the money in their pockets to care for themselves.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: My hon. Friend makes a valid point. One could go further, because the Bill is about encouragement and assistance given to the carers. The better off the carers, the less financial support they will need to carry out the magnificent work they do.

The Bill is about the quality of life of those people who have the misfortune to suffer handicaps. Without wishing to dismiss or diminish the importance of physical handicaps or to denigrate the importance of supporting such people, I should like to address my comments to the subject of mentally handicapped people. I believe that that is where the greatest need lies and where society is slowest to respond.

It is sad but true that most people prefer to ignore mentally handicapped people. They are embarrassed by them. They often do not extend the same sympathy to those who suffer from mental handicap as they do to those who are physically handicapped. That is especially true of communities around homes for the mentally handicapped and of people who might be able to offer the mentally handicapped work within their capabilities. The Government can, and I hope will, do more to encourage people to understand the problems better and to participate more fully in assisting to care for afflicted people.

The quality of life is affected by the Bill primarily through its encouragement of greater support for those who come out of the institutions in which many have to spend a large portion of their lives.

The Government are as dedicated—notwithstanding the implication in the otherwise good speech of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris)—to encouraging the return of handicapped people into the community as are Opposition Members. Much of the Government's enterprise and attention are, as the right hon. Gentleman well knows, aimed at that purpose.

The survey established last summer to identify the needs of the handicapped and to see what further must be done is already under way. When it has reported, I trust that the Government will introduce further legislation in accordance with its recommendations.

It would be unfair to allow the right hon. Gentleman's untrue attack upon the Government's policy to be unchallenged. He said that the Government were doing less for handicapped people than the Labour Government had done. That is not true. He said that he had a list of 12 things which someone had given him critising the Government and saying how they had hurt handicapped people. One can point to shortcomings in every Government policy. I have no doubt that one of the criticisms justified but equally I have no doubt that many are not. What is undoubtedly true is that the Government have put aside far more resources to deal with the problem than any other Government.

Mr. Alfred Morris *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Thurnham: The right hon. Gentleman is shaking his head, but he should know that that is a fact.

Mr. Morris: The hon. Gentleman referred to the survey on disabled people on which the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys is working. The results of that survey are not expected for some years. The Government are taking decisions as if the results were already known. I agree about the importance of the survey. Incidentally, the 12 points put to me were those of Peter Large of the Disablement Income group. He is known and respected as a disabled person by both sides of the House.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I accept the right hon. Gentleman's comments about Mr. Large. In the matter of the report he cannot have his cake and eat it. He is saying that the Government are taking no action but he is also saying that the Government are taking action as if the report were already completed. In the circumstances, I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman would not wish the Government to sit back and do nothing while waiting for the report. Nothing that the Government are doing is not subject to review when the report is published. His point is not a good one. He knows, as well as I do, that £5 million has been spent in 1985-86 and much of that has been set aside specifically for benefit for the long-term sick and disabled. That figure is substantially more than double what was being allocated in 1978 when the Labour party was last in office. I believe that the Government's record is nothing to be ashamed of in terms of the way in which the disabled are being supported.

I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West on avoiding the pitfalls of party political cross-Chamber argument. He gave a magnificent opening to the Bill, which has played a large part in cementing the intentions of both sides of the House to see that the Bill is successful. The hon. Member mentioned the effect of the inefficiency in some areas of the present administrative system and the way in which, without putting further allocations of funds into that system, much could be done which is at the moment left undone. I endorse that wholeheartedly.

I believe that one of the most important shortcomings in the area of mentally handicapped people is the accommodation in which they have to spend their lives if they are institutionalised beyond help. In my previous constituency of Nantwich, some hon. Members may recall that during the previous Session I had to fight, by way of an Adjournment debate, against an area health authority decision abruptly to close a small local hostel for the mentally handicapped holding 15 people and transfer them

to a huge conglomerate in the middle of Manchester. The area health authority showed an unbelievable callousness. It ignored the medical advice that at least two of the people living in the hostel would probably die if they were moved. It ignored the wishes of the people in that hostel to remain in a village environment where they could get out and meet the people and do some light work. It ignored all the fundamental necessities of public health care.

It was only with the help of my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg), who was then Minister of State for Health and Social Security, that I managed to forestall the area health authority's wishes and win a reprieve. During that reprieve, we have changed the hostel from a public service hostel to a private trust. Without putting any additional allocated funds into the hostel above those which were already being spent in the public sector, the private trust has managed to give everybody who lives there a room of their own, a colour television and proper furnishings. Before that, they were living in dormitory accommodation with very little privacy and no amenities.

I do not believe that the public service is incapable of administering such homes with equal efficiency, but I believe that in almost all cases at present it is failing to do so. I hope that, when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State looks at the Bill and the provisions that must be made for the mentally handicapped, he will do everything he can to review, audit and check the efficiency of our present health administration service to make sure that the public, especially those who are being cared for, are getting full and proper value from the funds allocated to the problem.

I will not detain the House long on specific clauses because most of them have been adequately covered. Clause 1 is particularly welcome for the mentally handicapped. The right of representation instead of the facility for representation is a significant change that the Bill will introduce, I hope unchallenged in Committee and at the Report stage. For the mentally handicapped, even more than the physically handicapped, such representation is essential to ensure that the rights and the needs of the people who cannot look after themselves are properly safeguarded.

The assessment of those needs must be improved, again more for the mentally handicapped than for the physically handicapped. Clause 4 sets out the way in which that should be done. Clause 5, which is equally welcome, gives an additional assessment of the capacity of the carers to cope and provides for support to be given to them if that capacity falls short of what is needed. The people who put in the wonderful work of looking after the disabled, both mentally and physically, need a greater back-up and support. They often undertake those duties and carry them out to the best of their ability but find that it involves more than they expected. When that happens, the carer and the cared for are bound to suffer.

There are three reservations that I should like to bring to the attention of the hon. Member for Monklands, West. I should like him to consider them before the Committee stage, and perhaps I could have his answers then. I join with the Minister for Health in having reservations about the bureaucratisation. That is a horrible word but I cannot think of a better one.

Mr. Rowe: A horrible word for a horrible thing.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: That is right. It is always difficult when defining statutory duties to get the balance right between giving sufficient power to the local authorities to help and giving too much power to them, so that instead of helping they interfere. The paperwork and the red tape that follows that often undoes the good work that would be done and which the legislators intend to do. In Committee and on Report, we must ensure that the Bill gets that balance right.

I am puzzled as to why, under clause 3(3), the consent of the child is required and the consent of the parent is required only if the child is incapable of forming a judgment. I am not sure of the legal position, because I have not had the opportunity to check it, but I should have thought that a 13 or 14-year-old child to whom that may refer might be capable of forming a judgment, but that if that judgment is at odds with that of the parents one should back the parents rather than the child. The parents' judgment is more likely to be in his interest.

Dr. Godman: Always?

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Not always, but generally. A 13 or 14-year-old has not had the experience of an older person. One is not always in the best position to make the decision for oneself. I should like to see a safeguard so that an adult judgment can be exercised in the matter.

The hon. Member for Monklands, West asked for a list of the numbers and ages of handicapped people. I am not convinced that such a list would assist the House in the form in which the Bill appears to demand it. For example, it does not give any breakdown of the severity of the handicap. It does not say whether the handicap is mental or physical or to what degree of handicap it applies. A breakdown of numbers and ages, particularly in the adult section, between 18 and 95, will not be of great assistance. The hon. Gentleman might like to consider whether better and more useful information might be achieved by some other means.

With those reservations, only one of which could be described as serious, I have the greatest pleasure in welcoming the hon. Gentleman's proposals, and I shall certainly support them.

12.20 pm

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on his good luck and thank him warmly for choosing this subject for the Bill, which is very relevant. We all know that those who come first in the ballot are under considerable pressure as to the legislation that they introduce. The Bill reflects the priority that the hon. Gentleman has given to this subject, which is shared in all parts of the House, as is evident from the debate. I hope that it is a priority that the Government will continue to support, not only in theory but in practice as far as possible, with the resources that are available.

The House knows of my interest in the area and of the family interest that we have. For that reason, apart from all the others, I wholeheartedly support the objectives of the Bill. I hope that it is given a unanimous Second Reading and that it goes forward to Committee to be considered and improved. I acknowledge that some areas might need rewording to achieve the Bill's objectives. All of the sponsors recognise that. We want the Bill to go forward so that those objectives can be achieved in the

[Mr. Dafydd Wigley]

most efficient, effective and cost-effective manner, the main objective being the services that we are trying to give.

I add my thanks to the representatives of several organisations such as MENCAP, MIND, the Spastic Society and the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, which have helped considerably in preparing the Bill.

The hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) said that we must always remember that we are discussing people. There is a tendency—I am guilty of it, as are all other hon. Members, and the Bill is, too—to refer to "the disabled" or "the mentally ill". We are talking about people. Many mentally and physically handicapped people feel a little resentful when they are classed generically like that. If we can, we should always refer to them as mentally handicapped people or mentally ill people. It is a good discipline and leads to better analysis.

The Bill has three objectives, which are all worthy. One is the improvement of representation and the establishment of rights. The second is the planning of services and the third deals with consultation. Representation is very important. If disabled people are able to represent themselves, that is the ideal. All well and good if they can represent themselves. We should do everything that we can to enable them to do so and to knock down the barriers, physical and others, that sometimes prevent them from being able to represent themselves.

Many disabled people, particularly those with a mental handicap, might not be able to represent themselves, and might never be able to represent themselves. Many of those people, particularly older people, may have few to speak up on their behalf. Some may be in long-stay hospitals or institutions and have only a handful of visitors, or not even any visitors, during the year. Therefore, they are in the hands of the staff. I pay tribute to the staff, who almost invariably show kindness and consideration to those people.

If individuals need someone to speak up for them, we must make sure that there is representation and advocacy of their needs. That is particularly relevant when people are moving from long-stay hospitals into the community. It is important that their wishes and needs are taken into account and that there are people to speak up for them.

Mr. Thurnham: Will the hon. Gentleman include children in long-stay mental hospitals, who have lost touch with their parents? The difficulty is to know who is responsible for them, because the National Health Service does not have ultimate responsibility for a child's life. It is important that, order clause 11, the names and addresses of the children are listed, as well as the local authorities, which should take responsibility if the parents have lost touch with the children. If parents have not seen their child for years, it is important that the local authority accepts responsibility for the child. I should like a list of local authorities responsible for the children to be included.

Mr. Wigley: The hon. Gentleman makes an important point. I am sure that we shall deal with it in Committee.

It is important that there is someone speaking from the child's point of view. In some circumstances where, regrettably, the parents may not be able to do so, have lost interest, or have died, there is a need for someone to do that. There could be dangers sometimes if the local authority takes that responsibility unto itself, because the local authority would have to represent the child against itself. The person representing the child must be genuinely independent, and his first priority must always be the need of the disabled person, be that person a child or an adult.

Representation and the advocacy of the needs and interests of disabled people should be a fundamental right. We should look at the wording of the Bill in Committee to ensure that we are establishing a fundamental right.

One aspect of the Bill that worries me is clause 1(1), which states that any disabled person

"may be represented by a representative whom he has authorised".

Two things cause me concern. First, the word "may" always causes difficulty in the House, and we ask whether it is strong enough. That is nothing new, and I am sure that we shall examine it in Committee. Secondly, I refer to the words "whom he has authorised". The client group that most greatly needs representation on its behalf is the profoundly mentally handicapped. They may not be able personally to give authorisation. We should ensure that the wording of clause 1(4) is adequate, so that those who most need the Bill are not left out or ignored. That matter needs attention.

Another important area in the Bill is the improvement that it provides in the procedures to assess the needs of disabled people and to plan services. By defining disabled people's needs and identifying them specifically in a coherent manner, there is a better chance of ensuring that those needs are met and the services are available for them in the right place and at the right time. Many organisations that deal with the needs of disabled people have referred to that. I should like to quote from a letter from Sir John Cox, director of the Spastics Society, who says:

"The Society is increasingly concerned with more multiply severely handicapped people, many of whom live at home with their parents, with little or no contact with statutory authorities. A co-ordinated assessment of need will help to provide a framework for progress for them by helping to strengthen the hand of disabled people and their families."

That is evidence from the Spastics Society, which is involved in that work. I commend those words to the Minister, because they help to answer some of the misgivings that he has expressed, reflecting discussions that he has had with local authority representatives. We need a balance, and the views of organisations such as the Spastics Society and MENCAP should be heeded.

Many disabled people do not get the support and services that they need, and nor do their families. Indeed, they sometimes miss out even when services are provided under statute. Part of the reason for that is lack of resources. There will always be a lack of resources, so we must maximise our use of them on selected priorities. Resources must go where our mouths are. Part of the reason is ignorance of services available to disabled people, and part of the reason is the system's failure to match the needs of disabled people with services.

I have an example of that in my village. A mentally handicapped man is being cared for by his mother. She is getting quite old and finds it increasingly difficult to look after him as he has become physically handicapped as well. Although they were in our midst and we knew about them, nobody had told her about mobility allowance which she could have got several years earlier than she did. We all know of similar examples. Services are available and it is possible to get help but there is a breakdown in

communication. We must overcome that. We need a system that ensures that the people do not fail to get services because of ignorance of them.

We must plan services properly. There is an acute problem for young mentally handicapped people leaving school or full-time education. I think particularly of 16-to-19 year-olds. We heard Brian Rix, the secretary-general of MENCAP, talking on the radio this morning about a young mentally handicapped person from Gwent who went to an institution in Scotland. His parents gave up their home and moved up there to be close to him, but, as they arrived, he was discharged without any planning for the future.

We all know of parents of mentally handicapped people being acutely anxious about what will happen when their child's time at school ends—whether there will be any work opportunity, an opportunity in an adult training centre or any social life. Often, such people's social life has revolved around the place of education. Parents are also anxious about whether they will receive enough support to look after their child and whether their children will be able to lead an independent life, and can hope to have their own home and possibly to marry.

Such things should not be thought to be irrelevant to young mentally handicapped people. The system should ensure that they have such opportunities and, if they are unmarried, the opportunity to live as adults with two or three others of the same age in a group home. There should be services and support to facilitate that rather than make such people increasingly dependant on aging parents who grow less able to cope. Without that provision, such people can less easily be integrated into the community in middle age after their parents die. There must be planning at the appropriate time. Clause 3 provides for that. I hope that, with improvement, it is accepted.

Another group is a cause of concern—the ageing parents of adult mentally disabled or mentally ill children, or brothers, sisters, or spouses caring for them. The perennial question is, "What will happen when we are dead?" Their predicament is worrying and becomes worse with time, just as it becomes ever more difficult to cope. We should ideally be able to ensure that such people develop independent living in the community. Some families might not want that. If so, we must provide support services that increase gradually with time so that their position does not become impossible. We all know of people for whom it has become impossible. We must face the fact that circumstances might well become intractable without planning and gradually increasing support. The Bill addresses itself to that as well.

Disabled people must play a larger part in the planning of services for their benefit. We, the "do-gooders", often do what we perceive to be right and fail to consult those who are affected. We can often get constructive and enlightening replies if we ask what they need. More than that, we should provide an opportunity for them to be involved in the decision making process. That is an important development. Clause 10 helps in that direction, and clause 12 is also relevant. As for the objective of screening developments of public policy, whether of central or local government, we should screen all our decisions for their implications for disabled people, as we monitor those decisions for their effect on other groups.

Mr. Thurnham: Will the hon. Gentleman also include in that the need for medical research into the causes of handicap which goes to the point when conception occurs? If medical research could help at that stage, it could avoid later difficulties.

Mr. Wigley: I was using the term screening to mean looking at the implications of decisions for disabled people, just as we consider their effect on women and other interest groups. That should be built in, and the Bill aims to build it in in relation to town and country planning procedures. That is an advantageous step forward. It is already done in the GLC area and could be done elsewhere. The hon. Gentleman's point is absolutely right. It is much more desirable to prevent mental or physical handicap, but that goes beyond the realms of the Bill. However, it is worth noting that 141 hon. Members have supported the motion on the prevention of congenital handicap.

Many local councils have individually welcomed the provisions of the Bill. I am aware of the comments made by the Association of County Councils and, to a lesser extent, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. I have received a letter from the ACC, which opposes the Bill. Did it consult properly with all its members? Did it receive comments from all member authorities, and do all those authorities take that view? I suspect not. With measures, including my Disabled Persons Act 1981, there is a danger that some bodies will give an instant reaction, and say, no on principle and because they do not want any change that makes impositions. It is perfectly valid for them to point out any increases in bureaucracy so that we can try to minimise them, and to point out the resource implications as we should be aware of changes that will require more resources. But let us have a positive attitude. We are not merely trying to pass laws to make impositions on authorities. We are here to improve essential services, and to improve minimum standards to the best practice that already exists. Those bodies should support that, not decry it, as they have done.

The Minister said that local authorities must be free to order their priorities and not have them prescribed from the centre. That comes a bit rich from the Government, given what has happened during the past three years in terms of the Government's direction of the resources that local authorities can use. But if we ask for priority to be given to a group, whether it be the mentally handicapped, the mentally ill or the elderly, we must accept the accompanying resource implications. As we work to integrate the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill into the community, we must accept that we shall need additional resources. Hon. Members on both sides of the House advocate this because it is the right policy. If it costs a bit more in public expenditure, we should go to the people and ask them to pay it. If we did that, we would obtain their support.

The Bill is timely and welcome, and if it reaches the statute book it will make a material change in the well being of families and individuals who must cope with disability, including mental handicap, physical handicap and mental illness. It deserves the support of hon. Members on both sides of the House, and I wish it well.

12.39 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I begin by striking the only note of discord that I shall make in my speech, because I wish to get it out of the way quickly. The right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr.

[Mr. Andrew Rowe]

Morris), whose record in this area is respected by all and for whom I have a high regard, should not be allowed to get away with the suggestion that a straight comparison of the amount of money paid by local authorities on, for example, home helps is sufficient to attribute a good reputation to those which pay a lot and a bad reputation to those which pay less.

I drive to work every day through the borough of Lambeth and I see the results of the extraordinary depredations that that council has made on its ratepayers for many years. Many businesses have closed. Clapham used to be the centre of an enormous thriving industry, which has been almost driven out of London. I compare Lambeth with a district council in my area, which has held its rates steady for more than 10 years, as a direct consequence of which businesses have been attracted to the area, unemployment is beginning to decrease and the amount of resources available to spend on provision for the disabled is beginning, at last, to increase.

I ask myself whether some boroughs are being extraordinarily generous with other people's money. A great difficulty in my area is that the demands made by the so-called generous boroughs are a direct disadvantage to our district councils, which would dearly like to have more money to spend. I am, I might add, not wholly satisfied with the Government's allocation of rate support grant to my county and, therefore, my district councils. It would be better if the Government considered more carefully the way in which they reward local authorities that have faithfully carried out Government policy.

I shall leave that partisan note and pass on to the excellent Bill. It is fortunate that politicians develop thick skins, because the compliments showered deservedly upon the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) would have made an ordinary person turn bright scarlet and remain so for the entire debate. But I am delighted to add to what would be the embarrassment of anyone who was not a professional politician.

I am chairman of the all-party parliamentary panel on the personal social services, and I am delighted to follow the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), who is one of my fellow officers. It is important to remind the House of this new panel, which has existed for about 15 months. It was the brainchild of the social workers who, having discussed ways in which the dilemmas, difficulties and opportunities of social workers and the personal social services could best be presented and understood in Parliament, made available to us the services of a part-time research assistant. The House has responded by providing an all-party parliamentary panel, which takes an interest in social work and the personal social services. We work closely with other groups, about which I shall say something in a moment.

The Bill deals avowedly with crisis prevention and partnership. I re-emphasise the fact that the present lack of co-ordination not only among local authorities but, more importantly, among different services leads to carelessness—in the strict sense of the word—and to the wasting of resources.

When I was first a civil servant in the Scottish Office, my assistant secretary made an interesting case for prisons being returned to local authorities, not because he felt that it would necessarily add enormously to the provisions for serious criminals but because it would bring home to local authorities and to the local community the costs involved in putting people in prison. A genuine dilemma is posed by our present administrative divisions. For example, if a local authority can shift responsibility for something to, for example, the NHS, that is off its hands and on those of somebody else. The fact that it costs more to keep people in the NHS is something of which they are aware, but feel that it is not their business.

I congratulate the Government on having extended the arrangement for joint finance, which is an indispensable aid to making sense of the way in which we handle the overlap between local authorities and the NHS. In my area of Maidstone, the health authority is carrying out a very energetic and enlightened campaign to get a whole range of patients out of psychiatric hospitals and back into the community. This is being facilitated considerably by the arrangements for joint finance. This is an admirable policy, and I hope that when the time comes for the present arrangements to expire, the policy will be looked at carefully to see whether the time is yet ripe for it to be wound up or whether it should be extended for a while.

The Bill is about restoring power over their life to handicapped people, and this is enormously important. In this, the element of representation is almost indispensible. I am sure that every hon. Member has experience of being made to feel like an inanimate object in the presence of experts. I remember vividly the experiences of someone whom I know well. When he was in hospital, he was appalled when a specialist swept in to his room with 12 students, stood the students round the bed and said, "This, gentlemen, is a straightforward case." The dehumanisation, and the feeling that thereafter the students would go away and talk about him behind his back was extraordinary, and I have never forgotten hearing about it.

All the time there is a "de-skilling" of patients by a combination of their anxieties and the doctor's attitude. They come along desperately worried about some aspect of their lives, whether their health or disability or that of their loved ones. They come seeking help and are far too ready to lay aside common sense and experience and leave everything in the hands of the specialist. The specialist may be one of two kinds. He may be utterly humane but paternalistic and think that he must assume the burden of telling the patients exactly what should be done or, far more often than we realise, the specialist is extremely anxious.

I used to teach students and, when I was confident of a subject on which I was teaching, I was only too glad to allow questions from, and discussion with, my students, but, when I felt that I was on pretty shaky grounds and had prepared the lecture only superficially, I filled the entire time allotted by speaking—a feeling with which hon. Members may not be entirely unfamiliar. This happens in the interaction between the clients, or patients, and the specialist. To have a representative there to hold the balance—somebody who is slightly detached—is an admirable proposition and I very much hope that it will be pursued.

May I also re-emphasise the point that was very well made my the hon. Member for Monklands, West that the contribution of the disabled to society is still grossly underestimated. I have told the House on previous occasions that I am proud to be a trustee of Community Service Volunteers. In that position I have learnt vicariously that it is the young volunteer who is engaged in the very interesting and exciting experiment of living

in a house with a severely handicapped person who gains from that experience. Quite frequently that young volunteer will admit only too readily that what he or she had to contribute at the beginning was little more than the unskilled work of providing a pair of hands and that they have absorbed from the handicapped person an experience of life and an expansion of their whole understanding of life that will be treasured long after the experiment is over.

Another question is that behind the Bill and integral to it is the need for training. May I remind the House that a debate is taking place about the training of social workers? In statutory terms the House has very little to say about that debate. I think that I am right in saying that the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work is entitled to make what recommendations it likes and to some extent to adapt the formal curriculum for social workers without very much interference from the House. However, it is a matter of the greatest importance. It brings sharply into focus the role that we expect social workers to play in our society. Frequently we put social workers into an intolerable position by demanding from them things which it is quite unrealistic to demand from them and then pillory them when they fail to deliver our wholly unrealistic expectations. Those wholly unrealistic expectations are frequently fuelled by highly skilled but over-ambitious social work trainers. They may feel confident that they could deliver those expectations, but they are dealing with students who frequently will find it quite impossible to do so. We need to look very carefully at the way in which the training of social workers is undertaken.

Furthermore, there is a very large number—I believe that it is over 70 per cent.—of staff in residential social service establishments who have had virtually no training at all. It is a horrific proposition that we should commit people, perhaps for the rest of their lives, to the care of untrained staff. We need desperately to look carefully at that proposition. One of the things that training needs to do is to provide these workers with confidence to handle their own doubts and difficulties and to share them with the client, and with their representative, in ways that will allow the client to make a much better plan for his own life than the life that these people, who are not very confident, frequently feel that they have to make for them.

Although this has nothing to do with the debate that is taking place within the social worker profession, we desperately need to expand and improve the training of the whole community so that it understands these very serious problems. In that connection I pay a high tribute to the posters of the Spastics Society. It has done a remarkable job in raising public awareness of the contribution that can be made by handicapped people. There should be very much more of that kind of activity.

It is also true that a great deal of discrimination against the handicapped results from unfamiliarity. People are afraid of saying the wrong thing, so they say nothing. They do not want to cause offence, so they simply ignore them. One reason why I applaud the move away from institutional care to community care is that by putting people frequently in touch with the handicapped, they will become familiar and more confident in their dealings with them. We need to help them in that, so the Government might consider extending the assistance given to voluntary organisations and others in raising public awareness of the contributions to society that the disabled can make.

In our consideration of the Bill, we should not be afraid of expanding considerably the contribution of volunteers. For example, many representatives could, quite properly, be volunteers. I say that for two reasons. First, during the past 85 years the average working life has halved. I believe that by the year 2035, it will have halved again. There will be an enormous reservoir of time that could be used for that sort of work. There is a great deal of evidence that there are people hungry to make that sort of contribution.

Secondly, I believe that volunteers are often the best people to represent other people. Professionals constantly must bear in mind that the person with whom they are battling today may be the person with whom they will have to co-operate on another case tomorrow.

Mr. Thurnham: On the difference of approach between voluntary organisations and local authorities, I refer my hon. Friend to Catherine Macaskill's book which contains 20 case studies of families who wanted to foster or adopt handicapped children. Half of them applied to local authorities, while the other half applied to voluntary bodies. The half that applied to local authorities were rejected, and only when they applied to the voluntary bodies were they able to adopt or foster. That shows the contribution of voluntary organisations. I believe that local authorities still suffer from the belief that the fear of handicapped people is something with which most people cannot cope.

Mr. Rowe: Local authorities face considerable difficulties, partly because of their statutory responsibilities, so they are more cautious. It is not only the voluntary bodies that make a contribution, but volunteers. The volunteer can commit himself to an emotional attachment for an individual, something that might be regarded as bad practice for a professional social worker.

The attention that the Bill pays to carers is absolutely right and, of great importance. I remind the House that the parliamentary panel, in conjunction with other all-party groups, has tabled an early-day motion drawing attention to carers. It is a very important subject and I hope that it will receive the support of the House. My private hope is that, eventually, this country will come to the concept of a minimum income, which would be of enormous assistance in resolving many of the problems.

I have wandered widely in my speech but I hope that I have given a clear sign of my personal support for this admirable Bill.

1 pm

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): First, I warmly congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on his choice of subject for his Bill. As others have already said, it is difficult, when one takes a high place on the ballot, to make a decision between laudable causes which come to one's notice. I commend my hon. Friend's Bill as very much in the spirit of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, which was probably the most humane piece of legislation to be placed on the statute book this century. That measure owes everything to the work of my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris).

I came to the House this morning in the hope that the Government would show that they were not willing to subject my hon. Friend to the shabby treatment we saw on 18 November 1983, when the full forces of the Government were launched against my Bill to amend the

[Mr. Robert N. Wareing]

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act. My Bill would have given more life to that Act and would have ensured that the disabled were not discriminated against. At that time, right hon. and hon. Members will remember that Conservative Ministers were unofficially whipped to return to the House, and all bar eight Ministers cancelled their engagements that day to dishonour the name of the House.

I warn my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West that, although he will hear Conservative Members use the rhetoric of compassion, the Minister's speech this morning echoed the real voice of the Government. No doubt they will allow the Bill to have a Second Reading, but they may try to denude it of its essentials in Committee. I recognise that the Minister with responsibility for the disabled is unable, because of the genuinely difficult task that he faces in his office, to be in the Chamber today, but it is worth reflecting on his speeches when there was a Conservative Opposition. The hon. Gentleman was very much a skinhead in Opposition, but in Government he has proved to be a skinflint. When he spoke for the Conservative Opposition, even Torvill and Dean would have qualified for the mobility allowance if he had had his way.

The Bill is important in seeking to give representation to the disabled, especially to the mentally handicapped in their bid to obtain their just rights. The take-up campaigns by various local authorities have revealed that many of our people are not obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled. With many organisations imperilled by the Government's legislation to abolish the GLC, the Merseyside county council, the West Midlands county council and the other bodies which carried out take-up campaigns, it is all the more necessary that those who are doubtful about their rights should be adequately represented before tribunals and local authorities.

The Bill would bestow vital obligations upon local authorities to provide care, and upon managers of hospitals when patients are discharged to inform local authority social services departments of the need to provide for such patients. I know that many of my constituents in areas such as Croxteth, where there is entirely inadequate provision for those leaving hospitals in the Liverpool and Sefton areas, would benefit greatly should the Bill reach the statute book and be implemented in the way in which my hon. Friend seeks.

I have strong feelings about clause 5, because of my own practical experience. During the last three years of my mother's life she was blind and entirely dependent upon me. I had a full-time job as a lecturer in further education and I worked difficult and unsocial hours. I know what a relief it is to be able to obtain help to allow one the relief of a holiday.

My wife's sister had a stroke some six years ago and has been completely dependent upon her husband, whose health is not of the best, ever since. He has to devote every minute of every hour to looking after his wife. He has to see that her food is cooked and the groceries are bought. he must provide for her needs when she visits the toilet and look after her every night, with little assistance from the local authority. How relieved he is when occasionally a relative or someone else can sit in with his wife allow him to breathe in the fresh air and feel free from the onerous duties that love has brought his way.

When the Minister talks about the cost of community care and the cost that the Bill will bestow upon local authorities, I hope that he will remember how much my sister-in-law's husband saves the National Health Service and how many people in his situation are similarly saving public funds.

I remind the Minister that in its 1983 manifesto the Conservative party said:

"Most people who are ill or frail would prefer to stay in or near their own homes, rather than live in a hospital or institution. helping people to stay in familiar surroundings is the aim of our policy."

The Bill challenges the Government to put their money where their mouth is.

It is essential that, in many areas of social legislation, people should be informed of their rights, and the Bill seeks to do just that. Organisations for the disabled such as the Spastics Society and the Disablement Income Group, have published an excellent pamphlet called "Getting the best out of your Act"—the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. I hope that, as far as possible, the Government will try to give such information to the people so much in need.

Disabled people feel that they are discriminated against. My Bill sought to outlaw discrimination, but there are many kinds of discrimination. Simply to be disabled and unable to discover one's rights—whether one has a right of appeal or is being dealt with correctly by the local office of the Department of Health and Social Security —is a form of discrimination. Such people are in a doubly difficult position.

The Minister has an opportunity to tell us how he has carried out his promise to the House when my Bill was debated in 1983, when I was told that education and persuasion was the way to deal with discrimination. How much have the Government spent in attempting to eradicate discrimination by education and persuasion?

The Bill will do much to eradicate discrimination by merely providing for information to be made available, but the Government's record cannot be looked on with favour. In Committee we cannot expect much real help from the Government to ensure that the Bill's principles are carried through. Indeed, the Government's record in relation to the disabled since 1979 has been disgraceful. The record has been full of broken promises since the Conservative party's research department produced a document in February 1979 which stated:

"Conservatives have singled out the disabled for priority within the social security budget."

There has been a complete rundown in the incomes of disabled people. In November 1980, there was a 5 per cent. cut in the real value of invalidity and sickness benefits. The Social Security Act 1980 abolished the earnings-related supplement to short-term benefits. In July 1982, when a much higher proportion of disabled people than able-bodied people were unemployed, unemployment benefit for the disabled was taxed. In 1984, the real value of heating additions fell. They are now under threat from the Social Security Bill which has recently been published. Dental and ophthalmic charges and prescription charges have been increased.

Hon. Members may ask, "What has that have to do with the Bill?" These cuts in benefits have meant that disabled people must lean more and more on local authorities at a time when those authorities have been uner vicious attack through financial cuts by the Government.

Under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, disabled people are entitled to help with holidays, telephones, aids to daily living, adaptations to accommodation and transport to educational and recreational facilities. Too few local authorities provide such facilities. Even with the best will in the world, local authorities cannot provide the necessary services, although many try hard.

Between 1979 and 1984, 41 local authorities increased spending on personal social services by less that 10 per cent. and 84 local authorities—two thirds of the total—increased expenditure on personal social services by less than 20 per cent. There is a great discrepancy between different parts of the country. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe pointed out, there is a discrepancy in the provision of home helps. In the much-abused London borough of Camden, there are 14 home helps per thousand people and in Wiltshire — about which there is little abuse in the House—there are 5·5 home helps per thousand people.

The authorities that want to provide for the needs of disabled people should be given the means to do so. It is no use Ministers genuflecting in the direction of compassion if they are not willing to provide the funds that will enable local authorities to act. Too often we hear Ministers passing the buck to those same local authorities that are subjected to reductions in rate support grant. RSG has fallen from 61 per cent. of expenditure in 1979 to 48 per cent. this year. There cannot be cuts of that dimension without harming essential social services.

It is not local councillors who have failed to implement the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1971 and who are appealing to the High Court against the decision of a district auditor; it is those who wish to implement such legislation. Under this Government, local authorities have to decide not only between what is discretionary and what is legal but between what is legal in one case and what is legal in another. That is why deprived people in many areas are becoming even more deprived.

If the Government believe that disabled people form too small a proportion of our community to consider, we should remind them that they are a large constituency—5·5 million people.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe: people are becoming more aware of the problems of disabled people. Disabled people's organisations must continue to agitate to maintain the morale and confidence of those whom they seek to represent. It is only in that way that we shall have legislation of the type for which we are pressing today.

The Labour party recognises the needs of disabled people, in its manifesto. It is creating the Socialist Disability Action Group, which I hope will soon represent disabled people as an organisation affiliated to the Labour party.

I hope that the Government will not, here or in Committee, tell my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West that there is insufficient money, and will not repeat what the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) said in 1982, when he told the House that there were insufficient resources to provide for disabled people.

In this rich country, what sort of society is it where millions of pounds can be gained by buying and selling shares in Westland within the period of the stock exchange fortnightly account and where we can afford £2 billion on tax relief to rich people since 1979, but not afford the means to allow our disabled brethren to have a normal and decent life? What sort of a society is it where we have to have flag days for scanners to screen for breast cancer and to raise funds for kidney machines? What sort of a society is it that allows that to happen? Many people would like to see flag days for Trident, cruise and Polaris. I suggest that there would be few givers.

I hope that the Government will look favourably, at least today, on the Bill and will not repeat the shabby treatment of November 1983. That discredited them in the eyes of many disabled people. It made many of them politically aware of the type of Government with which we are dealing.

Many Conservative Back Benchers feel compassion for disabled people. We have heard speeches from some of them today, such as the one by the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam). I hope that those Back Benchers will press the Government to ensure that destructive amendments will not be tabled in Committee and that we shall find on the statute book a measure to reverse the trend of recent years, which has been to destroy and undermine the standard of living of 5·5 million disabled people.

1.20 pm

Mr. Colin Moynihan (Lewisham, East): My one criticism of the debate today is that some of the speeches have been wide-ranging and lengthy. Perhaps the best service that I can render the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) is to keep my comments short to enable other hon. Members to speak.

It is a particular pleasure and honour to speak on the issue because, as hon. Members know, I was prevented from speaking for a while because of my position as a parliamentary private secretary in the Department of Health and Social Security. It was sometimes difficult to restrain myself from speaking on issues that I felt strongly about. I know that on this issue that applies to my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman), who would like to contribute to this debate.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West on providing a Bill that is a framework for progress. That is to be welcomed by both sides of the House. I think that he would want to pay tribute, not just to the people covered directly by the Bill, but to many of those who voluntarily work to provide the services to the disabled throughout the country, not least in my own borough of Lewisham. There has been an enlightened approach in that borough and I pay credit to the social services department in Lewisham for its approach to the issue.

The Bill provides closer co-ordination for the provision of community care and services to the disabled. That is much needed at the present time. In many cases the local district health authority has not been closely associated with, or aware, of the procedures of the Department of Health and Social Security or the housing department and I have been involved in bringing such people together to achieve the co-ordination that the Bill seeks to promote. The Bill does that in the best way by involving the disabled themselves. I strongly welcome that. It is another step towards the closer communication that is needed to solve the problem. It is all the more important when regional health authorities have a long-term aim to provide a comprehensive adult mental illness service, with each district ultimately closing the larger mental hospitals.

[Mr. Colin Moynihan]

The right for the disabled to have a say is important. The Bill goes further than that. It does not give them just a partial or nominal say but a full one. That must be welcomed. One of the subjects that should be highlighted and considered as a result of the debate is loneliness. Loneliness is a subjective feeling and is in no way confined to people with disabilities. Sharing experiences and giving the disabled the right to have a full say would do much to alleviate the problem of loneliness. With the responsibility that they will receive comes interest and involvement. That provides a remedy for their problem of loneliness. I perceive that the Bill will be important not just in terms of communication and entitling disabled people to rights but to solving one of the great problems that exists with disabled people who feel alienated from the solution to their problem of loneliness. I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West on directly tackling that problem at the same time as providing an important onus on the state to ensure greater rights and responsibilities for disabled people.

I should like to mention the vital role of public education in this area. We have discussed that role on many occasions in the House. For many years the prime necessity has been for public education to move towards acceptance of disabled people as people rather than as exceptional cases. It has also moved towards the integration of those people with the able-bodied of our society. The first and most important place for that process of education to occur is in our schools. I praise my own education authority, the Inner London education authority. It is rare for me to have an opportunity to praise ILEA, but I am delighted to be able to praise it for its input into the important area of education among our youngsters. It realises that the excellent initiative that is taken towards integration is of the utmost importance for public education in society. I wish other local education authorities would follow its lead in that area.

I refer to the importance of the right to be consulted, It is important to recognise what lies behind that view. There is increasing awareness by carers and the public of the needs, abilities and aspirations of disabled people, but it is not enough. We have to go further. That awareness is to be praised, but by involving those people in the decision-making process in areas affecting them, we shall make real progress. The debate is the beginning of the road in that direction. It is progress well beyond the rights of consultation in section 15 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act.

Participation through consultation and the establishment of the right of representation do not necessarily lead to the integration and equality that I seek. The disabled are not a homogenous group. They all have different and important needs and requirements and, equally, different ideas about what they require. We should celebrate the Bill because the fact that they have different ideas about what they require will be covered by the much fuller representation to which they are entitled under it. That will happen when as I dearly hope, the Bill becomes law with the minimum number of amendments to it.

Community care is one of the most important initiatives to have been picked up from previous Governments and developed by the Government. While I was a junior parliamentary private secretary at the Department of Health and Social Security, I had the opportunity to see how community care initiatives were being properly and constructively developed.

Extra costs will be incurred. That point has been rightly made. The costs will be in addition to what is spent on day centres, adult training centres an occupational therapy departments, which will have to be increased with the policy of community care. It is better not to pursue community care policy than to underfund it or do it badly. The Select Committee was right when it stated:

> "Community care on the cheap would prove worse in many respects than the pattern of services to date."

Therefore, it is important that we continue with the commitment to community care and fund it properly. I am sorry that this point has not been raised more vigorously by my colleagues on the Back Benches. There is no doubt that we have put a tremendous amount of effort and increased resources behind community care in the past six years. In the past 10 years the number of community psychiatric nurses has increased to 2,000 from a mere 663, and the number of day centre places is now over 9,000 compared with 6,500 in the middle of 1978. It is important that that increase in resources continues.

With increased resources and the policy of community care comes a critical consultation process, which will now be improved radically by the Bill. I welcome that because it is no good having the state deciding how to process community care if at the same time we cannot take complete account of the individual needs of each and every person who is going from a mental hospital into the community or being given the opportunity to go to a new home, having been institutionalised. The Bill goes a long way towards achieving that.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West on his Bill and I hope that everyone in the House will secure its safe and swift passage through the House.

1.30 pm

Mr. Bruce George (Walsall, South): I shall try to stick to the 10-minute limit imposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), who is assuming the guise not only of promoter of the Bill but of the chief person who is whipping his colleagues into meeting his requirements.

Dr. Godman: On both sides of the House.

Mr. George: Indeed, on both sides of the House.

Reflecting on having been in the House for nearly 12 years, I have come to the conclusion that on few occasions have I succumbed to the lure of attending a debate on a Friday on a private Member's Bill. The push and pull at midnight on a Thursday generally leads me to my constituency. My presence today, and my support of the Bill and participation in the debate are not only testimony to my admiration of my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West but the result of my empathy with the many organisations and individuals who have asked me to support his Bill.

The debate might not push today's Westland shareholders' meeting off the front pages. Nor perhaps will it gain as much publicity as debates on pornography or abortion. But I assure right hon. and hon. Members present, if they need any assuring, that many millions of people are awaiting the House's decision today. I refer to the sufferers and those who care for them. We should not

measure enthusiasm for the Bill or indeed the need for it in terms of column inches or minutes of air time on radio or television.

Perhaps not everybody who will benefit if the Bill becomes law is aware of the Bill's existence, let alone some of it provisions. That covers one of the principles embodied in the Bill—the concept of representation of those who are unable to articulate their views to authority. I dutifully, ritually and warmly congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West on his initiative. I rarely display the sin of envy, but I have tried for 12 years to get a place in the ballot for private Members' Bills and have not even got on the bottom rung of the ladder. The nation eagerly awaits the workings of the law of averages which I hope will display itself next time so that my long-awaited piece of legislation can deservedly reach the statute book.

I shall not talk in general about the problems of the disabled, services for the disabled, the need to improve the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, the need for maintenance benefits, the need to abolish discrimination against the disabled and the need to improve access to buildings despite recent building regulations, but confine myself to the Bill. I was not at all happy with the Minister's response. I shall be charitable and say that he does not believe what he said but dutifully reproduced what his senior colleagues wanted him to say. The Minister is high on principle but low on practice, and principle will not help the hundreds of thousands of people in need.

I regret that the concept of divide and rule extends even as far as underprivilege—the Minister said that if the group to whom the Bill addressed itself came from legislation, it would be to the detriment of other underprivileged groups. I am unhappy that one group of underprivileged must be played off against another to benefit.

The Minister conjures up and nurtures the national antipathy towards the bureaucrat by implying that this is a bureaucrat's charter. Perhaps I am being unfair to the Minister, but he seemed to imply that the bureaucrat, not the disabled, will benefit from the Bill. If so, why do so many groups who represent the mentally disabled and the physically disabled participate in the process of legislation by working closely with my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West?

The Minister also said that the Bill would damage local democracy. This is not the occasion to be openly partisan, but those words came rather strangely from the Minister in view of the Government's attitude to local democracy. The Bill should not take away the right of local authorities to decide what is in the interests of those whom they represent. The Minister's response is not at all helpful. He talked of sceptical neutrality. I only hope that the neutrality that he displays is the neutrality that the Government have shown towards the American-Westland deal. Perhaps my hon. Friend will welcome such neutrality. I hope that a group of hon. Members will not simply do the bidding of the Government and emasculate the Bill.

If there is a criticism of the Bill it is that it does not go far enough. That reflects my hon. Friend's sense of realism. He knows what he can get away with. However, even his limited objectives may expect too much in the light of the Minister's response. The Minister criticised my hon. Friend for covering only some of the disadvantaged. If my hon. Friend had applied a broader brush approach, he would have been dismissed for being Utopian and too broad in his concept. There is no way that he can win.

We must ensure that there are proper provisions for those in need. Much progress has been made since 1969 —I like to refer to it as the year "1 BA"—one year before Alf. Enormous progress has been made since the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Bill was enacted, but we still have a long way to go to achieve a proper attitude among public officials and a proper legislative framework, and we are light years from getting proper funding for the disabled and the needy. If this Bill reaches the statute book more or less intact, it will be a further step towards our goal.

The Bill helps to achieve a proper balance between the public and private sectors, and between voluntary and public organisations, which we need to do. The needs of the disabled will be catered for by both public and voluntary sectors functioning effectively, and it is important that the legislation secures that.

Hon. Members should read the evidence given to the Social Services Select Committee by the Association of Educational Psychologists — perhaps they are the bureaucrats who are being castigated—and the Select Committee's report on community care which contains 101 recommendations and represents one year's work. that is one pigeon hole filled by a lengthy report. The evidence shows how important it is that assessment is made. It states:

> "It is our professional experience that the families of mentally handicapped children are deriving great benefit from the recent improvements in the education and care of their children. The vast majority of parents wish to look after their handicapped child in their own home. Such commitment should be encouraged and indeed strengthened by the provision of facilities such as short stay hostels, short stay fosterings, counselling and on-going support and by on-going support and training for parents in matters relating to the care of their offspring."

We must seek support for individuals who can look after their own children with proper support. The evidence continues:

> "However, a variety of accommodation . . . should be available to meet the individual needs of mentally handicapped adults for whom living with their parents is not possible. It is essential that the families of handicapped adults have access to advice and support which they perceive as being tailored to meet their own personal needs."

We must break away from the old-fashioned approach where having a disabled child was seen as a form of divine retribution, and the child was sent to some institution to "join the field of cabbages", as a local friend of mine described it. The child would grow up there and probably die there. Expectations have changed and the provision of services has improved immeasurably. We must nurture voluntary organisations far more successfully.

I have a close relationship with the local MENCAP organisation and the Parkinsons Disease Society in my constituency which have an enormous volume of experience. They work with the local authority, require national and local funding, and can articulate the views of their members and stimulate a national debate. Supporters of the Parkinsons Disease Society are working on great research papers, and are trying to get the Government and people interested in developments in Hungary. What is happening there should not be dismissed because it emanates from the other side of the Iron Curtain. It is not strictly a cure or a treatment for Parkinsons disease; it is

[Mr. George]

known as conductive education. I have read papers and spoken to enthusiasts, and I hope that this form of treatment, which provides a structured therapeutic educational programme for Parkinsons disease patients, will be seriously considered. In Birmingham, the Parkinsons Disease Society is spending money in an attempt to inculcate new attitudes among sufferers and in the Government. It is an example of a voluntary organisation that should be helped financially more than it is now.

My local MENCAP branch, with which I have close contacts, said in a recent report:

"National MENCAP is committed to a policy of providing for people with mental handicap within the community. We support that policy."

It continues—this is where the Bill is so important—by saying:

"No longer should large mental subnormality hospitals cater for the offspring of despairing parents. A wealthy and civilised country, as ours is, should ensure that the needs of people with a mental handicap are met within normal society. Thus we see that our efforts will increasingly be placed in co-operating with the District Health Authority and the Council Departments involved in developing housing, educational and leisure services for adults."

This is a fine Bill that deserves support. If it passes this plenary session, I hope that it will not be emasculated in Committee but will be strengthened. I hope that we can send to the Government our message of support. From the sponsors of the Bill, one knows that it has cross-party support. It will reflect badly upon Members of Parliament who sit on the Committee dealing with the Bill if at the behest of the Whips, they try to do it down and to leave nothing except the title and the principle. The physically and mentally disabled deserve more than we have given them so far. The Bill must be acted upon. I congratulate the sponsors, and especially my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West, on his initiative and good fortune. He needs our support.

1.42 pm

Mr. Roy Galley (Halifax): It is unfortunate that a series of unnecessarily partisan points have been made during the debate to bring a discordant note into our proceedings. It would have been pleasant had the House been united in applauding the principles of the Bill.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on introducing the Bill, which is an important part of the gradual process in recent years of improving the lot of physically and mentally disabled people. It is inevitably a gradual process, and progress has certainly been made. If one considers the information on resources and the availability of services during the past five or six years—whether one considers Health Service provision, social services provision, the number of social services, the claims for social security or improvements to social security rules—one sees that the Government have a record second to none in help for the disabled. The policy of community care and its application is an advance for the disabled. I am especially pleased with the Bill because it is a great improvement upon the naive and potentially counter-productive approach set out in the Bill introduced last year by the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing).

As a member of the Select Committee on Social Services, I am pleased that the Bill seeks to implement several key recommendations in its report on community care. One of the most vital recommendations was that no one should be discharged from hospital without a practical individual care plan, devised jointly by all concerned, communicated to all those responsible for its implementation, and with a mechanism for monitoring. To a large extent, the Bill brings into effect that and other key recommendations of the Select Committee. It is a matter of regret that there are not more members of the Select Committee present today.

The individual treatment of the disabled is the key to the success of our community care policy. If the policy does not succeed and if we are not sensitive to the needs of individuals, and work out a plan for each that will work, the whole policy will fall into disrepute. If there are a series of incidents where people are cast into the community with inadequate provision, the basis of our policy will be questioned. That would be regrettable, because the policy is a great improvement in the treatment of so many of the needs of the disabled.

I hope that the hon. Member for Monklands, West and the Committee will take into account one or two points about the precise content of the Bill. On the whole, these are relatively minor matters, and the principles of the Bill are accorded agreement by both sides of the House. However, in certain aspects, it is rather bureaucratic and it will be easy for local authorities to hedge round some of the provisions with detailed regulations that could be counter-productive to the effects that the hon. Gentleman wishes to bring about. I do not say that from a sinister motive but because I am concerned that the disabled, their families and representatives could be inundated with a barrage of incomprehensible paperwork that could be counter-productive in helping them in their needs.

It is important that there are guidelines and some clear understandings about who may be representatives and what the role of those representatives will be. It may be difficult to build into the legislation specific provisions to overcome the difficulties that I see, but there is a danger of people being manipulated in a particular direction if a specific group sets itself up, almost as a business, as professional representatives of disabled people.

The major voluntary groups have to be involved and are likely to have the necessary detachment and experience to help disabled people. There are groups that do good and are well-meaning, but have a particular slant in their philosophical, religious or moral code of life that may work for some individuals but not for others. It is important that the authorisation procedures for representatives include elements that will guard against some malfunctioning of the system.

There is also a slight danger that a number of statutory solutions may result in the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped being moved from one type of institution into a different one, nearer to the community but not necessarily within it. This is the concept of what the Americans delightfully call "trans-institutionalisation". I hope that the establishment of statutory procedures such as those set out in the Bill will not, as they could, lead to such "trans-institutionalisation".

Clauses 1 and 2 in particular, but other parts of the Bill as well, give me cause for concern about the needs for, and the right of, families, as well as the disabled, to be consulted. I have no doubt that most health and local authorities will consult. There are references in the Bill to the needs of families and the rights of parents and children

to be consulted at appropriate times. Families have an important role to play in the overall concept of care for the disabled and I should like some inclusion in the Bill of statutory rights for those involved to be consulted at other points.

It is most welcome—and it is a matter to which we shall have to pay increasing attention in the next few years—that the Bill attaches importance to the 5·5 million carers. We must balance the needs of the carer, the disabled person and the extended family in any assessment that is made. I hope that the Bill will spur on the development of a range of respite care. The Bill could have a good spin-off effect in that direction.

I doubt whether it would be possible or right for statutory bodies to provide with sufficient flexibility the kind of respite facility that is needed, but they have a vital role to play in the co-ordination, encouragement and grant-aiding of that kind of provision. Within the imaginative and wide-ranging central funding initiatives that are currently undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Security it may be possible to lay particular emphasis when allocating funds upon the provision of respite care.

The result of advances in respite care may be that many carers will feel able to care for their relatives for a longer period of time if they know that occasionally they will receive help and a break from their onerous duties. To be cared for in the home is likely to be to the advantage of disabled people. To be able to continue in a family environment is very important for them.

Finally, I turn to a small point in the Bill that is of considerable importance. It continues the trail blazed last year by my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) in his Hospital Complaints Procedure Act: the provision of specific rights for patients. Our system does not provide sufficient protection for patients. We have sought, so far unsuccessfully, to find a number of financial mechanisms within the National Health Service that will result in a more responsive operation that can more readily be adapted to the needs of patients and that allows the voice of patients to be fully heard. If we cannot find the financial mechanisms, we must continue the search for them. It is important to introduce into legislation a statutory right for patients to be consulted and to have their complaints dealt with. It is another important side effect of the Bill that I welcome wholeheartedly.

1.52 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I am pleased to welcome this Bill and I am happy to congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke). I almost said "my hon. Friend the Member for Gartcosh" because he is so closely associated with Gartcosh in the minds of all my constituents on account of his deep concern for the people employed there. He has also long been known for his deep concern for those who suffer from that particularly debilitating handicap of blindness. Therefore I am pleased to be taking part in the debate upon his Bill.

Part I relates to the assessment of the needs of disabled persons. There is a need to define clearly in part I what is meant by the needs of both the disabled and their families. The identification of needs must have as its aim the object of enabling the disabled person to participate as fully as possible in his or her family and in the community. The definition of needs should, therefore, include economic, financial, social, education and employment needs.

During the last few days I have spoken to a senior psychiatric social worker, Mrs. Tricia Godman, and Miss Ann MacLean, a senior social work manager in the Strathclyde regional council's social services department. Both of them have considerable experience of working with the disabled. Clauses 1, 2 and 3 are eminently sensible. They seek to protect and promote the interests of the blind and the physically and mentally disabled.

It is important that social work departments are equipped with the skills to conduct the assessments spelt out in clause 3. Perhaps some specialisation should be encouraged, and, at the very least, given the range of needs of the young disabled, social workers may require some form of in-service training. Basic grade social workers will be involved in the important work of assessment, and they should be committed to the interests of that client group.

Miss MacLean told me yesterday that the Strathclyde regional council social work department planned to set up assessment teams to deal with the needs of young people who were physically or mentally handicapped or blind. Such a team would have among its members a social worker, the school teacher involved and an educational psychologist. I welcome that development. Educationists and others who train social workers will need to take cognisance of that. The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) outlined the implications for social work training contained in the Bill.

The two senior social workers both welcomed clause 4. They say that there is nothing more disastrous than a person — especially someone suffering from a mental disorder — being discharged from hospital with no warning of and no preparation for what may be an intensely difficult transfer to the community. Both social workers welcomed the need for prior notification spelt out in the clause and the need to plan discharge from hospital, especially for those suffering from psychological illness or mental disorder.

Too many people are discharged with no social skills and no experience or understanding of the DHSS regulations or provisions. That is an important requirement for those discharged from psychiatric institutions. Few, if any, undertake rehabilitation programmes. That is disgraceful. If my hon. Friend succeeds with his Bill, as he should, he will earn the immense gratitude of many patients, their families and their professional carers. Clause 4 will enable social workers to assist the disabled to settle in the community following their hospitalisation.

Clause 5 provides much-needed assistance for those millions of people who may be called informal or family carers — the parents, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters who give so much of their lives to disabled members of their families. It has already been pointed out that those family carers save the state a great deal of money. Just think of what would happen if they decided to forgo those immense burdens.

Clause 5 should deal with the problem that often confronts social workers when they discover the existence of a mentally disabled person only if his or her family carer is taken ill or, even worse, dies. That often involves a mentally disabled person in his or her 40s or 50s who has been cared for since childhood by parents who have grown old and who may still be carrying that awesome burden

[Dr. Norman A. Godman]

while in their 60s, 70s or even 80s. It is vital that decisions concerning the care of middle-aged people are taken while their elderly parents are still able to participate in that decision making. Many of these elderly family carers are plagued by worries about the care of their handicapped sons or daughters when they themselves are unable to perform that duty. An old lady in my constituency said to me recently that she was desperately worried about the care of her middle-aged son following her death. Her fear was that he would be filed away in some uncaring institution.

We should recognise that carers should be given holiday breaks from the difficult task of caring for their disabled family members. The Bill will perform a service for elderly carers of disabled relatives as well as for many others. I hope that it will have a safe passage and that its provisions are given the widest publicity by central Government and local authorities.

2 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke: I seek leave to reply to some of the issues which have been raised during what I think has been a splendid debate. I thank right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House for their contributions. I thank especially those who have taken part and those who have offered constructive criticism. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have shown that it is not true that Fridays are necessarily unpopular. They have shown by their presence in the Palace of Westminster that they support the main thrust of the Bill.

My right hon. and hon. Friends will understand that in thanking them for their support I confine my response to three contributions. First, I should like to thank the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) for his first-class speech and for the excellent support that he has given to the Bill. I am sure that his work in this area is much appreciated by hon. Members and by those beyond the House. I thank the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) for his speech and for his input into the Bill. He mentioned a number fo organisations, and I agreed with every word that he said. My difficulty is that the organisations have been so helpful, as the hon. Gentleman appreciates, that it would be impossible for me to put on record my gratitude to them while trying to enable a decision to be taken on whether the Bill should receive a Second Reading by 2.30 pm. Nevertheless, my gratitude is firm.

I turn to the most important contribution to the debate, which was made by the Minister for Health. He seemed to sum up his own response to the Bill by saying that it was one of "sceptical neutrality". That is a pity, especially after a debate in which it has been made clear that, although there is constructive criticism of some parts of the Bill, it is the will of the House to place the Bill on the statute book undiluted so that it can make a contribution to solving the problems of the disabled. The House wants to see progress, and it would be a great pity if the Government attempted to thwart that objective. I hope that the Minister will bear in mind what has been said in that respect during the debate.

As an ex-local government man, I am sorry that the Minister appears to have been influenced so profoundly by the last-minute letter of the Association of County Councils. When he mentioned the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, I am sure that the Minister wished to remind the House that it is supporting the Bill. In my view, the ACC did not make its best effort. It may be that it is suffering from a lack of resources, but there was nothing very constructive about what it had to say.

If the Minister is bearing in mind that advice, I hope he will consider a few points. First, it is overwhelmingly evident that prevention is not only better but cheaper than cure. Secondly, he should accept that good administration is cheaper than bad. I hope that he will also agree that too often those who pretend to oppose bureaucracy are in reality offering excuses for unacceptable lethargy.

The duties towards disabled people mentioned in the letter already exist to a great extent. I am trying to assist the association and other councils to keep within the law. They should not blame me for giving them that opportunity by spelling out the needs which exist and by imploring those public bodies and others involved to accept that disabled people are entitled to be represented or to express their views on the kind of society in which they live and the kind of services that they think they should be receiving.

I know that the Minister would never dream of letting councils take their own decisions, on the basis of the kind of autonomy he talked about today. I know that if members of the GLC were here they would have welcomed today's approach, but that attitude does not apply to the Minister's view on the DHSS. There is no way that he would tell each office in whatever geographical area they are located that the matter will be left to them. Therefore, I found the Minister's response on that point surprising to say the least.

I do not want to go overboard, because I am still trying to convince the Minister that he should be Mr. Nice instead of Mr. Nasty. Were he here, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) would have said that the Association of County Councils in its letter was, to say the lesst, over-egging the pudding. The Minister fell into the trap of exaggerating the administrative nature of the Bill, especially when he referred to clause 6. That will become increasingly clear as the matter is debated in Committee.

In the spirit of good will which exists in the Chamber today, I want to say that, if the Minister is asking the Bill's sponsors for constructive discussion on his amendments, that is fine. We would all accept that. What we could not accept is any attempt to destroy the real meaning of the Bill; any attempt to knock the heart out of the Bill and therefore to disappoint the millions of people whose needs have been identified by hon. Members on both sides of the House, who look, and rightly so, to the House of Commons for leadership in relation to their needs.

The Bill is not a blueprint for bureaucrats; it is a charter for the consumer within existing legislation. It offers a fair deal for disabled persons; they, too, are ratepayers. When the Minister comes to give quiet, sober and reflective consideration to those points, we as a House might even be able to convince him that he should remove from his mind the sceptical neutrality which he advances as an argument today and put in its place the positive merits of positive commitment.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 42 (Committal of Bills).

Criminal Records Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

2.8 pm

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I begin by saying how delighted I am that the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) has secured a Second Reading for his important Bill. I wish it speedy progress on to the statute book. May I also say how honoured I am that the Leader of the Opposition is in his place? He has obviously come specially to give support to my Bill, not tempted just because it obliges the disclosure of certain records. It is good to see him here and to know that he is four square behind a Bill which has magnificent all-party support. I shall be brief, because it is important that my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office should have the chance to explain and expound on the Government's view on this important matter.

The genesis of the Bill is interesting and important. We look back to one of the most brutal and appalling examples in recent years, of child abuse and cruelty, culminating in murder — the Colin Evans case. Colin Evans had a record, which was undisclosed. He was able to obtain a voluntary position of trust acting as a baby sitter and to murder one of his charges. This brought into the open the problem that has been highlighted, especially by the Association of County Councils—people with previous criminal convictions who have abused and assaulted the weak, the elderly and especially little children have subsequently been able to obtain positions of trust.

The ACC has circulated to hon. Members a number of illustrations of the types of cases that have made it so keen to see legislation on the statute book. I do not want to detain the House by quoting too many, but some should be put on the record. There is the case of a driver convicted of acts of gross indecency with mentally handicapped minors only to be found not to have declared his record of convictions on similar charges. There is the case of a school caretaker who had been convicted of indecent assault on a child, which was unknown at the time of his appointment to the county council. He was subsequently convicted of a similar offence with respect to children at the school and dismissed. There is the case of a resident warden on a gipsy caravan site on which a number of children lived. He was found to have been convicted and imprisoned for sexual offences in Zimbabwe. The association details drug offences and a number of sad cases of people convicted of theft and dishonesty who were able to obtain positions in registered private nursing homes or homes for the elderly run by local authorities.

The catalogue of 33 cases is but the tip of the iceberg. This week, the ACC furnished me with another list of 14 cases that have come to light in recent weeks. One particularly objectionable case involved a man appointed to the post of warden at a hostel for adolescent boys. His application showed that he had worked for 15 years previously in a similar capacity in a home for displaced teenagers run by a charitable society. Before his appointment, he claimed that he had been employed in a hostel for homeless families. He gave references, but these were later proved to be forgeries. He had a deplorable record, yet he obtained that position of trust. Such cases have made the ACC feel that there should be a statutory obligation to disclose the records of people seeking positions of trust in work with the young and with vulnerable adults.

There is no difference between me and the Government in determination. I know that my hon. Friend the Minister of State is as concerned as every hon. Member. He shares my concern that modest measures like this should not become an excuse for a witch hunt. I was one of those many Members who supported the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. That measure enables those who have made mistakes, have been punished and have atoned for their crimes to have the opportunity to wipe the slate clean. I do not object to that and nor could anyone who had any feeling of compassion.

There are always exceptions—those who have abused the young, sexually or in other ways, and those who have defrauded the elderly and have convictions which are relevant and remain relevant. They remain relevant, especially if their acts come about because of some mental abnormality or flaw in their characters which makes it almost impossible for them not to do those things again. Society needs protecting from them and they need protecting from themselves. It is with that in mind that I believe that the Bill should commend itself to the House.

I was gratified when I talked to my hon. Friends—I use those words advisedly—in all parts of the House and had no difficulty in attracting an impressive list of sponsors.

I have not discussed the matter with my hon. Friend the Minister of State, but I have discussed it with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department whose responsibility this matter is. He has apologised to me for the unavoidable reasons for his absence, which I accept. We have had what I call an enlightened disagreement.

I am aware that the Government feel that this matter can best be dealt with by some form of voluntary code. I beg to differ. I feel strongly, and I know that the ACC does, that the Bill will do something more than the code. It will ensure that anyone who seeks employment or offers his services as a volunteer—that is important—to care for children, the elderly, physically and mentally disabled people and all who are vulnerable should have previous convictions disclosed.

The Bill does certain things which the admirable guidelines upon which the Home Office has spent a great deal of time, care and thought in hammering out do not do. I know that my next point will appeal to the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart). The Bill applies to Scotland. The Home Office guidelines do not. It is invidious that one important part of the United Kingdom should be omitted from such provisions. A number of bad cases have come to light north of the border. I am pleased to see the right hon. Gentleman and to see him nodding vigorous assent to that matter. For that reason alone, the Government should pause and think again.

Of course, the Bill is not perfect, although as one who drew seventh place in the ballot, I had the opportunity of having it drafted professionally. I realise that it is not perfect and I am more than happy, in effect, to say to my hon. Friend and his colleagues, "Put in what amendments you wish." I hope that when my hon. Friend replies he will surprise us all and say that my argument has, at last, prevailed.

The Government have worked exceptionally hard. People involved in voluntary organisations and the local

[Mr. Patrick Cormack]

authorities have been consulted. A great deal of homework has been done. The experts in the Home Office know far more about the problem and its details than I do. However, I strongly and respectfully urge my hon. Friend to realise that there is no difference in interest and determination between us as we share the same objectives, and for a moment to reflect that on this occasion my road might be slightly better than his.

I believe that it is often right to rely on voluntary guidelines and codes of practice that do not have the force of statute. In many areas that is entirely the right road to take. I also believe that there are certain areas where legislation is necessary. When we are dealing with the wellbeing of the disadvantaged in our society, we have to do that in legislation. Just as it was right, laudable and proper for the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) to introduce his Bill today and to have all-party support in an area where it could have been argued that legislation was not absolutely necessary, so I believe that in this case legislation will improve matters. It will mean no ducking. If people seek to evade or avoid their responsibilities, there will be parliamentary and legislative sanction.

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that to many of us the inference from his Bill is that, if the legislation is accepted by the Government, the code will operate without any recourse to the legislation?

Mr. Cormack: That is precisely why, at this late hour, I am urging my hon. Friend, whose sincerity is not in doubt and whose determination is not in question, to think again about legislation.

I speak as one who is convinced that this is a real problem for Parliament to tackle. As are so many hon. Members in the House, I am the father of young children. I know how vulnerable they can be. In my constituency I have seen many young and elderly people in danger of exploitation. We have all had similar experiences. Before I came to the House I was a school master for 10 years and during that time I came across evidence of many disturbing cases. They would have been dealt with more adequately had legislation of this sort been on the statute book. Therefore, I urge my hon. Friend, whose credentials are impeccable, to reconsider whether it would not be better to legislate rather than to rely on a code of practice.

I am most anxious, as I am sure the House is, to hear the comments of my hon. Friend. I am anxious to hear his conversion and to learn that he has been sitting in Damascus rather than in the Chamber.

2.23 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Giles Shaw): I do not think that anybody can fail to be moved by the cogency, clarity and extreme charm with which my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) has made his case. I endorse the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) cannot be here. I am glad to know that my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South recognises and acknowledges his absence. However, there is a continual confusion between Putney and Pudsey, so it is not surprising that I am here instead.

My hon. Friend has made an eloquent plea that the legislative route, which is what he would prefer to deal with this matter, is one that the Government should follow as opposed to the administrative route that we prefer. That lays upon me the obligation to expose to the House the reasons why we are not so minded at this time.

I am prepared to start from the position of common ground, which I am sure my hon. Friend will undoubtedly admit. Despite the close limitations placed on disclosure, there have been many changes within recent years to provide greater protection for children. For example, in 1982 it was agreed that information on the background of people seeking to register as child minders should be made available to the local authorities concerned. Many serious incidents of assault on children by those in a position of trust has led to widespread concern that more fundemental changes need to be made. The Home Office and the police share that view.

Following the particularly horrible case of the murder of 4-year-old Marie Payne and the conviction of her murderer in 1984, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South referred—I must point out that she was unknown to her murderer before the tragedy took place — the then Home Secretary decided that the arrangements for disclosing the criminal background of people seeking work with children should be urgently reviewed.

The terms of reference of the review, which was announced by means of a parliamentary written answer in March 1985, were:

"To devise a system under which information about the unsuitability by reason of criminal background of people seeking positions where they will have substantial opportunities for access to children can be communicated to those bodies which are responsible for engaging such people, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, and to those who have responsibility for authorising or licensing such people to occupy such positions."

Although the terms of reference were restricted to those with access to children, the review was undertaken on the basis that the system should be capable of extension to cover other vulnerable members of the community such as the elderly and the handicapped. The review team included representatives of the local authorities and the police as well as central Departments, and produced its first report in July last year.

I think that my hon. Friend will concede that the review team examined in detail every aspect of disclosure and made several recommendations for a new system capable of being applied to children and other vulnerable groups. Specific recommendations were made about those working in the state sector with substantial access to children. The review team has been expanded to include representatives of the voluntary and private sectors, and I hope that the House will be interested to know that it is now considering what acceptable arrangements can be made to extend disclosure to them as well. Those who have read the report, a copy of which is in the Library, will understand that, far from being a simple matter, the issue is full of complexities. The principle of the complexity of the problem is at the heart of our present anxiety about the legislative proposals currently before the House.

The then Home Secretary welcomed the report when it was published on 23 July and said that consultations would be held with interested organisations before the recommendations were brought into effect. The report was widely circulated for comment and was in general well received. Draft circulars to give effect to the

recommendations for paid and volunteer staff in the local authorities and the National Health Service have been prepared. Subject to any comments on the drafts, we hope to be able to bring the new arrangements into effect in the state sector with effect from 1 April this year. It is estimated that as a result of those arrangements about 100,000 extra checks may be made each year covering areas of particular concern, such as teaching and social work.

The recommendations in the report and the guidance in the circular have been worked out very carefully, keeping the protection of children as the paramount consideration but balancing the often conflicting views about how disclosure can most effectively be made. As a result, we have produced proposals that take account of the needs of children and also pay regard to the scope of checking, the confidentiality of records and the practicalities of running criminal record checks on potentially hundreds of thousands of staff and volunteers. I emphasis the sheer scale of the operation that is now to be set in train.

Because of the impracticability of checking on everyone who has any access to children or other vulnerable people, which must run into several millions, the arrangements that we propose are limited to those appointed to positions giving opportunity for substantial access to children. Checks will not necessarily be required for administrative staff or those with little or supervised access to children. Guidance is also to be given to the local authority services concerned and to the National Health Service about the main groups of people for whom checks should be considered and about the elements to be considered in deciding whether a person has substantial access.

In order to limit the volume of checking, we are proposing that checks should be made at the point when a person has been otherwise accepted for a job. Checks will not therefore be made on all candidates for jobs or all volunteers but only on those who, apart from a criminal records check, have been accepted for an appointment. That will greatly reduce the amount and cost of checking and avoid unnecessary exposure of criminal records, Because confidentiality is an extremely important part of public confidence in the system—

It being half past Two o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

To be resumed upon Friday 7 February. — [Mr. Cormack.]

NEW TOWNS (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (SCOTLAND) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Second Reading what day? No day named.

CORNEAL TISSUE BILL

Read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 40 (Committal of Bills).

Ordered.

That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Corneal Tissue Bill that they have power to extend the Bill to make provision to permit the removal of eyes or parts of eyes for therapeutic purposes or for purposes of medical education or research.—[*Mr. Hannam.*]

MARRIAGE (WALES) BILL

Read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House. —[*Mr. Coleman.*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This is an unusual course. Does any hon. Member object to proceeding? No.

Bill immediately considered in Committee; reported, without amendment.

Motion made, and Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 58 (Third Reading), and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for Neath (Mr. Coleman) on his good fortune, which is in stark contrast to mine.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order, but the hon. Gentleman has got it on the record.

LAW REFORM (PARENT AND CHILD) (SCOTLAND) BILL

Read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 42 (Committal of Bills).

Special Constables

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Sainsbury.]*

2.34 pm

Mr. Colin Moynihan (Lewisham, East): The House will regret the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Mr. Conway). He had the good fortune to draw today's Adjournment debate on the special constabulary. Regrettably, his younger child has fallen ill, and rightly, he is with his family. I am sure that all hon. Members will wish his baby a speedy recovery. My hon. Friend's views on the subject are well known and respected by hon. Members. He is wholly committed to a growing role for the special constabulary, and seeks a clear sign of political will from his colleagues to support it in its present and future role to uphold law and order. Although it may be unusual, it is a mark of my respect for him and of the importance of the subject that I have chosen the same title for my Adjournment debate.

The special constabulary receives all too little credit for the service it provides to both the public and the regular forces. It is a very British idea. Only recently it celebrated the passing of the Special Constables Act 1831, 155 years ago. We ask ordinary members of the public to give some practical help to the police, and we give them the same powers as regular officers. That sounds a concept fraught with dangers and difficulties, but it works.

For years specials have been carrying out the duties asked of them without giving civil liberty activists the slightest cause for complaint. I suspect that those activists share the general public's ignorance of the contribution and, even, the existence of the special constabulary. I share the views expressed in the House by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), who said in a similar Adjournment debate — too much time has elapsed since we discussed the subject in detail—

> "My purpose in initiating the debate . . . is to call on the Government to expand, strengthen and revitalise the specials, so that they can be built up into an effective and well-trained police reserve with roots in their local communities. . . . The priorities for the specials are more training and more recruitment. Neither priority should be all that difficult to achieve, provided the political will exists, because there are such solid foundations to build on within the existing structure of the special constabulary." — [*Official Report,* 31 July 1981; Vol. 9, c. 1410.]

Those words are equally true today.

I recognise and applaud the fact that the long decline in the number of special constables has been halted since those words were uttered. However, I find it hard to believe that only 15,000 or 16,000 men and women are willing to give a few hours a week to this important work when 45,000 were employed in 1964. Is enough being done to inform potential applicants, and to make the work attractive? I fear that the answers may be No. I am looking for answers to those questions from the Government Front Bench today. I seek an assurance from the Government that the specials are being taken seriously. I am confident that my hon. Friend the Minister will give me that assurance, but I hope that he will go on to describe the role within the police service that the Government seek for the special constabulary.

Is enough being done to inform the public about the specials, and to encourage recruitment? If any hon. Member conducted a survey of his constituents he would find that the majority would not know of the existence of the special constabulary. Even most of those who have heard of the specials will have little idea of what they do. Some constituents would be surprised and alarmed to discover that for a few hours every week their next-door neighbour or friend down the road had all the powers and privileges of a regular constable, and used them. They would be even more surprised to learn that special constables had existed for 155 years.

Cannot we make greater inroads into that widespread ignorance? From time to time in the national newspapers I see advertisements for regular officers and for other voluntary national bodies, such as the Territorial Army. I cannot remember seeing any advertisement for the special constabulary. Yet that could be the subject matter, particularly for local newspapers. There are human interest stories that could be sensibly written up by such excellent local papers as the Lewisham *Star, Mercury* and the *South London Press,* to mention only those in my borough. I would welcome such an initiative.

There is great difficulty in recruiting special constables, even in London. Catford has one divisional officer, one sub-divisional officer and 11 special constables, but it would need 40 to 50 officers. Lewisham has one divisional officer, one sub-divisional officer and only five special constables; it could do with about 30 to 40 constables. Divisional Officer Jenkins of Lewisham has given outstanding service to the force and to the country for about 21 years. He has a bar to his long service medal, which I understand means that he has served for a minimum of 19 years. He is competent, responsible and has great experience. He is much liked in the force and in the community that he serves, and I pay tribute to him and to his colleagues.

Why do I say that human interest stories are involved? During the past year, Lewisham special constables, who work voluntarily, have done duty at Millwall, have patrolled regularly in pairs and have helped elderly folk. The sight of the policeman out of the panda car and on the beat is important in removing the fear of crime, which is larger than the incidence of crime, among the population. They also participated in Brave Defender, on the security side, patrolling Biggin Hill 24 hours a day for three to four days. Their role in ceremonials, including the Easter parade, is well known to all who follow their work in London, but I fear not to the majority of the population. I emphasise that the critical part of their work is the removal of the fear of crime by their presence on the streets, in the estates and especially among the elderly and responsible citizens, who like to see officers patrolling the streets on foot and who like to know their officers personally.

There are other ways in which police forces could bring the existence of the special constabulary to the notice of local residents. I should be glad if my hon. Friend would say something about the methods used by forces and how successful they are. I should be interested to know what the Government do at national level to increase the size of the special constabulary.

On the important subject of relations with regular officers, it is possible that the Government take specials seriously. It is possible that senior police officers are clearly aware of the value of special constables. But I wonder whether that view is shared all the way down the line in the police force? If we are to use the special constabulary to its full potential, we must be certain that there is no friction with regular officers. Specials must be

fully integrated into the force. I have heard it said that some regular officers do not view the efforts of the special constabulary as important. I have also heard of resistance from regular officers to the extension of the special's work into more vital areas of police activity. But if there is a lack of trust between specials and regular officers elsewhere than in Lewisham and Catford, where it does not appear to be a problem, it will be difficult for the Government to make progress. There must be a clear understanding on both sides of the limits of the role of the special constabulary. Will my hon. Friend tell us whether there is a problem here? if so, what is he doing about it?

I mentioned the extension of the specials' work. Ordinary men and women will not wish to devote their spare time to the police service unless they get some reward. I am not talking about a financial reward, although I shall say something about that later. I am talking about gaining satisfaction from the work and feeling that they are making a contribution to the force. If we use specials only for the dull, undemanding tasks which regular officers do not wish to undertake, we cannot reasonably expect them to attract recruits or to keep them once they have been attracted. People will not be moved to apply by the prospect of standing in the rain every November to line the route for the Lord Mayor's show. they will, understandably, decide that they have better things to do. Surely we can offer them better things within the special constabulary.

One area where specials could play a useful role is in crime prevention. It is the soft end of policing, but it is just as important as the hard end—public order policing—for which specials are clearly not qualified.

Much has been done recently to help people to help themselves. The specials have a foot in both camps. They are part of the community as well as part of the police force. Most are deployed in the area in which they live. If they are more involved in neighbourhood watch schemes in their area, other local residents might find it easier to identify with them and might be more ready to turn to them. People might find it easier to get into contact with a special constable who is also a local resident than with a beat constable who lives at the other end of the borough.

I know that in London, and in my borough of Lewisham in particular, the Metropolitan police have made some progress in involving the special constabulary in crime prevention work. I should be interested to learn from my hon. Friend the Minister whether other forces have taken similar steps and whether more work could be done on the important neighbourhood watch schemes which have done so much good in terms of upholding law and order, certainly in London and, as I understand, throughout the country.

If specials are to perform more duties in the mainstream of police work and if they are to do so in a way that attracts the respect of regular officers, they must be properly trained. They cannot just pick it up as they go along. They have important powers to exercise and they must be taught how to use them.

I recognise that there are problems in providing training for part-time volunteers. It is difficult to plan a programme when one cannot be certain who will attend, and when, but the problems are not insuperable. Anyone who has a commitment to the police service—which every special must have—will be prepared to make the effort to ensure that he is equipped to do the job properly. It is not unreasonable for the specials to give up the occasional weekend.

It is in the specials' interest not just to ensure that they can carry out the work with knowledge and confidence but to provide a wider and more fulfilling range of tasks. The training that they are given must not be superficial. The training given to regular officers is unsuitable for specials, but the courses that specials undertake must be just as professional. A member of the public will be upset when a constable misuses his powers whether he is a regular or a special. I seek an assurance that the special constabulary is being taken seriously.

Earlier, I mentioned the need to provide a reward for the time that specials devote to the service. I was talking about a sense of personal satisfaction. Such a reward is most important to special constables. However, we should not assume that a financial reward in unnecessary. At the moment, specials receive various allowances but no remuneration. I know that the question of making some kind of payment, perhaps along the lines of the Territorial Army bounty, has been considered. I can see that there are arguments on both sides.

I am interested in having more special constables. The only question that interests me is whether a payment would persuade more public-spirited members of the community to offer their spare time to help the police. As specials are not paid, I assume that the Government think that the answer to that question is no. They may be right, but the question still needs to be asked from time to time. It is important to many special constables. To some it may seem as though a lack of payment is a measure of the value that the Government place on their work. I am sure that they are wrong, but I should be grateful for some light on the Government's thinking.

This is a secondary issue compared to that of job satisfaction, and I believe that the vast majority of special constables take the same view. However, we should note the benefits of a formal payment along the lines of the Territorial Army bounty.

My hon. Friend may make a fair point about paying special constables—that even without payment forces are finding it possible to attract recruits. I leave aside the question whether a payment would attract more. I wish the House to consider the fact that without the promise of a financial reward, and at the cost of their spare time, men and women are prepared to offer their services to help the police with the heavy burden that they carry on our behalf.

It is generally recognised that the prevention of crime and the maintenance of law and order are the responsibility not just of the police but of the community as a whole. There are people to whom this idea is not part of the small change of political debate on the police but a principle which they are prepared to put into practice.

We do not hear much about them, and we probably fail to recognise them when we see them, but every time a police force is under pressure, we can be sure that ordinary men and women are being called from their homes to keep routine police work turning over while the regular officers are diverted to deal with the crisis, whatever it may be—an important sporting event, a royal visit or a riot. The men and women of the special constabulary all over the country deserve our gratitude for the contribution that they are making to the police service. More than this, they deserve our support.

[Mr. Moynihan]

I am glad to have this opportunity to raise various questions with the Minister about the policies that the Government and the chief officers of police are pursuing. All right hon. and hon. Members can help the specials. All of us can do more to make the public more aware of the work that the special constabulary performs. We can all do more to encourage people to put their own spare time at the disposal of the police service. The police are more than ever under pressure and more than ever in need of our support. I sometimes hear people say that the police are too cut off from the public. Tell that to a special constable. There may be many suitable, public-spirited people who would be prepared to give practical assistance to the police service. Let us find them.

I hope that my hon. Friend does not think that my recognition of the general responsibility of us all to help the special constabulary means that I do not acknowledge his particular responsibility. I do. I look forward to his replies to the questions that I have raised in this debate.

2.51 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Giles Shaw): The whole House will be delighted that my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) has had the good fortune to take this debate, even though my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Mr. Conway) was unable so to do. I sympathise with him in the decision that he had to take. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East has made this, as it should be, a special day. It is a rare event when the House has time to discuss the special constabulary. I know that the men and women of the special constabulary will be particularly delighted with my hon. Friend's speech. he has demonstrated not only his substantial knowledge of the problem but his enthusiasm for their cause. The way in which he has presented his case shows a professionalism, a commitment and a detailed knowledge of this problem which I envy. I am most grateful to him.

The contribution that the special constables make has already been set out by my hon. Friend, but let us be quite clear about this. There is no way in which the police forces of this country can continue to sustain some of the major events that they have to sustain without the service of the specials. Specials in many forces worked long hours, far beyond their normal contribution, in order to ensure that the level of service to the public was not reduced by the inevitable diversion of regular officers to police, for example, the miners' dispute. That is a classic example of how important the specials are.

But the specials have another value. We all recognise that effective policing depends upon the support and co-operation of the public, and my hon. Friend was right to draw attention to that point. What more practical and valuable form of support is there than giving some of one's time to sharing the burden of the police service? What better way is there of ensuring that the police know what the public want of them and that the public know what problems the police face in meeting their wishes? I am happy to join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to the work of the men and women of the special constabulary within the police service.

My hon. Friend referred to the number of special constables. They have declined steadily from the very high wartime peak of about 100,000 to just under 15,000 at the end of 1981. I am happy to say that there has been some recovery since then. At the end of 1984 the numbers stood at just over 16,000. We are at present collecting information on the position at the end of 1985. This informaton will be available next month. I hope that it will show a further upward trend.

However, we should not be too anxious about the recent decline in numbers. A significant proportion of the loss has resulted from the weeding out of inactive members and the introduction by most forces of a retirement age of 55. That has played an important part. At the same time, forces have made efforts to improve and extend the training of specials. My hon. Friend drew particular attention to that point, to which I shall return in a minute. Let me assure him that we believe that the forces are moving in the right direction. We have now a special constabulary that is smaller than it was in the past, but in general it is younger, better trained and more active. The position varies considerably from force to force, and I certainly do not suggest that we have all the specials that we need.

The special constabulary is not a national force, which may be part of the reason why my hon. Friend queried the scale of its operation. It is based on individual forces, and, under the Police Act 1964, individual chief officers have responsibility for appointing special constables. Experience has shown that local recruiting campaigns are a better way of attracting members than national recruiting by, for example, the Home Office. The Home Office did undertake national advertising campaigns for several years, but they were less successful than local campaigns. Therefore, I should prefer recruitment of specials to take place through local campaigns, and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I are very willing to lend our support to local recruitment initiatives.

There are obvious reasons why local recruitment activities are likely to be more successful. Specials more than regular officers, identify closely with their local force. National recruitment initiatives for regular officers are a different matter, as that job involves a professional commitment to a service that can carry a person from one force to another or from one branch of the service to another as the opportunity presents itself. By definition, special constables are local residents. That is their strength and value. Probably the most effective method of recruitment is still personal contact with another special or a regular officer drawn from the location. Local events can be used to bring the special constabulary more immediately to the attention of local people.

We should not underestimate the importance of recruitment. The local force of my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham—the West Mercia police—has recently increased the number of special constables by more than 50 per cent. It has applied a number of interesting methods to achieve that.

My hon. Friend raised the question of possible difficulties in the relationship between regular officers and specials. That has been a problem, and we understand that a special constable must not be seen, and would not wish to be seen, as a cheap substitute for a regular officer. There will always be many duties that can be carried out only by properly trained regular officers. However, I accept what my hon. Friend said about the need for the role of the special constabulary to be significant. Deployment of the specials on tasks of interest and importance should play a major part in the commitment to join. Correct training for staff is important and is seen as such. I assure my hon.

Friend that there has been considerable development in training in that area during the past few years. A working party of the Police Advisory Board, which reported in 1981, recommended a more extended and structured training programme for specials, to include a great deal of practical work. I assure the House that all forces have taken steps to implement those recommendations, together with the recommendation of an earlier working party that specials would benefit from residential courses.

We now have a special constabulary that is not only younger and more active, but better informed, better prepared and better able to take on a more demanding role. What should that role be? The duties of specials traditionally have been on some of the peripheral functions to do with traffic, lining the roads and supplementing the police presence at local events. However, there has been a growing recognition that that is not the most effective use of specials. The police service cannot expect to attract and retain volunteers unless they can be offered more rewarding activities. The specials can contribute in areas such as traffic control, patrol duties, manning police stations and administrative duties within police stations. Indeed, most chief officers now reckon that that is the sort of role that they should provide.

There are some duties for which special constables are especially well equipped, and crime prevention activity is certainly one example. They are a bridge between the police and the community and they are well placed to participate in community-based crime prevention activities.

My hon. Friend referred to neighbourhood watch schemes. There are about 8,000 such schemes and I am sure that chief officers will be using specials to ensure that neighbourhood watch schemes, though they are selected and established by the regular crime prevention officers of the force concerned, are maintained enthusiastically. Continuity will be maintained by the activities of special constables, who can play a valuable role in that direction.

I understand that in Rugby the local crime prevention panel maintains a caravan for crime prevention publicity and information, which is manned by the Warwickshire specials. I understand also that in Bedfordshire, specials, as well as regular officers, give talks on crime prevention to schools and youth clubs. In London, in which my hon. Friend has a particular interest, members of the Metropolitan special constabulary run a series of self-defence courses for women. In all these activities, specials act in support of regular officers and under their direction. I cannot emphasise too strongly that the extension of the duties of specials is not intended to encrouch on the activities of proper regular officers.

My hon. Friend talked about the payment of a bounty. It is an issue that arises from time to time. My hon. Friend has experience of the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve, which pays such a bounty. The specials are divided on this issue. It is one that is considered regularly but the conclusion has always been that the payment of specials would not necessarily improve the recruitment of volunteers who were prepared to give long-term service to the force. The last formal review was undertaken by a working party of the Police Advisory Board, which reported in 1981. The special constabulary was represented on it and it was consulted. The working party gathered information from a number of voluntary bodies, including the Territorial Army, and it came to the firm conclusion that those which offered a financial reward faced exactly the same problems of recruitment and wastage and seemed no more successful in recruiting volunteers or keeping them.

The cost of paying a bounty would not be enormous, but before we add even slightly to the costs of police authorities we must be certain that the money would be well spent. At present, the evidence is not especially persuasive.

I have been speaking mainly about what chief constables are doing and I shall turn now to what the Government can do. At national level, our aim is to strengthen the special constabulary to ensure that it receives appropriate training and to encourage its effective use. In the end, it is chief officers who will decide whether to recruit additional specials, and it is they who will recruit and train them. We seek to provide chief constables with encouragement—they need very little—to pursue the objectives I have mentioned and to support them in doing so. This we do partly through our own commitments as Ministers by making it clear in public how important the role of the specials is. In the Metropolitan police district we have direct responsibility by virtue of the role of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary as the police authority. In the provinces, our main means of providing support and encouragement to chief officers is through Her Majesty's inspectors of constabulary. It is with our full backing that the inspectors, in their annual inspection visits to provincial forces, provide professional advice to chief constables on their efforts to recruit special constables and to deploy them more effectively.

I hope that I have not sounded complacent, because that would be far from the truth. I trust that what I have said is encouraging to my hon. Friend, who raised the issue, deployed effective arguments and emphasised the importance of the service. I hope that my remarks have been encouraging to the specials. We have a more important role for them. We have a body of men and women whose dedication and volunteer spirit we much admire. We have an adjunct to the professional police service and it is one that is becoming increasingly important. It has proved itself extremely valuable under critical conditions in recent times. It is a voluntary service and we respect those who serve in it. We admire what they do and we trust that we shall give them every encouragement in future to fulfil their part in helping the police and the community from which they come.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at three minutes past Three o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 16 December 1985

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Food Storage

Mr. Canavan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest available information on the amount of surplus food stored *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in the European Economic Community and the costs of storage.

Mr. Gummer: A note setting out the volume of United Kingdom and Community intervention stocks, including those of foodstuffs, on the latest available dates is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly.

The storage, handling and related costs of United Kingdom intervention products (including barley and feedwheat) in 1984 were £46·4 million. We have no figures for storage costs incurred by other member states.

Cereal Stocks

Mr. Pike asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the total cereal production in intervention in the United Kingdom has been stored for more than one year.

Mr. Gummer: Twenty nine per cent. of the grain held at 29 November 1985 has been in store for more than one year.

Veterinary Services

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make a statement about the restructuring of veterinary investigation centres and their management.

Mr. Jopling: I have carefully considered the proposals for restructuring of veterinary investigation centres in the light of the many comments received from interested organisations and individuals. In addition, we have undertaken a detailed investment appraisal of the recommendations made by the efficiency study.

Against this background, I have concluded that the Gloucester centre should be closed but with retention of the badger-tuberculosis unit. I confirm that Chester and Cardiff centres will be closed. Discussions on the future of the Moulton centre have taken place with Northampton county council to ascertain whether it would wish to take it over. It concluded that it did not wish to do so. Accordingly this centre will also be closed. I have also decided that it would be wrong to close both the Leeds and Lincoln centres, which would leave the large pig population in the area without adequate laboratory diagnostic facilities, and concluded that the best course would be to retain and enlarge the Lincoln centre and close that at Leeds. This represents a better option than establishing a new centre in the area.

On further examination it is clear that closure of Truro, Starcross, Winchester and Wye centres with their replacement by two new centres would not be cost effective. I have therefore decided not to take any action in relation to these centres. The timing of the closures will require careful consideration and this is now being pursued with a view to implementation during the first half of next year.

Finally, I confirm that we shall be establishing a new and more centralised management structure for the veterinary investigations which I am confident will increase efficiency and enable the more effective deployment of available resources.

Less-productive Areas

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will outline his policy concerning the effect of the European Economic Community common agricultural policy on the more extensive systems for poorer land; and if he has considered alternative crops and systems for the less productive areas of the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Fenner [*pursuant to her reply*, 13 December 1985]: Our policy for the areas of poorer land in the United Kingdom is to take full advantage of the provisions of EC Directive 75/268 on farming in less favoured areas. Accordingly, we secured agreement in Brussels last year to a major extension of these areas which now represent over 50 per cent. of our agricultural land. For many years we have paid headage allowances in them and on 28 November my right hon. Friend the Minister announced an increase in the rates. Within the constraints of the common agricultural policy we are continually seeking ways of assisting these areas. But most of them are not basically suitable for any form of agricultural production except livestock rearing. It is partly with this in mind that in the new agricultural improvement scheme, introduced on 1 October, we included certain new features to encourage conservationally sensitive investments and diversification.

Crop Research

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he proposes to advise the Agriculture and Food Research Council that it should invest in research on a broader range of crops; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Fenner [*pursuant to her reply*, 13 December 1985]: The Agricultural and Food Research Council already studies a wide range of crops. There is close collaboration between my Department and the council in order to identify opportunities for the further development of agriculture.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Legal Aid

Mr. John Fraser asked the Attorney-General if it is the intention that the scheme of interim payment on account of costs under the legal aid scheme should again be made in the current financial year; and if he will make a statement.

The Solicitor-General: Yes. Another payment on account scheme will operate in the current financial year, on a similar basis to those operated in each of the last two years.

Magistrates

Mr. Hoyle asked the Attorney-General if he will enumerate magistrates in England and Wales under the following categories: *(a)* sex, *(b)* age groupings, *(c)* occupation, *(d)* social background, *(e)* resident or non-resident within their petty sessional area and *(f)* if they have acknowledged a political viewpoint, party affiliation.

The Solicitor-General: On the last count at the beginning of the year there were 27,244 active justices of the peace, of which 15,980 were male and 11,264 female. The other information could not be ascertained except at undue cost.

PRIME MINISTER

Honours List

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister (1) what procedure is followed by Departments in submitting names for the honours list; and if she will move to appoint a joint committee to review the present departmental procedure with the object of widening its scope;

(2) if she will define the phrase political services as it is used by her in submitting her list for honours;

(3) what representations she has received on the procedure followed by Departments in submitting names for the honours list; and what reply she has sent;

(4) if she has any plans for reviewing and modernising the departmental machinery for the submitting of names for honours lists; and if she will make a statement;

(5) what are the functions and powers of the political honours scrutiny committee in relation to the suitability of individuals whose names are proposed to be submitted for honours to Her Majesty;

(6) on what dates the political honours scrutiny committee met in each of the last five years;

(7) who are the current members of the political honours scrutiny committee; and what are the criteria for making appointments to the committee;

(8) what criteria are used in determining whether an individual's name should be included on the list of proposed honours submitted to the political honours scrutiny committee;

(9) how many names were included in the list of proposed honours submitted to the political honours scrutiny committee in each of the last five years; and if she will provide a breakdown according to the political parties in respect of which those names were submitted.

The Prime Minister: It has rightly been the practice of successive Prime Ministers not to disclose or discuss details of the procedures and processes by which their recommendations to the Crown for inclusion in honours lists are arrived at, and I do not propose to depart from that practice.

I keep the arrangements under regular review, and they are modified from time to time in the light of changing needs or circumstances. I have no plans for any kind of external review.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister what scientific advice she sought from outside the Government about the feasibility of the strategic defence initiative programme before Her Majesty's Government concluded an agreement with the United States Administration on research projects; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: None. The United States strategic defence initiative is a research programme to investigate the feasibility of strategic defence.

British Atlantic Committee

Mr. Nellist asked the Prime Minister what was the financial support given by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in each of the last 10 years to the British Atlantic committee.

The Prime Minister: The British Atlantic committee (BAC), whom we have consulted, receives no grant from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. NATO refund a proportion of the travelling costs of visits to NATO headquarters organised by the BAC and other voluntary associations affiliated to the Atlantic Treaty Association. In the case of the BAC, this amounted to £13,201·50 in 1984-85.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Prime Minister if, having regard to the international status of the Anglo-Irish agreement, she will require a Minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, or other appropriate representatives of that Department, to attend meetings of the Inter-Governmental Council.

The Prime Minister: Membership of the conference is small and flexible. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be represented as appropriate.

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Prime Minister which Ministers and Departments of State have taken part or been represented in meetings of, and within the framework of, the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my hon. Friends the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State attended the first meeting of the intergovernmental conference on 11 December. The Northern Ireland Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office were represented at official level. There have been no other meetings.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisoners (Petitions)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of petitions received by his Department from prisoners in prisons in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

Mr. Mellor: As I stated in reply to a question from the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Kilroy-Silk) on 30 October at column *556*, no record is kept of the total number of petitions received from prisoners in prison in England and Wales.

Advancement of Women

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will establish law reform committees constituted as proposed in paragraph 66 of the United Nations Nairobi forward looking strategies for women.

Mr. Waddington: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so. Every Government Department already has a duty to keep under review as appropriate the legislation relevant to its areas of responsibility. The Equal Opportunities Commission has a duty to keep under review the working of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Pay Act 1970 and may review other legislation in the fulfilment of its other statutory duties.

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a special office within his Department to monitor periodically and accelerate the process of equitable representation of women as called for in paragraph 88 of the United Nations Nairobi forward looking strategies for women.

Mr. Waddington: The Home Office designated two equal opportunity officers in January 1984. They oversee and monitor the equal opportunities policy within the Departments, including the Civil Service programme of action for women.

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to evaluate those parts of the United Nations forward looking strategies for women which apply to his Department; what resources he has allocated to this; and if he will make a statement..

Mr. Waddington: Those parts of the 'forward looking strategies' which are relevant to the Home Office are being carefully considered as part of the normal work of the Department.

Departmental Appointments

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those bodies to which his Department makes appointments, the number of appointees and the number of these who are women.

Mr. Hurd: The information is contained in the Cabinet Office publication "Public Bodies 1984". I understand that the 1985 edition is to be published on 17 December and that a copy will be placed in the Library.

Pit Bull Terriers

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to secure the removal from the United Kingdom of two pit bull terriers recently imported from the United States of America and currently in quarantine.

Mr. Mellor: The Government have no power to remove from the United Kingdom animals which have been legally imported and properly held in compliance with our quarantine regulations.

Foreign Visitors

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what records and statistics are compiled of the number of United States citizens entering Britain each year.

Mr. Waddington: Nationals of all countries outside the European Community are required on entering the United Kingdom to complete a landing card which includes details of the purpose of their journey. Analyses of these cards showing the numbers admitted by nationality (including the United States of America) and purpose of journey are published annually in table 1 of "Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom" (Cmnd. 9544 for 1984).

National Drugs Unit

Sir Eldon Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the establishments of forces from which officers are to be seconded to the national drugs co-ordinating units are to be increased so as to enable additional officers to be recruited to replace them;

(2) if the police officers being seconded to the national drugs unit under the command of Mr. Colin Hewitt are to be placed on central service.

Mr. Giles Shaw: For the period of their service in the national drugs intelligence unit (NDIU), provincial officers are seconded to the Metropolitan police. They do not remain on the strength of their home force and chief officers providing officers to NDIU may replace them for the duration of that secondment; there is thus no need for any increase in establishment. NDIU is funded as a common police service.

This reply also provides information pursuant to my reply of 13 December to a question from my hon. Friend about police officers being seconded to the NDIU.

Mr. Mason asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in establishing a new national drugs intelligence unit and the creation of drug wings within regional crime squads; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The national drugs intelligence unit, superceding the central drugs intelligence unit, came formally into existence on 1 November. It currently consists of 25 officers drawn from provincial forces as well as from the Metropolitan police together with five officers from Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and 16 civilian staff.

My right hon. Friend has indicated to police authorities his readiness to approve appropriate increases in establishments of regional crime squads, to make provision for drugs wings, which they are currently considering.

Mr. Mason asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated extra annual expenditure to the South Yorkshire police committee and the metropolitan council in the funding of the new drug wings within regional crime squads; to what extent this will be nationally funded; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The precise arrangements for the funding of each regional crime squad, including drugs wings, are a matter for its constituent police authorities. Eligible expenditure will rank for 50 per cent. police grant from the Home Office in the usual way.

Mr. Mason asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will meet a delegation from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities to discuss the operational and financial implications of establishing drug

wings within each regional crime squad and the possibilities of national funding; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: As the then Home Secretary indicated, we are ready to approve requests for increases in regional crime squad establishments necessary to create drugs wings. The extra expenditure involved will qualify for 50 per cent. police grant from the Home Office in the usual way. Moreover, specific provision has been made in police grant related expenditure to cover local authority expenditure for this purpose.

The addition of drugs wings will not change the operational or other arrangements as regards the control of regional crime squads.

Officials are already in touch with the AMA, and my right hon. Friend is ready to consider any particular issues which it may wish to raise: but we hope that police authorities will play their part in the tripartite system by recognising in financial provision the priority which the Government attaches to the investigation of drugs offences.

Prisoners (Statistics)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, for the most recent week for which the data can be conveniently assembled, the number and percentage of prisoners in each closed prison and in aggregate who spent more than 18 hours a day *(a)* in their cells on three or more days, *(b)* on average and *(c)* on any day.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not available centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Reward Payments

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of the Metropolitan police towards reward payments; in what circumstances they may be made; what guidance or limits are laid down regarding their size; at what level the decisions to sanction payments are made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Commissioner of Police does not disclose details of reward payments. The policy is that payments are made in suitable cases, where there is no risk of compromising the criminal process. They vary in size but the decision is always taken at the highest level within the specialist Operations Department.

Civil Defence

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the pilot study in home defence region 10 examining the need and scope for improved co-ordination of home defence planning takes into account the transition to war measures contained in the United States-United Kingdom lines of communication agreement;

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the interim report of the pilot study concerning the co-ordination of planning in home defence region 10; and when the final report is expected.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This study is expected to be complete in a year or so's time after which the results will be made available to the House. An internal report has been made on the first part of the study which has confirmed the need for regional co-ordination. It would not be appropriate to place it in the Library. The study takes into account the agreement referred to in as much as plans made under it bear on regional co-ordination.

Detained Young Persons

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has as to how many persons under the age of 16 years were detained in the penal system in England and Wales at the latest date for which figures are conveniently available.

Mr. Mellor: According to the records held centrally, which are approximate, on 31 October 1985 about 340 persons aged under 16 were held in prison department establishments in England and Wales.

Cinemas (Safety) Regulations 1985

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he now expects to issue the Cinemas (Safety) Regulations 1985 and accompanying guidance; if he has agreed to any changes to the draft regulations as originally circulated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: It is planned both to make the Cinemas (Safety) Regulations and issue the accompanying guidance during the course of 1986. No significant changes to the draft regulations are expected, but the guidance's advice on access for disabled people will be revised on the lines explained in the reply given on 5 December 1985 to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam).

Freemasons

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what records justices' clerks keep of persons in their area known to be freemasons.

Mr. Mellor: None.

Citizenship

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy not to place any impediment in the way of people claiming British citizenship by descent being able to exercise their rights, including rights of appeal, in the same way as Momotaj Begum, the daughter of Nurul-Islam, a British citizen settled here with his wife and other children, following the recent decision of the immigration appeal tribunal in this case.

Mr. Waddington: British citizens do not require leave to enter the United Kingdom under the Immigration Act 1971. The immigration officer's examination of such persons is confined to establishing that they are British citizens. The tribunal determination to which the hon. Member refers concerns rights of appeal, not substantive questions of admission. Passengers who are refused entry because they do not satisfy the immigration officer that they qualify under the Immigration Act and the rules but who nevertheless can put forward a claim to British citizenship by descent may, as the tribunal confirmed, appeal against refusal on the grounds that they do not need leave to enter.

In the Government's view passengers claiming to be British citizens by descent have such a right of appeal only if there appears to be some basis for the claim. The instructions available to immigration officers cover the matters set out above.

The Government have no immediate proposals for changes in the operation of the immigration control. They do, however, keep these arrangements under continuous re-examination and would not hesitate to take appropriate action if attempts were made to misuse the tribunal's determination to evade the prescribed entry clearance procedures overseas.

Emergencies

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure adequate co-operation in dealing with peacetime emergencies between local authorities, emergency services, public services and voluntary bodies.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This is already covered in sections 22-25 of the "Emergency Planning Guidance to Local Authorities" issued last June. A copy is in the Library.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will estimate total spending by local authorities on training, designation and preparation of appropriate staff at each level to cope with peacetime emergencies;

(2) what, in each of the past five years, has been the level of *(a)* central Government and *(b)* local authority spending on planning for non-nuclear emergencies.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This information is not available in the form requested.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the categories of grant available to local authorities for planning to deal with peacetime emergencies.

Mr. Giles Shaw: None is available to local authorities specifically to support peacetime emergency planning.

Immigration

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what statistics are collected by immigration service officers serving terminal 3 at Heathrow airport regarding right hon. and hon. Members' representations in respect of arriving passengers refused admission by immigration officers there; and if he will publish the statistics collected regarding the first nine months of the current year;

(2) what is his policy towards the collecting of statistics at ports of arrival of the number of immigration cases attracting representations by right hon. and hon. Members; what analyses are carried out of these statistics *(a)* at the ports of arrival and *(b)* elsewhere; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: At all ports, the number of cases in which a right hon. or hon. Member makes representations is recorded. At terminal 3 Heathrow in the first nine months of this year it is recorded that representations by right hon. or hon. Members were made in about 2,500 cases. These statistics are required as management information both at the ports, and centrally, as a record of the cases themselves, and as a measurement of the work involved and of the resource implications of that work. The available information is looked at in a variety of ways depending on the issue being examined.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to the answer of 2 December, *Official Report*, column 26, if he will place in the Library any statistical data submitted by the Immigration Service Union in support of its concern expressed at the increase in the number of immigration cases attracting representations from right hon. and hon. Members; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his policy towards members of the immigration service gathering statistics on the number of immigration cases attracting representations by right hon. and hon. Members for union purposes; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what information he has disclosed to representatives of immigration service officers about the number of immigration cases attracting representations by right hon. and hon. Members; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: The statistics available to me of the number of representations made by right hon. and hon. Members about immigration cases are compiled and presented by immigration service management and/or by my private office. I have not received such statistics from representatives of the Immigration Service Union but, in my discussion with it, both I, and it, referred to the considerable increase this year in cases attracting such representations at the ports.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many South African or former Rhodesian nationals have been recruited to the Metropolitan police; in what years; and in which divisions.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis informs me that the information requested is as follows:

Officers of South African origin

Rank	*Year of joining police service*	*Currently serving at*
Chief Inspector	1963	S District
Chief Inspector	1972	A3 Branch
Inspector	1967	N District
Inspector	1973	N District
Sergeant	1959	C11 Branch
Sergeant	1963	W District
Sergeant	1968	Special Branch
Sergeant	1971	M District
Sergeant	1976	L District
Sergeant	1977	K District
Sergeant	1978	C District
Sergeant	1979	P District
Sergeant	1979	S District
Constable	1962	Special Branch
Constable	1974	C District
Constable	1975	R District
Constable	1976	C District
Constable	1976	Special Branch
Constable	1976	D District
Constable	1977	Royalty and Diplomatic Protection Department
Constable	1981	P District
Constable	1981	Q District
Constable	1981	M District

Rank	Year of joining police service	Currently serving at
Constable	1982	B District
Constable	1982	E District
Constable	1982	F District
Constable	1982	D District
Constable	1982	I District
Constable	1984	P District
Constable	1984	Y District
Constable	1985	Z District

Officers of Rhodesian origin

Rank	Year of joining police service	Currently serving at
Inspector	1974	B8 Branch
Sergeant	1976	W District
Sergeant	1979	B District
Constable	1972	T District
Constable	1977	M District
Constable	1977	X District
Constable	1979	A District
Constable	1979	G District
Constable	1980	X District
Constable	1980	A District
Constable	1980	N District
Constable	1980	Y District
Constable	1981	Y District
Constable	1981	M District
Constable	1981	G District
Constable	1981	Q District
Constable	1981	Y District
Constable	1982	B District
Constable	1982	K District
Constable	1982	E District
Constable	1982	P District
Constable	1982	N District
Constable	1982	M District
Constable	1982	G District
Constable	1982	E District
Constable	1983	A District
Constable	1983	Q District
Constable	1983	T District
Constable	1983	C District
Constable	1983	P District
Constable	1983	J District
Constable	1984	M District
Constable	1984	A District
Constable	1984	Y District
Constable	1985	H District
Constable	1985	B District

Local Government Reform

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give separately for the six metropolitan county councils and for the Greater London council, the number of civil servants working in his Department on duties associated with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985, listing in each case the numbers and ranks of officers and the estimated cost per year of each group.

Mr. Hurd: No staff are presently engaged exclusively on such work. The total estimated staff time devoted to reorganisation in all seven areas is:

Grade	Total staff input at each grade devoted to this work
Grade 3	0·2
Grade 4	less than 0·1
Grade 5	1·0
Senior legal assistant	less than 0·1
Principal (and related specialists)	3·4
SEO (and equivalents)	1·4
Junior administrators (HEO/HEO(D)/EO/AT)	3·4
Clerical grades (CO/CA)	0·3

The estimated annual cost is £213,000. About £13,300 can be attributed to work on Greater London but it is not possible to provide any further breakdown by area. The figures do not include members of Home Office inspectorates who are consulted on reorganisation preparations.

ENVIRONMENT

Water

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why, under article 20 of the European Community directive (80/778/EC) relating to the quality of water intended for human consumption, he has applied for a delay on lead for four years and on all private water supplies for 10 years for the United Kingdom as a whole, rather than specified geographical areas thereof.

Mr. John Patten: The Government's response of 1983 to the ninth report of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution set a target date of December 1989 for reducing lead concentrations in drinking water to acceptable levels. Our application to the European Commission under article 20, which is consistent with that policy, relates to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and to the areas covered by the Anglian, Severn-Trent, North West and Yorkshire water authorities where major improvement programmes are still under way. These programmes will be substantially complete by the target date.

Private supplies, although only serving 1 per cent. of the population, are spread throughout the country and in general do not constitute a serious health risk. District councils have a duty to ascertain the wholesomeness of private water supplies and powers to ensure that action is taken to secure improvement when necessary. The article 20 application does not relate to private supplies serving more than 500 people.

Z Scores

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied that the statistical technique known as Z scores used by his Department accurately reflects the poverty, deprivation and difficulties within each local authority.

Sir George Young: There is no single authoritative measure of the difficulties faced by a particular area. The Z scores prepared by my Department provide a comparative index of local authority areas, combining six indicators of deprivation based on information at census enumeration district level. They provide a useful guide to the incidence of multiple deprivation, but cannot give a comprehensive picture of an area's social and economic circumstances.

Retail Superstore Developments

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what emphasis he places on the anticipated employment potential of large retail superstore developments when assessing an appeal through referred planning applications; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: Each case must be considered on its merits in the light of all the circumstances.

GLC (Land and Property)

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the total amount of land and property in the possession of the Greater London council; and what is the latest estimate of its value.

Mr. Tracey: My Department does not have comprehensive information about the GLC's land and property holdings. It is for successor authorities to obtain information about the property to be transferred to them at abolition.

Holiday Project Funding

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what he plans to spend on holiday project funding from the traditional urban programme in 1986-87; and if he proposes to restore the £400,000 initially cut from the current year's funding.

Sir George Young: Bids from local authorities are being considered and an announcement will be made in the new year.

Thermal Insulation Standards (Building Regulations)

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will increase the thermal insulation standards of the building regulations in energy efficiency year.

Sir George Young: The requirements of the regulations, including those for thermal insulation, are under review. The principal aim of the review is to reduce the burden of regulation, but the Government recognise that the building regulations have a role in setting basic standards of cost-effective energy efficiency.

Building Controls (Inner London)

Mr. Maples asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to lay regulations to apply the system of building controls currently operating in England and Wales to inner London.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend has today laid before Parliament the Building (Inner London) Regulations 1985. It is intended that the regulations will come into operation on 6 January 1986. The effect of the regulations is that the building control system will become essentially the same in inner London as in the rest of England and Wales. With certain limited exceptions the Building Regulations 1985 will apply to building work in inner London in place of the present constructional byelaws made under the London Building Acts. The Building (Approved Inspectors, etc) Regulations 1985 will also apply to inner London from 6 January 1986.

The Greater London council and the district surveyor service will be responsible for administering the new system for inner London until 1 April 1986, when responsibility for this function will pass to the inner London borough councils and the Corporation of the City of London.

The regulations provide for transitional arrangements so that schemes in progress on the 6 January will continue to be subject to the London Building Acts and byelaws.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, with dates, the orders made under section 29 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and for Scotland are responsible for making section 29 orders within their own territories. In total, the following orders have been made: —

Order	*Date Made*
The Baddesley Common (Hampshire) Nature Conservation Order 1982	21 October 1982
The Sandford Heath (Dorset) Nature Conservation Order 1982	9 December 1982
The Tealham and Tadham Moors (Somerset) Nature Conservation Order 1983	23 March 1983
The Annesley Woodhouse Quarry (Nottinghamshire) Nature Conservation Order 1983	24 June 1983
The Waltham Chase Meadows (Hampshire) Nature Conservation Order 1983	28 June 1983
The Carstairs Kames (Strathclyde) Nature Conservation Order 1984	31 May 1984
The Carnkief Pond (Cornwall) Nature Conservation Order 1984	21 September 1984
The West Westray (Orkney) Nature Conservation Order 1984	26 September 1984
The Tan-y-Gadair, Cadair Idris (Gwynedd) Nature Conservation Order 1984	2 October 1984
The Uddens Heath (Dorset) Nature Conservation Order 1984	22 October 1984
The Llyn Mawr (Powys) Nature Conservation Order 1984	3 December 1984
The Walton Moss (Cumbria) Nature Conservation Order 1984	20 December 1984
The Horse Field (North Yorkshire) Nature Conservation Order 1984	21 December 1984
The Upton Heath (Dorset) Nature Conservation Order 1985	22 January 1985
The Leek Moors (Staffordshire) Nature Conservation Order 1985	1 May 1985
The Tealham and Tadham Moors (Somerset) Nature Conservation Order 1985	7 April 1985
The West Mersea Meadow (Essex) Nature Conservation Order 1985	17 May 1985
The Hencott Pool (Shropshire) Nature Conservation Order 1985	17 July 1985
The Coedydd A Chorsydd Aber Teifi (Dyfed)	6 August 1985

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide details, including dates, of those orders under section 29 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which were proposed by the Nature Conservancy Council and which he rejected.

Mr. Waldegrave: In three cases submitted to him by the Nature Conservancy Council, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment was not satisfied

that the criteria set out in section 29 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 had been fully met. Details of the three sites are:

Site	Date rejected	Comment
Went Ings—South Yorkshire	30 August 1983	Order requested to avert damage. Agreement involving exchange of land subsequently reached.
Sherburn Willows —North Yorkshire	8 February 1985	Order requested to curtail damage. Modified site being re-notified.
Brimham Rocks—North Yorkshire	27 February 1985	Order requested to avert damage. Site currently protected under the provisions of section 28 of the Act.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list separately for *(a)* the six metropolitan county councils and *(b)* the Greater London council, the number of civil servants working in his Department on duties associated with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985, listing in each case the numbers and ranks of officers and the estimated cost per year of each group.

Mr. Tracey: I will answer this question shortly.

Channel Fixed Link

Sir Hector Monro asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to consult the Nature Conservancy Council on all relevant environmental and nature conservation matters before Her Majesty's Government come to a decision on the preferred route for a Channel fixed link; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Yes. The Government have consulted the Nature Conservancy Council on the relevant environmental and nature conservation matters in respect of the proposed Channel fixed link and will take its views into account in reaching a decision on which (if any) scheme is to be preferred.

Sewer Collapse (North-West)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the extent of sewer collapse in the north-west region in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and how this figure compares with the average for the other regions in each of those years;

(2) what percentage of total United Kingdom sewer collapse occurred in the north-west region in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. John Patten: The North West water authority reported 690, 690 and 600 significant collapses respectively in 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84. Reporting standards have improved but they vary between water authorities and this makes comparisons unreliable. Ignoring those variations, the north west has about 14 per cent. of the collapses in England and Wales. The rate of collapses per kilometre is about the same as for England and Wales as a whole.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning the ratio of housing stock to inhabitants in each of the member countries of the European Economic Community.

Sir George Young: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible with the information available.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the crude surplus by which the number of dwellings in England and Wales exceeded the number of households in the latest year for which figures are available; and how this figure compares with the adjusted figure, taking into account second homes, unfit dwellings, unoccupied dwellings undergoing repair and concealed households.

Sir George Young: 1981 is the most recent year for which information is available about each of the items referred to in the question. The "crude surplus" of dwellings over households in England and Wales was:

	Number
Dwellings	19,086,000
Households	18,293,000
"Crude surplus"	793,000

There is no unique conventional set of adjustments to be made to the crude surplus. The 1981 figures for the item referred to in the question are:

	Number
Second residences, including holiday accommodation	221,000
Dwellings that were vacant and undergoing improvement	181,000
Unfit dwellings	1,207,000
Concealed families	343,000

Some of the concealed families are likely to have lived that way from choice. There is probably some overlap between vacant dwellings undergoing improvement and unfit dwellings. Many of the unfit dwellings could probably be made fit by remedial work.

London Forum

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give approval to the funding which has been allocated by the Greater London council for the London Forum.

Mr. Tracey: I am not aware of any application by the GLC for consent in respect of a payment to London Forum.

Easiform Houses

Mr. Sumberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the number of Easiform houses which *(a)* have been reported as defective and *(b)* have been reported as in good repair.

Mr. John Patten: Over 60,000 Easiform houses are estimated to have been built in England and Wales. A preliminary analysis of local authorities' responses to my Department's recent stock condition inquiry has identified only some 38,000 houses of this type; and that authorities had some information on 36,500. Some 1,000 were reported to require no renovation work of any kind; the

other 35,500 were said to require renovation work averaging £5,100 per house, compared with an average cost of £4,900 for all dwellings requiring renovation.

Mr. Sumberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received from hon. Members seeking designation of Easiform houses under the Housing Defects Act 1984.

Mr. John Patten: I have received three such representations this year, including that from my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South. In response I have explained that the Department has no evidence at present to justify national designation of Easiform houses under the Housing Defects Act.

Mr. Sumberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have designated Easiform houses under section 12 of the Housing Defects Act 1984.

Mr. John Patten: None.

Birtenshaw Farm, Bolton

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the answer of 3 December, *Official Report*, column *170*, on what date he signed the document giving approval to the planning appeal at Birtenshaw farm, Bolton.

Mr. Tracey: The decision was signed on behalf of the Secretary of State on 18 July 1985.

Rugby Football (Grants)

Mr. Stott asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much public money the rugby football unions have received through grants payable to their members by the Sports Council during each of the last five years.

Mr. Tracey: The Sports Council grant aids rugby union football in England through direct grants to the governing bodies and capital grants to clubs.

Grant aid to the governing bodies for rugby union football in England for the last five years was:

	1980-81 £	*1981-82* £	*1982-83* £	*1983-84* £	*1984-85* £
Rugby Football Union	21,615	19,766	24,703	32,229	23,762
Rugby Football Schools Union	7,961	5,161	12,500	6,691	6,691
TOTAL	29,576	24,927	37,203	38,920	30,453

Figures for capital grants are only available for the last two financial years. For 1983-84 the total was £137,776, and for 1984-85, £183,951.

Nature Conservancy Council

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make arrangements for right hon. and hon. Members to obtain reports of the nature Conservancy Council from the Vote Office.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am arranging for copies of the eleventh report to be placed in the Library. Other NCC publications may be obtained direct from the council.

Urban Programme

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will explain, in respect of each authority invited to bid for traditional urban programme resources in 1986-87, the reasons why it has been included, setting out the information in the format of table 3 of his Department's census information note No 2.

Sir George Young [*pursuant to his answer*, 13 December 1985]: The information requested is shown in the table.

Comparison of Key Indicators of Deprivation for Authorities invited to bid for Traditional Urban Programme new approvals in 1986-87

Local Authority	*Number of Times in Worst 50**	*Number of Times in Worst 10†*	*Main Issues*	*Local Authority*
Burnley	4	1	Lacking amenities, Mortality rate, single parents, pensioners living alone	Burnley
Calderdale	2	—	Overcrowding, pensioners living alone	Calderdale
Camden	6	2	Population loss, non-whites, Lacking amenities, single parents, overcrowding, pensioners living alone	Camden
Corby	4	2	Unemployment, Single parents, mortality rate, overcrowding	Corby
Derby	2	—	lacking amenities, non-whites	Derby
Derwentside	2	1	mortality rate, Unemployment	Derwentside
Ealing	5	2	Non-whites, lacking amenities, Overcrowding, population loss, single parents	Ealing
Greenwich	3	—	single parents, non-whites, overcrowding	Greenwich
Grimsby	3	—	single parents, unemployment, mortality rate	Grimsby
Halton	3	—	unemployment, mortality rate, single parents	Halton
Haringey	5	3	population loss, Non-Whites, Lacking Amenities, Single Parents, overcrowding	Haringey
Hartlepool	5	1	Unemployment, single parents, lacking amenities, overcrowding, mortality rate	Hartlepool
Hyndburn	2	—	lacking amenities, mortality rate	Hyndburn

Local Authority	Number of Times in Worst 50*	Number of Times in Worst 10†	Main Issues	Local Authority
Kensington & Chelsea	5	3	Population loss, Lacking Amenities, Overcrowding, single parents, non-whites	Kensington & Chelsea
Kirklees	2	—	overcrowding, non-whites	Kirklees
Langbaurgh	3	1	unemployment, Mortality Rate, single parents	Langbaurgh
Lewisham	5	1	population loss, non-whites, Single Parents, lacking amenities, overcrowding	Lewisham
Lincoln	3	—	lacking amenities, unemployment, single parents	Lincoln
Luton	3	—	non-whites, overcrowding, single parents	Luton
Newham	6	3	population loss, Non-Whites, Lacking amenities, single parents, Overcrowding, unemployment	Newham
Pendle	3	—	pensioners living alone, non-whites, lacking amenities	Pendle
Preston	7	—	lacking amenities, unemployment, overcrowding, single parents, non-whites, population loss, pensioners living alone	Preston
Rossendale	2	—	mortality rate, pensioners living alone	Rossendale
St. Helens	3	—	mortality rate, lacking amenities, unemployment	St. Helens
Scunthorpe	3	1	Unemployment, single parents, population loss	Scunthorpe
Sedgefield	2	—	mortality rate, unemployment	Sedgefield
Southwark	7	2	Population Loss, non-whites, Single Parents, overcrowding, lacking amenities, unemployment, pensioners living alone	Southwark
Stockton-on-Tees	3	1	unemployment, Mortality rate, single parents	Stockton-on-Tees
Stoke-on-Trent	4	—	lacking amenities, unemployment, population loss, mortality rate	Stoke-on-Trent
The Wrekin	2	—	unemployment, single parent	The Wrekin
Walsall	3	—	unemployment, overcrowding, non-whites	Walsall
Waltham Forest	5	1	population loss, non-whites, Lacking Amenities, overcrowding, single parents	Waltham Forest
Wear Valley	3	1	unemployment, Mortality Rate, overcrowding	Wear Valley
West Lancashire	2	—	mortality rate, single parents	West Lancashire
Westminster	5	2	Population Loss, non-whites, Lacking Amenities, overcrowding, pensioners living alone.	Westminster

Note. The other authorities invited to bid for Traditional Urban Programme new approvals in 1986 do not score under columns * or †. They are Barnsley, Bristol, Dudley, Ellesmere Port, Plymouth, Rotherham, Tameside, Trafford, the Wrekin.
* Listed in "Main Issues" column.
† Listed in Capital Letters in "Main Issues" column.

WALES

Cycle Tracks

Mr. Anderson asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he is satisfied with the use made by Welsh highway authorities of the provisions under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 for converting footpaths into cycle tracks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The powers in the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 to convert footpaths to cycle tracks are discretionary, and it is for the local authorities concerned to decide what use to make of them. To assist them we shall shortly be issuing a circular giving advice on the Act and the associated regulations.

Free School Meals

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate for primary and secondary maintained schools in Wales the number of pupils receiving free school meals where the entitlement derives from families' *(a)* receipt of supplementary benefit, *(b)* receipt of family income supplement and *(c)* local authority discretionary powers.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: On the basis of the 1984 school meals census in Wales, the following is an approximate estimate:

Pupils receiving free meals on the basis of:	Numbers
(a) families' receipt of supplementary benefit	64,000
(b) receipt of family income supplement	16,000
(c) local authority discretion	14,000

Pupil Statistics

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give figures for each year since 1975 for primary and secondary maintained schools in Wales for the total number of pupils in attendance, the number of pupils taking school meals on payments and free and the number of pupils bringing their own food.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The figures for 1984, the latest year for which information is available, are as follows:

	Numbers
Primary Schools	
Pupils present	222,564
Pupils taking midday meals:	
On payment	31,115
Free	57,007
Pupils bringing own food	56,488
Secondary Schools	
Pupils present	198,788
Pupils taking midday meals:	
On payment	72,864
Free	37,009
Pupils bringing own food	30,276

	Numbers
Primary and Secondary Schools	
Pupils present	421,352
Pupils taking midday meals:	
On payment	153,979
Free	94,016
Pupils bringing own food	86,764

The corresponding information for the years 1975 to 1983 inclusive is published in section 8 of volumes 5 and 9 of Statistics of Education in Wales, copies of which are in the Library.

Local Authorities (Capital Allocations)

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he will announce the capital allocations for individual local authorities.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: On 3 December I announced that the total of capital allocations for 1986-87 in Wales would be £323 million. Authorities have also been informed of the allocations I have made for housing (£141 million) and for projects of regional or national importance or special projects (£10 million). The major remaining component of local authority capital allocations is distributed on a formula basis. These allocations together with those for major road schemes will be notified today. In total they amount to almost £150 million. Authorities will then have the information they need to plan their detailed capital programmes for the coming year.

Details of the allocations for individual authorities have been placed in the Library. Allocations for schemes under the Urban Programme, totalling £23 million, will be announced early in the new year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Advertising

Mr. Jim Spicer asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advertising agents have been appointed by his Department, or by the Central Office of Information on behalf of his Department, to handle campaigns involving the communication of information on subjects for which his Department is responsible to Parliament over each of the last 10 years, respectively; what was the subject of each campaign; and how much was spent on each campaign.

Mr. Butcher: Information is readily available covering only the past five years and not all of that permits the advertising agent to be readily identified. However, where the advertising agent is known the information is as follows:

Agency	Campaign	Expenditure £
1980-81		
Ogilvy Benson and Mather	Queens Award to Industry	28,067
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Furniture Fire Safety	43,729
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Electronic Applications Division	6,023
Ogilvy Benson and Mather	National Maritime Institute	2,690
Ogilvy Benson and Mather	Technology Advisory Point	7,026
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Conference on Chemical Nomenclature	4,176
Ogilvy Benson and Mather	Computer Aided Design Centre	31,850
Ogilvy Benson and Mather	British Business	16,825
Freeman Matthews Milne	Small Firms Service	362,969
Freeman Matthews Milne	Inward Investment	16,356
Doyle Dane Bernbach	BOTB Home and Overseas Publicity	3,968
Charles Barker Recruitment	Recruitment	123,942
Charles Barker Recruitment	Statutory Notices	10,234
1981-82		
Freeman Matthews Milne	Companies (No. 2) Act	101,749
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Queens Award to Industry	26,889
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Country of Origin Legislation	2,133
Freeman Matthews Milne	Business Opportunities	7,069
Freeman Matthews Milne	Small Firms (Local)	124,226
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Maritime Institute	20,848
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Physical Laboratory	39,180
Royles and Parker Ltd	Robotics	91,433
Freeman Matthews Milne	Small Firms (West Midlands)	32,299
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Engineering Laboratory	85,042
Doyle Dane Bernbach	British Business Magazine	7,184
Roles and Parker Ltd	Microprocessors Application	79,184
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Technology Advisory Point	18,997
Doyle Dane Bernbach	CADCAM	58,762
Doyle Dane Bernbach	BOTB Export Services	19,167
J Walter Thomson	BOTB Export Services	135,035
Charles Barker Recruitment	Recruitment	29,166
Charles Barker Recruitment	Statutory Notices	11,229
1982-83		
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Queens Award to Industry	34,520
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Physical Laboratory	14,371
Doyle Dane Bernbach	CADCAM	18,702
Doyle Dane Bernbach	NPL (NATLAS)	16,341
Doyle Dane Bernbach	British Business Magazine	22,603
J Walter Thomson	BOTB Export Services	133,298
Charles Barker Recruitment	Recruitment	25,630
Charles Barker Recruitment	Statutory Notices	19,806
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Engineering Laboratory	70,544
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Research Support	52,876
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Technology Advisory Point	14,420
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Robotics	4,891
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Cadcentre (Home/Overseas)	48,374
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Regional Industrial Development	191
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Maritime Institute	43,055
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Information Technology Caravans	39,272
Freeman Matthews Treasure	Small Firms	469,562
Dewe Rogerson Ltd / Hilton Advertising Ltd	Information Technology Year	485,000
Roles and Parker Ltd	Biotechnology	50,058
Roles and Parker Ltd	Microprocessor Application Project	86,558
Wight Collins Rutherford Scott	Small Firms	964,917
1983-84		
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Queens Award to Industry	30,954
Doyle Dane Bernbach	SURMA-Asian Eye Make-up	7,854
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Furniture Fire Safety Regulations	10,462
Doyle Dane Bernbach	NPL Awareness	24,197
Wight Collins Rutherford Scott	Help for Small Businesses	19,257
Roles and Parker Ltd	Quality Control	244,338
Roles and Parker Ltd	Robotics	238
Roles and Parker Ltd	SEFIS	48,761
Roles and Parker Ltd	Microsystems	90,996
Dorland	Information Technology	1,315
Roles and Parker Ltd	CADCAM	124,376

Agency	Campaign Expenditure	£
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Engineering Laboratory	6,026
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Invest in Britain Bureau	1,021
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Physical Laboratory	3,879
Roles and Parker Ltd	Robotics	3,122
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Invest in Britain Bureau	63
Freeman Mathews Treasure	Small Firms	169,965
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Design for Profit	23,263
Dorland	BOTB Modern Languages	992
J Walter Thomson	BOTB Marketing Advertising Services	10,144
J Walter Thomson	BOTB Export Services	8.021
Charles Barker Recruitment	Recruitment	24,596
Charles Barker Recruitment	Statutory Notices	13,234
1984-85		
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Engineering Laboratory	89,000
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Queens Award to Industry	38,970
Doyle Dane Bernbach	National Physical Laboratory	710
Doyle Dane Bernbach	Business Statistics Office	9,500
Young and Rubicam	Microsystem Centres	10,000
Wight Collins Rutherford Scott	Small Firms	261,168
Roles and Parker Ltd	Biotechnology	5,344
Ayer Barker Ltd	Industrial Heat Recovery	6,930
Dorland	Micros in Primary Schools	395
J Walter Thomson	BOTB Export Services	3,542
J Walter Thomson	BOTB Export United States of America	70,000
J Walter Thomson	BOTB Small Firms Review	150,000
Charles Barker Recruitment	Recruitment	29,417
Charles Barker Recruitment	Statutory Notices	29,892
David Tolson	Inward Investment in United Kingdom	494,892
Industrial Publicity Services	SF (local)	220,173

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department spent on advertising in national and local newspapers, on television and in other printed journals during the financial year 1984-85; and what is the amount budgeted and spent to date in 1985-86.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 December 1985, c. *373*]: Information is not readily available to provide a breakdown of the advertising between national and local newspapers and periodicals nor is it readily available for minor amounts of advertising placed other than through the COI or centrally by my Department. The figures which are readily available are:

	1984-85 £	**1985-86* £
Press and Periodicals	2,081,283	1,160,410
TV	31,635	Nil

* To 4 December 1985.

Electricity (Resale)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to introduce legislation to require landlords to charge tenants for the resale of electricity and gas at the standard tariff operated by the appropriate electricity or gas board covering the area in which the premises are situated.

Mr. Howard: I have no such plans. Under present legislation, the electricity and gas supply industries fix the maximum resale prices of electricity and gas and I understand that in the light of my statement to this House on 5 December at column 287 the electricity supply industry is considering some further rationalisation of the domestic resale price of electricity.

Television (Programme Schedules)

Mr. Parris asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to introduce legislation to prevent broadcasting authorities from using copyright to restrict the circulation of information about future programmes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: We expect to publish a White Paper early next year, setting out the Government's proposals for the reform of copyright law.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give separately for the six metropolitan county councils and for the Greater London council the number of civil servants working in his Department on duties associated with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985 in relation to the enterprise boards and other economic functions of the metropolitan county councils listing in each case the numbers and ranks of officers and the estimated cost per year of each group.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No staff of the Department of Trade and Industry are employed on the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985 in relation to the functions referred to.

Tobacco Industry (Grants and Loans)

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give the number and total value of grants and loans made by his Department in each of the last 10 years for businesses involved in the manufacture, processing, packaging or distribution of tobacco products, including cigarettes.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The information is not available in the detail requested.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will be seeking to make any changes in the draft European Economic Community negotiating mandate for the multi-fibre arrangement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Steel

Sir John Osborn asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to the tonnage and value of bulk steels, special alloy stainless engineering and tool steels, respectively, in total, manufactured and used in the United Kingdom in 1975, 1980 and 1985, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: The following is the available information:

United Kingdom Producers Deliveries

'000 tonnes

	**1976*	*1980*	*1984*	*‖ 1985*
Ordinary steels	14,626	9,221	11,072	8,542
Special steels†	1,686	1,293	1,566	1,215
of which				
engineering steel	976	742	665	532
tool steel	13	13	6	4
TOTAL STEEL	16,312	10,514	12,638	9,757

United Kingdom Steel Consumption of Finished Steel Products

million tonnes

	1976	*1980*	*‡1983*	*‖ 1985*
Ordinary steel	14·50	11·47	10·31	n/a
Special steel	1·67	1·30	1·31	n/a
TOTAL STEEL	16·17	12·77	11·62	8·51

Sources: Total steel consumption from the Department of Trade and Industry inquiry, all other figures are from the Iron and Steel Statistics Bureau.

* Comparable figures for special steel are not available prior to 1976. Total steel deliveries in 1975 were 15,353 thousand tonnes.

† As defined in Euronorm 20-74.

‡ 1983 is the latest year for which estimates of consumption of special steel are available.

‖ January to September.

Companies (Inspectors)

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will appoint inspectors under section 432 of the Companies Act 1985 into the affairs of Fab Fashions, Fair Fashions and Quatriz companies.

Mr. Howard: The Official Receiver is already investigating the affairs of Fab Fashions Limited and Fair Fashions Limited which are in compulsory liquidation. The hon. Member's request for investigation of Quatriz Limited will be considered but it is open to creditors to petition for its compulsory winding-up.

Grant Aid (Worsley)

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total amount of grant aid paid to firms in the Worsley constituency, under the old rules, during the same period of time £9,300 was offered under the rules introduced a year ago.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Steel Council

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a further statement on the outcome of the Steel Council on 29-30 October.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply of 11 November at columns *48-49* to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Stevens) and to my right hon. Friend's reply of 27 November at columns *877-78* to my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet). In order not to delay the adoption of conclusions which represented a successful outcome for the United Kingdom, I judged it important to give my agreement even though the House had not had the opportunity to debate the proposals in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation. I reported to the House at the earliest opportunity in my reply of 11 November.

ENERGY

Coal Industry

5. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to meet the chairman of the National Coal Board to discuss employment problems in the industry.

Mr. Peter Walker: I meet the chairman of the National Coal Board regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

27. **Mr. Skeet** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give figures on the increased productivity per man shift of British coal mines.

Mr. David Hunt: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) earlier today.

32. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he next intends to meet the chairman of the National Coal Board to discuss investment in the coal industry.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of the National Coal Board frequently to discuss all aspects of the coal industry, including the NCB's substantial programme of investment to reduce costs and improve productivity.

Oil and Gas Development

6. **Mr. Gale** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many annexe B oil and gasfield development approvals have been granted so far in the current year.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: So far in 1985 I have approved 18 projects.

19. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish a list of the number of oil and gas wells drilled so far in the current year and in each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The total number of oil and gas wells drilled so far this year, and in each of the last 10 years is as follows:

	Number
**1985*	329
1984	330
1983	244
1982	245
1981	237
1980	197
1979	154
1978	167
1977	207
1976	145
1975	156

* To 30 November.

30. **Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate the value of research and development work carried out in relation to the offshore oil and gas industry since 1979.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: My Department has spent over £90 million on research and development since 1979. We do not have any figures available for the amount of money invested by the oil and gas industry.

British Gas

12. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what steps will be taken to ensure that small investors will have an opportunity to purchase shares in British Gas.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The Government intend to see the widest possible ownership of British Gas shares. Details of the special opportunities which will be provided for small investors will be announced nearer the time of the sale.

26. **Mr Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has had any recent discussions with trade unions involved in the gas industry concerning his privatisation proposals.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: My right hon. Friend and I have received a number of representations from various organisations and individuals, including the trade unions involved in the gas industry.

Coal Conversion Scheme

22. **Mr. Michael Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many schemes have been approved so far in 1985 for the conversion of boilers to coal firing.

Mr. Peter Walker: In the 11 months to the end of November 1985, grants were offered for 118 schemes for converting boilers to coal firing.

Wind Energy

25. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what grants and assistance are available for the development of wind energy.

Mr. David Hunt: My Department is supporting a comprehensive research and development programme aimed at exploiting the United Kingdom wind resource for electricity generation. The Department of Trade and Industry, through its support for innovation scheme, makes funds available to manufacturers for innovative research and development in this and other sectors. The European Commission offers grants both for research and development and for demonstration projects in wind energy.

7. **Mr. Neale** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans further to assist development of wind energy for isolated communities.

Mr. David Hunt: Wind energy is a most promising source for generating electricity in particular for isolated communities in the United Kingdom and overseas. My Department's renewables programme for this year includes £6·5 million for wind energy research and development.

Gas Meters (Accuracy)

28. **Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make provision for a free check on the accuracy of all domestic gas meters in advance of privatisation of British Gas.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: No. The Gas Bill provides that the existing consumer protection in respect of meter testing will continue unchanged; it would be both unjustified and impracticable to test some 16,000,000 meters before privatisation.

Opencast Coal Mining

29. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many new opencast coal mining schemes were initiated by the National Coal Board in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. David Hunt: The National Coal Board had submitted 19 planning applications for opencast coal sites in the last 12 months (since December 1984).

Nuclear Power Stations

31. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will indicate the number of nuclear power stations planned for construction over the next 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: The CEGB has applied for consent to build a PWR station at Sizewell B. The board's plans for further stations will depend on the outcome of the inquiry into that application.

33. **Mr. Patchett** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to introduce amending legislation concerning the mining industry before the Christmas recess following recent consultations with the industry.

Mr. David Hunt: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) earlier today.

34. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he next expects to meet the chairman of the National Coal Board to discuss manning levels.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of the National Coal Board regularly for discussions on the coal industry.

Oil Sales

35. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the traditional and non-traditional markets, respectively, to which Her Majesty's Government respectively authorise and prohibit the sale of oil from the continental shelf of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The Government expect that oil companies exporting North sea crude will do so in the markets of our partners in the International Energy Agency and in the European Community. This expectation in no way cuts across the maintenance, to the extent possible, of any existing patterns of trade outside these regions. In practice, such patterns exist only with Finland and certain Caribbean destinations.

National Coal Board

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what has been the total expenditure of the National Coal Board or its subsidiaries upon overseas activities in 1983, 1984 and for that period of 1985 for which figures are available;

(2) what consultations he has had with the National Coal Board about the board's involvement in International Fuels Ltd., the Coal Trading Corporation and involvement in South Africa, in the British Fuel Company and in Coal Development (Queensland) Ltd.; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: These questions are matters for the National Coal Board and I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

European Fast Reactor Collaboration

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he remains satisfied that the French Government are complying fully with their obligations under clause 5 of the intergovernmental memorandum of understanding on European fast reactor collaboration and that the collaboration is directed solely to the peaceful development of nuclear energy.

Mr. Goodlad: I have no doubt that all our partners in the collaboration are fully conscious of their obligations under clause 5 of the memorandum of understanding.

Capenhurst Enrichment Plant

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what provisions exist for allowing the withdrawal of nuclear material from safeguards at the Capenhurst enrichment plant under the recently announced safeguards agreement covering that plant.

Mr. Goodlad: The Capenhurst enrichment plant has been designated for inspection by the IAEA under the terms of article 78 of the United Kingdom International Atomic Energy Agency/Euratom safeguards agreement. Article 14 of this agreement provides for the withdrawal of nuclear material from safeguards for national security reasons.

I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to the hon. Member for Bedfordshire North (Mr. Skeet) on 9 March 1983 at column *402-3*.

Coal Industry (Private Capital)

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will take action to encourage the introduction of private capital into the deep-mined coal industry.

Mr. David Hunt: The Government have no plans for the introduction of private capital into the deep-mined coal industry.

Power Stations (Coal Supplies)

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the latest effects of the coal strike on the balance, as between road and rail, of coal supplies to the power stations.

Mr. Goodlad: I understand that rail will continue to be the dominant means for delivering coal to the Central Electricity Generating Board's power stations.

Gas Prices

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will explain without reference to mathematical formulae the basis upon which gas price increases are to be controlled or influenced following privatisation.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The price of gas to tariff customers will be strictly controlled by reference to changes in the retail price index and changes in gas costs. The maximum price (covering both standing charge and rate per therm) that can be charged will be determined by the price formula set out in the licence.

The price formula itself is in two parts:

(i) a part relating to the cost of gas purchased (Y in the formula) which provides for changes in gas costs to be directly reflected in the maximum price. At present the cost of gas accounts for about half of the price customers pay.

(ii) the remaining part of the price (RPI—X in the formula) which is limited to X per cent. below the rate of inflation. This puts a discipline on the company to achieve real reductions in the non-gas costs under its control and will ensure that customers take a share of the benefit. The value of X, the efficiency factor, will be set when the scope for improved efficiency has been assessed.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received from the Trades Union Congress concerning the proposed privatisation of British Gas.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer to the answer I gave earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow East (Mr. Dykes).

Nuclear Power Stations (Safety)

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will describe any precautionary measures taken at other nuclear power stations following the site incident at Hinckley Point nuclear power station on 29 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: The CEGB has confirmed its continuing full compliance with its statutory duty to maintain safe working conditions at all times, and has advised me that the Hinckley Point B incident on 29 November has no implications for any of its other nuclear power stations, which do not have gas circulators of the same design.

Continental Shelf

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Energy if the Continental Shelf Jurisdiction Order 1968 has been repealed.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The Continental Shelf (Jurisdiction) Order 1968 (SI 1968/892) was revoked by the Continental Shelf (Jurisdiction) Order 1980 (SI 1980/184), which re-enacts the provisions of the 1968 order (and subsequent amendments), and also extends jurisdiction to additional designated areas.

Hinckley Point

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish a list of reactors at nuclear power stations showing the number of gas circulators or blowers at each reactor and whether these have any relevant features of

design and construction in common with the faulty gas circulator that led to a site incident being declared at Hinckley Point nuclear power station on 29 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *751-752*]: The following is a list of CEGB Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactors showing the number of main gas circulators in each.

Power Station	*Reactor/Unit*	*Number of main gas circulators*
Dungeness B	Reactor 21	4
	Reactor 22	4
Hartlepool	Reactor 1	8
	Reactor 2	8
Heysham I	Reactor 1	8
	Reactor 2	8
Heysham II	Reactor 7	8
	Reactor 8	8

The main gas circulators on all the above AGRs (8 in all) are different from those at Hinckley Point B.

CIVIL SERVICE

Equal Opportunities Officer

44. **Mr. Janner** asked the Minister for the Civil Service how many of the applicants for the post of equal opportunities officer in his Department were *(a)* white males, *(b)* white females, *(c)* males of Afro-Caribbean or Asian origin and *(d)* females of Afro-Caribbean or Asian origin.

Mr. Luce: It is not the practice to fill this post by inviting applications. A member of the personnel division is designated equal opportunities officer on the basis of overall suitability and not on sex or ethnic origin. The first postholder was female, the current holder is male.

Civil and Public Services Association

45. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Minister for the Civil Service when he last met representatives of the Civil and Public Services Association; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Luce: I have met representatives of the Civil Service unions, including the CPSA, informally.

Trade Unions (Meetings)

Mr. Parry asked the Minister for the Civil Service when he last met Civil Service trade unions; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Luce: I have not yet had formal discussions with the Civil Service unions but I met representatives informally on 29 October.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Philippines

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the Government of the Philippines.

Mr. Eggar: The Philippines are members of the Association of South East Asian Nations and occupy an important strategic and economic position. Our policy towards them takes count of these factors. We also take opportunities, with others, to encourage and help the Philippine Government to pursue policies contributing to the stability and development of the region.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all crimes, by category, for each of the past five years and to the most recent available date in the current year, which have been committed in the Falkland Islands; what was the verdict of the court in each case; and whether the crimes in question were committed by Falkland Islanders, airport construction staff or military personnel.

Mr. Eggar: I will ask the Falkland Islands Government to provide me with statistics regarding convictions in the Falkland Islands comparable to those which are made available about convictions in the United Kingdom. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what personnel are available for the detection, prosecution and trial of offenders in the Falkland Islands; what training and qualifications they have; and whether he has any plans to strengthen their complement.

Mr. Eggar: There ae eight fully trained police officers in the Falkland Islands. There is an Attorney-General and a stipendary magistrate, both of whom are solicitors. There are also lay magistrates. There is a Supreme Court, but no resident judge. Most prosecutions are conducted by the police. If appropriate, the Attorney-General or counsel from the English Bar would prosecute. The legal assistant to the Attorney-General, who is a barrister, is available to represent accused persons, there being no lawyers in private practice in the islands. The Falkland Islands Government have no plans to increase the strength of the police or legal service.

Cyprus

Mr. Hickmet asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about progress on the Cyprus initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and on the prospects for the success of that initiative in the light of the breakdown of the Washington talks on 17 January 1985 and of the recent elections in Southern Cyprus.

Mr. Eggar: The Secretary-General of the United Nations continues to have our full support and confidence. He has pursued his initiative through talks with both sides in recent weeks. We understand he will continue this process following the elections in the Republic of Cyprus.

European Assembly

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will initiate inquiries into the reasons for the physical abuse and assaults sustained by British citizens who are members of the European Assembly in Strasbourg following the

violent scenes on Wednesday 11 December; and if he will make a statement on the extent of the injuries sustained by British members of the European Assembly during the incident.

Mr. Rifkind: No. These events are a matter for the European Parliament itself.

Israel (Trade Boycott)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will list all the firms and industrial organisations which were *(a)* consulted by his Department and *(b)* submitted written comments to his Department during the review in 1983 into the practice of authenticating negative certificates of origin relating to the Arab trade boycott of Israel, indicating which respondents favoured continuation of the existing system and which wished the authentication to be discontinued.

Mr. Eggar: Such exchanges with British companies and trade bodies are held on the basis that they will remain confidential.

Tristan da Cunha

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which companies supply Tristan da Cunha; and which companies have been given concessions to trade and exploit resources there.

Mr. Eggar: Tristan da Cunha has a long-standing but non-contractually binding agreement with Table Bay Marine of Capetown which acts as a buying agent of general merchandise for the island.

The concession to take crayfish from Tristan waters (the only known exploitable resource) is held by South Atlantic Islands Development Corporation Limited (SAIDC) a Bermuda registered company. The concession is operated by its subsidiary, Tristan Investments Limited of Capetown. Tristan da Cunha receives a royalty (1985 US $294,000) for this concession, which along with revenue from the sale of postage stamps makes the island financially self-sufficient. The concession runs from 1962 to 1997.

Departmental Appointments

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those bodies to which his Department makes appointments, the number of appointments in each case and the number of women appointed in each case.

Mr. Eggar [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 November 1985]: The information concerning those bodies to which my Department makes appointments is as follows:

Name of body	*Number of appointments*	*Number of women appointed*
Diplomatic wing appointments:		
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind	3	0
British Council: Board	2	0
Great Britain—China Centre	2	0
Great Britain—East Europe Centre	2	0
Universities China Committee	1	0
University College of Wales, Aberystwyth Wilson Chair of International Politics: Advisory Board	Unfilled	—
Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission	7-10	1
School of Oriental and African Studies	2	0
Imperial College of Science and Technology	1	0
Imperial War Museum: Board of Trustees	2	0
Advisory Panel on Arms Control Control and Disarmament	32	2
The Lloyd Foundation	1	0
Academic Council of Wilton Park	22	2
Commonwealth Institute	*13	2
Commonwealth Foundation	1	0
Diplomatic Service Appeal Boards	8	0
ODA appointments:		
Institute of Development Studies	22	2
Economic & Social Committee for Overseas Research	9	1
Commonwealth Scholarship Commission	15	2
Imperial College of Science & Technology (Governing Body)	1	0
Queen Elizabeth House (Governing Body)	4	0
British Post-Graduate Medical Federation	2	0
Bureau of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases Managing Committee	1	0
Imperial Cancer Research Fund (Governing Body)	1	0
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Board of Management)	1	0
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Court of Governors)	1	0
Tropical Medicine Research Board	6	0
Commonwealth Development Corporation	10	1
Crown Agents Holding & Realisation Board	8	0
Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administration	8	0
Royal Veterinary College (The Council)	1	0
Superior Services (India) Family Pension Fund (Transferred) Scheme	4	0
Overseas Service Pensions Scheme (Advisory Board)	2	0
Overseas Superannuation Scheme (Advisory Board)	3	0
Centre for International Briefing (Farnham Castle) (Governing Body)	3	1
United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO	68	7
School of Oriental and African Studies (Governing Body)	1	0
United Kingdom Trade Agency	8	1

* Plus 1 vacant.

THE ARTS

Yorkshire Water Colour Society

Mr. Mason asked the Minister for the Arts if his Department has considered an application for an

exhibition relating to the Yorkshire Water Colour Society to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I understand that arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall on 17 March 1985.

British Library

Mr. Colvin asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the next stage of the new British Library building at St. Pancras.

Mr. Luce: I have today authorised a start on the second stage of the building, which is estimated to cost £61 million and will be ready for occupation in 1993. Work on this stage will start in 1987, in parallel with the first stage, which will be ready in 1991.

When both stages are complete, the library's new facilities will include substantial new storage space in the modern environmental conditions which the collection requires, reading rooms for the departments of manuscripts and oriental manuscripts and printed books, and open access reading rooms for the science reference library.

Further decisions on later stages will be taken and announced in due course.

British Film Institute

Mr. Dormand asked the Minister for the Arts whether he will increase the grant to the British Film Institute; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 December 1985, c. *620-21*]: I am now able to announce further details of the arts budget for 1986-87, including the allocation for the British Film Institute.

The central Government element of the arts and libraries programme has been set at £321 million for 1986-87, an increase of nearly 18 per cent. in cash over the corresponding provision for 1985-86. Subject to parliamentary approval of the Supply Estimates, I propose the main 1986-87 allocations listed below. The greater part of the increase reflects the additional central funding for the performing arts, film and museums, following the abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils. The grants to most bodies directly supported from my central Government programme will be broadly in line with the provisional forward planning figures for 1986-87 given to them last January. But it has been possible in some cases to make modest additional provision for new developments or other special needs.

As I announced to the House on 14 November 1985 at columns 700-710, the grant to the Arts Council in 1986-87 will be £135·6 million, including increased central post-abolition funding of £25 million. The grant to the British Film Institute will be £9·738 million (20 per cent. more than in 1985-86): this includes £1·3 million for post-abolition funding, and a further £0·3 million above its provisional planning figure to help with matching funding for film production and with the Institute's accommodation needs.

For the major museums and galleries affected by the abolition of the GLC and metropolitan county councils, I propose the following arrangements.

First, an order in council will be made under section 46 of the Local Government Act 1985 to establish a new trustee body with responsibility for the bulk of the museums and galleries hitherto administered by Merseyside county council. A grant-in-aid of £8·745 million will be made to the trustee body for these institutions in 1986-87.

Secondly, a grant-in-aid of £1·075 million will be made in 1986-87 to the existing trustee body responsible for the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, which has hitherto been funded by Greater Manchester county council.

Thirdly, subject to the enactment of the Museum of London Bill currently before the House, the Government's grant to that museum will be increased to £2·25 million in 1986-87, reflecting the proposal in the Bill that the Government's share of the museum's main budget will be raised from the present one-third to one-half.

Fourthly, I am allocating an additional £1¼ million to the Museums and Galleries Commission for pump-priming grants to other museums and gallery services affected by abolition.

Finally, some provision for certain affected museums is being channelled separately, as follows: for the Manchester university museum and Whitworth gallery, through the University Grants Committee; for the London historic house museums, through the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission; and the Geoffrye and Horniman museums will be maintained by the Inner London Education Authority, whose expenditure limit and grant-related expenditure assessment for 1986-87 take account of this transfer.

I will be making a separate announcement in due course following the recent consultations on arrangements for the treatment of revenue generated by the nine national museums and galleries for which I am responsible. That announcement will also cover the provision to be made in 1986-87 for those institutions' purchase grants, other net running costs, and the building and maintenance programme undertaken for them by the Property Services Agency.

Meanwhile, as regards the other institutions in the museum field for which I am responsible, the grant to Sir John Soane's museum in 1986-87 will be £250,000, including a supplementary allocation towards the improvement of its building and facilities; and, for the Museums and Galleries Commission, I am making additional provision for increased staffing and accommodation requirements and for the establishment of a new Conservation Unit to provide advice on conservation facilities and on training opportunities available throughout the country. The £½ million conservation grant fund administered by the commission, introduced two years ago, will be continued in 1986-87, as will the existing schemes of grants for Area Museum Councils and for purchases and capital development by local museums.

As in 1985-86, the grants to the Crafts Council and the National Film and Television school will in 1986-87 include modest additional provision for special regional or capital developments during the year. A token sum is allocated to the South Bank Theatre Board, which is to be wound up as soon as its responsibilities for settling the outstanding accounts for the initial construction and equipping of the National theatre building have been discharged. The voted provision for the National Heritage memorial fund and for acceptances of art objects in lieu

of tax (both of which also receive corresponding sums from Department of the Environment votes) will remain at the same level as in 1985-86. The new arrangements for supplementing the acceptance in lieu provision, announced on 26 July last [*Official Report*, Vol. 83, Col. 777], will of course continue to apply.

In view of the sustained success of the business sponsorship incentive scheme launched in 1984, I have decided to make a further increase in its allocation, to £1¾ million next year. This should yield some £6 million or more from combined public and private sources for sponsored activities in arts bodies. I shall keep under careful review the arrangements for 1:1 matching grants for first-time sponsorship and 1:3 matching grants for additional sponsorship.

The recurrent grant to the British Library will be increased to £49·8 million in 1986-87, including an allowance towards initial expenditure on its corn stores storage project for its lending division in Boston Spa. Provision will be made on the Property Services Agency vote for continued expenditure on construction of the present stage of the Library's new St. Pancras building, and for net expenditure on the Library's existing accommodation. I am making a separate announcement about the next stage of the St. Pancras project.

The grant to the Royal Commission on historical manuscripts will be raised to £0·54 million next year, including a special allowance for computerisation of its records. The ceiling for the public lending right scheme, which was substantially increased to £2¼ million in 1985-86, will remain at that level in 1986-87.

These allocations are within the arts and libraries programme total given in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement. Plans for 1987-88 and 1988-89 will be summarised in the next Public Expenditure White Paper, and will be subject to annual review. Provisional planning figures for those years will be communicated to the arts bodies concerned early in the Next Year.

Details of the main allocations covered by today's announcement for 1986-87, compared with the provision originally made for 1985-86 (as amended by Supplementary Estimates where relevant), are set out in the following table.

Table of Main Allocations

£ million (cash)

	1985-86	*1986-87*
Arts		
Arts Council	105·600	135·600
British Film Institute	8·075	9·738
National Film and Television School	1·120	1·100
Crafts Council	1·680	1·925
Government Art Collection purchases	0·133	0·135
Business sponsorship incentive scheme	1·250	1·750
South Bank Theatre Board	0·200	0·001
Heritage		
National Heritage memorial fund (OAL share)	1·500	1·500
Acceptances in lieu (OAL Vote share)	1·000	1·000
Museums and Galleries		
Museums and Galleries Commission:		
Administration	0·380	0·596
Grants to area museum councils etc	2·726	2·781
Local museum purchase grants	1·282	1·282
Post-abolition grant scheme	—	1·250
Museum of London	1·372	2·250
Merseyside museums and galleries	—	8·743
Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry	—	1·075
Sir John Soane's museum	0·232	0·250
Libraries		
British Library current grant	48·254	49·800
British Library capital/maintenance (PSA)	7·245	9·861
Royal Geographical Society	0·054	0·054
Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts	0·412	0·540
Public lending right scheme	2·750	2·750

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

"Going to College or University"

Mr. Freeman asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will request local education authorities and university authorities to send to all new students copies of leaflet FB23, "Going to College or University", currently available from the Department of Health and Social Security.

Mr. Chris Patten: No. Copies of the leaflet are readily available to students from DHSS local offices.

Trauma (Research)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list all the Medical Research Council funded projects on research into trauma; if he will give the range of such research and numbers of researchers involved, the particular disciplines of the directors, the location of each unit and the research grant available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 3 December at column *158* and to my reply of 25 November at columns *397* and *398* to questions from my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton). I will write to the hon. Member with further details.

Schools (Lunchtime Supervision)

Mr. Freud asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the ratio of supervisors to pupils and the amount to be paid per hour of supervision upon which his Department's calculation of £40 million as the cost of lunchtime supervision in a full year is based; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The figure of £40 million was arrived at after considering a range of costs and staffing levels because different staffing ratios and rates of pay may be appropriate within the new arrangements to be supported by education support grant according to local circumstances. Such local differences might arise, for example, from variations in the numbers of supervisory assistants already employed and in the qualities of the staff which need to be recruited. Thus the sum of £40 million is not based on any single staffing ratio or rate of pay, but the Government are satisfied that it will suffice to provide reliable and adequate supervision in schools in England and Wales.

Parental Involvement

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to support and encourage parental involvement in education.

Mr. Dunn: Our Education Act 1980 substantially increased parents' rights to influence and involve themselves in their children's schooling. Yet greater scope for parents to utilise their natural and beneficial interest in their children's progress will be given by the proposals in chapter 9 of "Better Schools" (Cmnd. 9496) which, as announced in the Gracious Speech, will feature in a Bill to be introduced later this session.

Science Budget

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the distribution of the science budget for 1986-87.

Sir Keith Joseph: Having considered the recommendations of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC), I have decided that the science budget for 1986-87 should, subject to approval by Parliament of the Estimates in due course, be allocated as follows:

1986-87	*£ million cash*
Agricultural and Food Research Council	52·7
Economic and Social Research Council	23·6
Medical Research Council	128·3
Natural Environment Research Council	70·3
Science and Engineering Research Council	315·5
British Museum (Natural History)*	17·2
Royal Society	6·4
Fellowship of Engineering	0·45
Science Policy Studies (ABRC)	0·11
	614·56

* Including expenditure of £5·4 million by the Property Services Agency on behalf of the museum.

Copies of the ABRC's recommendations on allocations from the science budget for 1986-87 have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Student Grants

Mr. Charles Wardle asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about levels of student grants and parental contributions in 1986-87.

Sir Keith Joseph: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and I have agreed that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the main rates of student grant will be increased by around 2 per cent. in 1986-87. There will, in addition, be some adjustment to grant rates following the consultations on students' entitlement to certain benefits described in the White Paper on Social Security published today.

The parental contribution scale for 1986-87 will be adjusted upwards in line with earnings, as follows:

Parental contribution scale 1986-87

Residual income £	*1986-87 contribution* £
8,100	—
8,200	—
8,400	—
8,600	—
8,700	20
8,800	34
8,900	48
9,000	62
10,000	205
11,000	348
11,100	362
11,200	382
11,300	402
11,400	422
11,500	442
12,000	542
13,000	742
14,000	942
15,000	1,142
16,000	1,342
16,200	1,382
16,300	1,407
16,400	1,432
16,500	1,457
17,000	1,582
18,000	1,832
19,000	2,082
20,000	2,332
21,000	2,582
22,000	2,832
23,000	3,082
24,000	3,332
25,000	3,582
26,000	3,832
27,000	4,082
28,000	(maximum) 4,300

Notes:

(1) For 1986-87 the rate of contribution is assessed at £1 in £7 for residual incomes from £8,700 to £11,100; then £1 in £5 to £16,200; then £1 in £4 thereafter. In 1985-86 the rate of contribution was assessed at £1 in £7 from £8,100 to £10,300; then £1 in £5 to £15,000; then in £4 thereafter.

(2) The contribution payable may be less than the amounts shown on the scale, particularly at its top end. This will depend on the amount of the grant against which the contribution has to be set and whether any of the assessed contribution is offset by allowances for other dependent children.

(3) The maximum parental contribution of £4,000 introduced in 1985-86 has been increased in line with earnings to £4,300 in 1986-87.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Ethiopia

Dr. Mawhinney asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has made any estimate of the amount of money required from the aid budget to feed one person for one day in Ethiopia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Raison: Using the information in the report of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission on 8 October 1985, which gives a food requirement of 500 grammes of grain per person per day, I estimate that it costs 12·6 pence to feed one person for one day in Ethiopia with imported food aid, including purchase, shipping and internal transport.

Dr. Mawhinney asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the number of people in Ethiopia who have died of malnutrition in the past six months.

Mr. Ralson: We cannot know how many Ethiopians have died of malnutrition in the past six months. It is clear that the suffering has been great, but the scale of the tragedy that loomed a year ago has been much reduced thanks to the resilience of the Ethiopian people and the response of the international community.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gow asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil servants there are in his Department employed *(a)* in Northern Ireland and *(b)* outside Northern Ireland; and how many, in each category, were born in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Boyson: The numbers of civil servants employed in Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Departments are:

	Number
(a) in Northern Ireland	28,632
(b) outside Northern Ireland	144

Details of the places of birth of civil servants could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Youth Training Programme

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total funding for the youth training programme in Northern Ireland; how it is allocated to the various providers; what percentage of the total funding comes from the European Economic Community; what is the cost per training place for each provider; what is the cost of the Civil Service administration of the youth training programme; and what number of civil servants are involved in the administration.

Dr. Boyson: For the total funding of the youth training programme and its allocation to the various providers, I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on 11 November 1985 at columns *97-8*.

Eligible expenditure on the provision of the YTP attracts 55 per cent. assistance from the European social fund.

As more than one provider is involved in delivering each young person's programme of training, further education and work experience, the cost of a training place can not be allocated per provider. In 1984-85, 5,289 first year full-time training places were delivered for a total cost of £20·8 million; the figures for second year full-time training places were 2,000 and £7·9 million. The cost per training place was therefore £3,076 for the first year and £3,950 for second year trainees. These figures do not take account of a further 1,473 first-year full-time training places which were sponsored by the Government training centres, the costs of which were included in the GTC running costs. Ninety eight civil servants are employed full-time in the administration of YTP at an annual cost of £1·3 million. There is also additional indirect and part-time input by other civil servants which can not be readily quantified.

Construction Industry (Subcontractors)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to introduce legislation to outlaw labour-only subcontracting in the construction industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: I have no such plans.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many self-employed labour-only sub-contractors were employed in the construction industry in the Province in each of the past six years.

Dr. Boyson: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

RUC (Code of Conduct)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the new code of conduct of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Tom King: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

TRANSPORT

Dim-dip Lighting

36. **Mr. Speed** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the current status of his dim-dip vehicle lighting proposals before the European Court.

Mrs. Chalker: I understand that the Commission is preparing an application to the European Court. The point at issue is whether our national lighting regulations should exempt vehicles that meet the provisions of the lighting installation directive.

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated cost to public funds of defending his dim-dip lighting proposal in the European Court.

Mrs. Chalker: Such costs would be largely in the form of official time in preparing written submissions on any application made by the Commission to the European Court, and in answering questions raised by the court. No estimate can be made in advance.

Road Signs

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many road signs on the M1, M62 and A1 refer to Pennine Radio and Radio Leeds and give the wavebands on which these stations can be obtained; if he will ensure that these radio stations are mentioned on suitable new signs erected on these roads; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: There are no signs giving the wavelengths of Pennine Radio or Radio Leeds on the M1, M62 and A1. The only radio station signs on these roads in South or West Yorkshire refer to Radio Hallam and Radio Sheffield. These signs were erected as part of an experiment to assess whether such signs should be introduced nationally. The results showed an increase in the number of motorists listening to the stations but this still represented only a small proportion of the total.

As yet I do not consider public expenditure would be justified on a national network of local radio station signs on motorways and other major roads, but the broadcasting

authorities and the RAC are considering submitting proposals for a national scheme, including suitable sign locations to ensure equal treatment for the BBC and IBA stations. We await their proposals.

M25 (Fog)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the points and stretches on the M25 that are statistically prone to a greater than average frequency or intensity of fog.

Mrs. Chalker: We commissioned the Meteorological Office to undertake a study of fog susceptibility on the M25. Their report identified the following areas as prone to fog (ie visibility less than 1,000 metres):

Site	*Approximate average annual number of days with fog*
River Mole crossing	35
River Roding crossing	35
River Chess crossing	35
River Wey crossing	33
River Misbourne crossing	33
Titsey wood	33
Junction 22 area	33
River Lea crossing	31
River Colne crossing	30
Westerham wood	28
Limpsfield area	28
River Darent crossing	28
Brasted	28
Junction 10 area	27
3km east of junction 6	27
Junction 12 (Thorpe)	27
2km west of junction 9 (wooded cutting near Dorincourt)	26
Junction 5 area	26
Between junctions 13 and 14	26
'The Paddocks' area	26
Junction 6 area (including slip roads)	26
Junction 23 area	25
Junction 7 area	24
Junction 27 area	23
Cutting at Downside	22
Junction 17 area	22
Between junctions 29 and 30	20
Junction 25 area	20
Between junctions 30 and 31	18
Junction 28 slip roads	18

A copy of the report has been placed in the Library.

Roads

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to modify the public inquiry procedure for major roads and motorways; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Transport and the Environment are reviewing all preconstruction procedures for national road schemes in the light of the Civil Engineering EDC's report "A Fairer and Faster Route to Major Road Construction". They expect to publish their response to the report early next year.

Rail Electrification (Dorset)

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to be able to announce his decision on British Rail's proposals for railway electrification in Dorset; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I hope to be in a position to reach a decision on the investment that BR has submitted for electrifying the line between Bournemouth and Weymouth before the House rises for the Christmas recess.

M25-M1 Interchange

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost to date for the construction of the M25-M1 interchange, the budgeted cost for completion, and the likely cost for this completion.

Mrs. Chalker: The costs for the M25-M1 interchange cannot readily be separated from the total costs for contract 2 of the Micklefield Green to South Mimms section of M25, which also includes lengths of the main M25 carriageway on both sides of the interchange and a junction with A405 to the east. The estimated main works cost for contract 2 was given as £24·7 million at November 1982 prices in "Policy for Roads in England: 1983". The final main works cost will depend on the rate of inflation throughout the contract and the determination of any contractual claims. The estimate at current prices is approximately £21 million, of which £15·7 million has already been spent.

Rail Closures

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list each stretch of railway from which British Rail withdrew passenger services but did not submit the closure to the full procedures laid down in section 56 of the Transport Act 1962 on the grounds that the alternative was of the nature of a service improvement, in each of the last three years; and if he will also list any stretches of railway in respect of which British Rail has decided to adopt this procedure, but not yet implemented it.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Department does not have the information requested. In the first instance it is for the Railways Board to satisfy itself whether the statutory closure procedures apply to its plans for any particular stretch of line or station. It is always open to those affected by such plans to challenge them.

A40 (Flyover)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has received from the London Borough of Hillingdon for the construction of a temporary flyover at the Swalkeleys road junction on the A40(T); and if he will indicate the level of resources he will make available for this project.

Mrs. Chalker: Possibilities for alleviating congestion at this junction pending decisions on our proposed grade-separation scheme are still being explored. Hillingdon borough council has not as yet put any specific proposals to me.

Road Accidents

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents have been reported on British roads in each of the last three years involving vehicles carrying hazardous substances.

Mrs. Chalker: There is no central record of all road accidents involving hazardous substances.

Road Haulage (Hazardous Substances)

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Secretary of State for Transport what are the present regulations governing the carriage of hazardous substances by road in the United Kingdom; if he is satisfied that these regulations are adequate; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The present regulations governing the carriage of hazardous substances by road are as follows:

Non-Radioactive

Gas Cylinders (Conveyance) Regulations, 1931, 1947, 1959
Petroleum Spirit (Conveyance by Road) Regulations 1957, 1958, 1966
Carbon Disulphide (Conveyance by Road) Regulations 1958, 1962
Corrosive Substances (Conveyance by Road) Regulations 1971
Inflammable Liquids (Conveyance by Road) Regulations 1971
Inflammable Substances (Conveyance by Road) (Labelling) Regulations 1971
Organic Peroxides (Conveyance by Road) Regulations 1973
Petroleum (Regulation) Acts 1928 and 1936 (Repeals and Modifications) Regulations 1974
Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928 (Enforcement) Regulations 1979
Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928 (Conveyance by Road Regulations Exemptions) Regulations 1980
Dangerous Substances (Conveyance by Road in Road Tankers and Tank Containers) Regulations 1981
Classification, Packaging and Labelling of Dangerous Substances Regulations 1984

New regulations to control the carriage by road of dangerous substances in packages are to be made next year. These will replace all the above regulations apart from the final two.

Radioactive

The Radioactive Substances (Road Transport Workers) (Great Britain) Regulations 1970 SI 1970 No. 1827
The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) (Great Britain) Regulations 1974 SI 1974 No. 1735
The Radioactive Substances (Road Transport Workers) (Great Britain) (Amendment) Regulations 1975 SI 1975 No. 1522
The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1983 SI 1983 No. 344
The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) (Great Britain) (Amendment) Regulations 1985 SI 1985 No. 1729.

On 1 January 1986 the first and third of these regulations will be replaced by the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985 SI 1985 No. 1333 for which the Health and Safety Executive are responsible.

New regulations to control the carriage by road of explosives will also by made next year to replace a number of orders made under the Explosives Act 1875.

I believe that the new regulations and those which will remain in force will provide a comprehensive framework for the safe carriage of hazardous substances by road.

Motorways (Traffic Forecasts)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has concerning the average number of vehicles per day by which forecast capacity for the year 2000 will exceed the actual capacity at present standards for each of the motorways in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Chalker: The Department is considering predictions from the 1984 national road traffic forecast in relation to the latest information from the national traffic census as part of its current review of motorway capacity. It will then be necessary to examine in more detail those sections of the network identified as likely to come under greatest traffic pressure. Motorways in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the concern of my right hon. Friends.

Traffic Control Systems

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he proposes to exercise his reserve powers under paragraph 10 of Schedule 5 to the Local Government Act 1985 in respect of traffic control systems.

Mr. Ridley: Yes. I propose to accede to the London co-ordinating committee's request to exercise my reserve powers to take over the traffic control system in London, employing the London Residuary Body as my agent from 1 April 1986. Officials of my Department have written to the London boroughs with details of my proposals for managing the system and I am arranging for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House. The appropriate specialist GLC staff will be transferred to the Residuary Body by order.

In Merseyside, the co-ordinating committee was unable to agree satisfactory joint arrangements and I therefore intend to exercise my reserve powers to take over the traffic control system in that area. As in London, I propose to ask the Residuary Body to act as my agent with appropriate transfer of MCC staff.

I expect the boroughs and districts in both areas to develop proposals for joint arrangements in the longer term.

Road Safety

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for Transport how he proposes to alleviate the problem of blind spots on the nearside of lorries; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I am grateful for the opportunity to explain our proposals. The problem is well known and has led to accidents resulting in serious and fatal injuries to other road users, particularly cyclists, who have been alongside the lorry outside the driver's view. Following a recent amendment to the European Community directive on mirrors my Department is circulating draft regulations which would require additional near side mirrors giving a downward, as well as improved rearward, view alongside the vehicle, to be fitted to new lorries from 1 October 1988. Meanwhile I hope operators will take advantage of the amending Directive and consider fitting the additional mirrors to their present vehicles or to any new ones which they buy.

London Regional Transport

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of state for Transport when he will announce his proposals for the levy on London's ratepayers in support of his grants to London Regional Transport for 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Section 13 of the London Regional Transport Act 1984 empowers me to make a levy on London ratepayers to recover up to two-thirds of the cost of my total grants to London Regional Transport. I have today laid before Parliament a draft levy order, which is subject to affirmative resolution. This provides for a levy in 1986-87 of 9·79 pence in the pound which is estimated to raise £193·6 million. This is equivalent to 65·6 per cent. of my estimated expenditure on grants to LRT in 1986-87 of £295 million, the balance of £101·4 million being found from the Exchequer.

By comparison with 1985-86 these proposals represent a reduction in grant of £28 million and a reduction in the call on ratepayers of £18·4 million. The burden on the ratepayers falls by slightly more than a penny in the pound, while the proportion of expenditure they fund has been held constant.

My proposals reflect London Regional Transport's major achievements to cut costs while providing more efficient and responsive pubic transport services in the capital. My proposals sustain an increased programme of investment, directed mainly at cost-saving projects and modernisation of the system, and provide £5 million for the funding by LRT of Dial-a-Ride services for the disabled.

Further details of LRT's proposals for 1986-87 are given in its annual business plan which I understand is being published today. Copies will be made available to hon. Members.

Air Agreements

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the bilateral liberalised air agreements he has made in 1985 and the agreements he hopes to make in 1986.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to the reply*, 13 December 1985]: In 1985 we have secured new liberal agreements with Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland, and have made our agreement with the Netherlands even more liberal. We have also been able to note the growth in air traffic that has followed our liberal agreements in 1984 with the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany.

In 1986 during the EC Presidency of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom we will be making a major effort to achieve a truly liberal EC aviation policy. Bilaterally, we shall be continuing our discussions with Finlnd, the Scandinavian countries and Spain, and we already hope to open discussions with Austria and the Irish Republic.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give separately for the six metropolitan county councils and for the Greater London council, the number of civil servants working in his Department on duties associated with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985, listing in each case the numbers and ranks of officers and the estimated cost per year of each group.

Mrs. Chalker: About 46 staff in the Department of Transport are concerned with abolition at an annual cost of about £1·2 million. Of these 16 are directly concerned with metropolitan counties and 13 with the Greater London council; the remaining 17 are employed on general policy work in headquarter divisions. Following is the breakdown of staff by grade.

Grade	*Estimated full-time equivalents*
Grade 3	0·7
Grade 4	0·7
Grade 5	2·8
Grade 6	0·6
Principal	7·3
Senior executive officer	1·5
Higher executive officer	5·8
Administrative trainee	0·7
Executive officer	3·0
Clerical officer	3·7
Clerical assistant	0·6
PPTO	4·0
PTO I	4·1
PTO II	2·2
Statistician	2·8
Assistant statistician	0·5
Senior personal secretary	0·8
Personal secretary	3·8
TOTAL	45·8

NATIONAL FINANCE

Home Civil Servants

46. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total number of home civil servants; and how many of these have their place of work outside the inner London area.

Mr. MacGregor: At 1 April 1985, there were 592,400 home civil servants, both industrial and non-industrial. Of these, 515,800 work outside the inner London pay area.

Assets (Disposals)

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will estimate in respect of the most recent year practicable *(a)* the number of disposals in that year of assets acquired prior to 6 April 1965, other than quoted securities, subject to capital gains tax, or in the case of companies' capital gains, to corporation tax, *(b)* the number of valuations as at 6 April 1965 carried out in the year in respect of such assets and *(c)* the cost to the Inland Revenue and taxpayers, respectively, of those valuations.

Mr. Moore: I regret that information is not available on which to base satisfactory estimates.

Budget Council

Mr. Forman asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will report on the outcome of the latest meeting of the European Community Budget Council.

Mr. Brooke: The Budget Council met in Strasbourg on Wednesday/Thursday of last week. I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council and the representatives of the European Parliament failed to reach agreement on the Community budget for 1986. The Council decided nevertheless by qualified majority to propose a further 242 mecu (some £150 million at the budget exchange rate of 1·61 ecu to the pound) of payment appropriations for non-obligatory

expenditure, on top of the provision proposed in the Council's revised draft budget, provided that agreement could be reached in the Parliament's plenary on this figure. I voted against this decision on the grounds that the figures in the Council's revised draft budget were already too high and represented a threat to budget discipline.

The Parliament's plenary voted on Thursday to increase the Council's revised draft budget figures by the larger sum of some 570 mecu in payment appropriations (about £355 million). This figure rises to some 630 mecu (about £390 million) after including the consequential increase in transitional refunds for Spain and Portugal. The Parliament also voted to increase the provision for commitment appropriations by some 410 mecu (about £255 million).

The President of the Parliament is expected to decide shortly whether to sign the budget as voted by the Parliament.

Crown Property

Mr. Blair asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the hereditaments owned by the Crown but occupied by private sector organisations on behalf of the Crown for public purposes to which contributions in lieu of rates are payable by the Treasury in accordance with sections 37 and 38 of the General Rate Act 1967 or under parallel provisions of the Scottish Valuation Acts.

Mr. MacGregor: Those contributions in lieu of rates made centrally by Her Majesty's Treasury are on property deemed to be occupied by the Crown for public purposes. Estate holding departments are responsible for any arrangements reached with private sector organisations acting on their behalf and where the private sector occupation is for that public purpose the rating position remains unchanged.

No comprehensive list of such occupations is kept by Her Majesty's Treasury and I regret that this information cannot be collated without a disproportionate expenditure of time and resources.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Fatchett asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give separately for the six metropolitan county councils and for the Greater London council the number of civil servants working in his Department on duties associated with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985, listing in each case the numbers and ranks of officers and the estimated cost per year of each group.

Mr. MacGregor: The number of staff in my Department who have been working during 1985 on duties associated with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985 is as follows:

Grade	*Estimated full-time equivalents*
Grade 3	0·1
Grade 5	0·2
Grade 6	0·1
Principal	0·6
Higher Executive Officer	0·1

It is not possible separately to identify work on the Greater London council and the metropolitan councils.

The cost, including accommodation, of employing these staff for a whole year would be approximately £40,000 (1985 prices).

Construction Industry (Subcontractors)

Mr. Parry asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many current valid 714 tax certificates are held at the latest available date according to Inland Revenue records;

(2) if he will call for a public inquiry into the operation of 714 tax certificates;

(3) if he is satisfied with the present system of the issue of 714 tax certificates; and if he will make a statement;

(4) how many prosecutions have been made for fraud in cases involving 714 tax exemption vouchers in England and Wales at the latest available date.

Mr. Moore: There are 492,880 valid 714 certificates currently in issue.

I have no plans to call for a public inquiry into the operation of the scheme.

The 714 tax certificates are an integral part of the construction industry tax deduction scheme. Significant improvements have been made to the system of issue of certificates and I am satisfied with the present arrangements.

Since April 1977, when the present scheme came into operation, the Inland Revenue has prosecuted 862 cases in England and Wales involving subcontractor exemption certificate frauds and obtained 817 convictions. In the same period a further 119 convictions were obtained by the police for the United Kingdom as a whole. It is not possible to say how many of those 119 police convictions relate to England and Wales.

Independent Schools

Mr. Hancock asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated loss of revenue arising from the charitable status of independent schools.

Mr. Moore [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *770*]: I regret that the information is not available.

Income Tax

Mr. Silvester asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1)what would be the cost of introducing an income tax rate of 15 per cent. to apply to half the present 30 per cent. tax rate band, leaving other tax rates undisturbed;

(2) what changes would be necessary to higher rate bands to ensure that no tax benefit accrues to higher rate taxpayers if a lower rate band is introduced at 15 per cent. to apply to half the present 30 per cent. tax-rate band.

Mr. Moore [*pursuant to his replies*, 6 December 1985, c. *356*]: The direct revenue cost of introducing an income tax rate of 15 per cent. to apply to the first £8,100 of taxable income would be about £14·4 billion in a full year at 1985-86 income levels.

It is not possible to alter the higher rate structure to withdraw completely the benefit of the lower rate band from all existing higher rate taxpayers without also reducing the benefit which the band would give to those currently liable at the basic rate. By way of illustration, leaving the present higher rate structure as it stands but charging tax at 45 per cent. on taxable income between £8,100 and £16,200 would withdraw the whole of the

benefit of the lower rate band from higher rate taxpayers. This structure would, however, mean that taxable income between £16,200 and £19,200 would be charged at a lower rate (40 per cent.) than the taxable income between £8,100 and £16,200. The net cost of this rate structure (including the lower rate band of £8,100 at 15 per cent.) would be about £11·9 billion.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General how many of the new jobs since 1983 are part-time; and how many are temporary.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information about job gains and job losses is not available from the Department's statistics, but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Between June 1983 and June 1985, the latest date for which estimates are available, the number of part-time female employees in employment in Great Britain increased by 87,900; corresponding figures for part-time males are not available. The latest available figures subdividing self-employment between full and part-time show an increase between June 1983 and June 1984 of nearly 80,000 part-timers. Temporary jobs included in the estimates of employed labour force are not separately identified but estimates from the labour force surveys suggest an increase of 43,000 between spring 1983 and spring 1984 in the number of persons in employment doing seasonal, temporary or casual work.

Special Employment and Training Programmes

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General what is the number of persons in the London borough of Newham on special employment and training programmes analysed by programmes.

Mr. Alan Clark: Some 3,800 people were covered by the employment and training measures in the London borough of Newham at the end of November. Because of the various bases on which local information is collated, an unknown proportion will be in areas outside Newham. The numbers in respect of each scheme are as follows:

	Number
Community Industry	120
Community Programme	2,269
Enterprise Allowance Scheme	610
Job Release Schemes	140
Young Workers Scheme	55
Youth Training Scheme	658

Community Programme

Ms. Clare Short asked the Paymaster General (1) how many additional community programme places became available in November;

(2) how many additional community programme places became available in September.

Mr. Alan Clark: 8,744 in September and 7,057 in November.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General how many people on the community programme receive financial support for their participation in the new community programme training places.

Mr. Trippier: Community programme participants receiving off-the-job training under the MSC's adult training programme are not paid a training allowance for attending courses though out of pocket expenses (such as travel and meals) are met. The training costs are paid direct to providers.

In the seven-month period ending in October some 7,000 community programme participants had benefited from this training. The number of those who had claimed expenses is not yet known.

Health and Safety Executive

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General how many officers were employed by the Health and Safety Executive in the construction industry in England and Wales in each of the past six years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The numbers of health and safety inspectors allocated to inspection work in the construction industry in England and Wales on 1 January each year were:

	Number
1980	76
1981	77
1982	79
1983	78
1984	79
1985	76

Inspectors in Her Majesty's factory inspectorate's construction national industry group and in other specialist branches of the Health and Safety Executive are also engaged in advisory and policy work related to the construction industry.

Construction Industry (Subcontractors)

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General how many self-employed labour-only subcontractors were employed in the construction industry in England and Wales in each of the past six years.

Mr. Alan Clark: This information is not available from the Department's statistics.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to introduce legislation to outlaw labour-only subcontracting in the construction industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There is no intention to introduce such legislation.

Construction Industry (Accidents)

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General (1) how many workers employed in the construction industry have been killed in accidents in England and Wales in each of the past six years;

(2) how many workers have been injured *(a)* seriously and *(b)* slightly in the construction industry in England and Wales in each of the last six years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The available information for the period 1979 to 1984 (provisional) is given in the table:

Reported injuries to workers in the construction industry, 1979-84 England and Wales*

Type of Injury	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984**
Fatal						
to employees	103	118	84	82	104	88
to self employed†	17	29	6	14	18	15
Major‡						
to employees	‖	‖	1,446	1,666	1,847	1,973
to self-employed	‖	‖	27	47	57	68
Total notified to¶ HSE enforcing authorities as leading to over three day absences from work (injuries to employees only)	‖	‖	37,507	33,540	‖	‖

* Provisional.

† Before 1981, fatalities to the self-employed were reported on a voluntary basis only. They are therefore not strictly comparable with figures for 1981-84 which are based on reports resulting from a specific requirement under the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation 1980 (NADOR).

‡ As defined in NADOR and reported to relevant enforcing authorities. Information before 1981 is therefore not available.

‖ Not available.

¶ Those giving rise to claims for industrial injury benefit. Arrangements for industrial injury benefit changed in April 1983. From that date, only a proportion of such injuries give rise to benefit claims so that total figures are not available. Comparable figures prior to 1981 are not available for England and Wales.

Barnsley

Mr. Mason asked the Paymaster General (1) how many persons were employed in the Barnsley travel-to-work area in each of the last five years in the coal mining industry;

(2) how many persons were employed in the Barnsley travel-to-work area in the glass manufacturing industry in each of the last five years;

(3) how many persons were employed in the Barnsley travel-to-work area in manufacturing industries, excluding glass manufacture, in each of the last five years.

Mr. Alan Clark: Comprehensive employment statistics for travel-to-work areas are not available except for dates when censuses of employment are taken. In the six years from 1978 to 1984, these censuses have been taken triennially. The available information for the years 1978 to 1981 is given in the table. More up-to-date employment figures for travel-to-work areas will become available following the publication of the 1984 census of employment in the spring of 1986.

Information for the glass manufacturing industry alone cannot be given without directly disclosing confidential information relating to individual undertakings. The table therefore gives figures for a broader group of industries comprising the manufacture of glass, bricks, fireclay and refractory goods, pottery, cement abrasives and other building materials.

Employees in employment in the Barnsley travel-to-work area

Industry and Order or Minimum List Heading (MLH) of the Standard Industrial Classification 1968	*(thousands) June 1978*	*September 1981*
Coal mining (MLH 101)	17·7	16·3
Bricks, pottery, glass, etc. (Order XVI)	3·3	2·3
Manufacturing industries (Orders III-XIX) excluding Order XVI	18·7	15·1

As results of the 1978 census are not available for the new travel-to-work areas announced last year, figures are given for the travel-to-work areas as defined before last year's review.

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General whether he expects the Manpower Services Commission to meet its commitment of a place on a youth training scheme for everyone who wants one by Christmas.

Mr. Trippier: The Government have undertaken to offer a place on the youth training scheme by Christmas to all minimum age school leavers who remain unemployed. I am confident this undertaking will be effectively met once again, as it had been in the previous two years.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about the funding position of information technology centres under the two-year youth training scheme.

Mr. Trippier: Following a wide ranging review of the information technology centre (ITeC) programme, agreement has now been reached on the funding arrangements that will apply to ITeCs from 1 April 1986.

These arrangements are designed to give ITeCs a much sounder basis of operation, by reducing their costs and increasing their range of activities. The funding package will enable ITeCs to play a full part in the new two-year YTS and to develop their role in the training of adults.

ITeCs have achieved a great deal in the last four years and we are determined to build on this foundation. The Government have made a real investment in ITeCs. I am looking to industry and local areas to back this with their own support.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General if he will list the current, past and projected expenditure on the youth training scheme for 1984 to 1989, broken down according to trainee maintenance, training costs, and central administration.

Mr. Trippier: Information is not available in the form requested. Expenditure on the youth training scheme in 1984-85 and the estimate for 1985-86 can be categorised as in the following table:

	Allowance costs*	Other grants to managing agents and sponsors†	Other YTS costs (including central administration)‡	Total
1984-85 (actual)	384·0	362·6	80·4	827·0
1985-86 (estimate)	411·6	350·2	72·1	833·9

Notes:

* Includes the trainee's allowance and the cost of excess travel and lodgings.

† Includes managing agents' fees, the non-allowance element of the block grant and vacated place payments in mode A; all non-allowance costs in mode B1; and managing agents' fees and grants in mode B2.

‡ Includes the costs of YTS administration, development of YTS training techniques and residual expenditure on youth opportunities programme, unified vocational preparation and apprentice support.

The Manpower Services Commission's corporate plan 1985-89 shows planned expenditure on the scheme of £855 million and £860 million in 1986-87 and 1987-88. Additional sums of £125 million and £300 million will be made available in these years to expand the scheme from one to two years. It is not possible to provide a detailed breakdown of these figures.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General if he will list for each area manpower board area the available number of mode A, mode B and mode B2 places for the years 1984, 1985 and 1986, giving the figures for premium and non-premium places where appropriate.

Mr. Trippier: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

"Burdens on Business"

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what is his estimate of the time per employer spent on paperwork for compliance with the regulations covered in the "Burdens on Business" White Paper; and if he will estimate the past, present and future monetary costs to the small firm for this compliance.

Mr. Trippier: The information is not available in the form requested. The findings of the "Burdens on Business" scrutiny included evaluations by businesses of the time and costs involved in complying with various Government regulations. As proposed in "Lifting the Burden" (Cmnd. 9571), the Government are setting in hand new arrangements to assess the costs to business of compliance with new regulatory proposals.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General if he will list the available evidence that he referred to in his written answer on 10 December; and if he will place the material referred to in the Library.

Mr. Trippier: "Lifting the Burden" (Cmnd. 9571) refers to the evidence collected in a survey of 200 businesses by Research Associates as part of the "Burdens on Business" report which was published in March. The survey shows that 52 of the firms questioned reported that they had lost or not taken on an average of 6.5 employees each year over the last five years due to the inhibiting or costly effect of regulations. Copies of both Cmnd. 9571 and "Burdens on Business" were placed in the Library.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what is his estimate of the total number of jobs lost as a result of the burden of regulations on small firms; and if he will list the present number of small firms in the economy and the total number of persons employed by these firms.

Mr. Trippier: The White Paper "Lifting the Burden" (Cmnd. 9571) pointed out that it is not possible to prove a direct causal relationship between deregulation and job creation or conversely between regulations and jobs lost. Hence, no reliable estimate can be provided though the available evidence suggests that there is a link between deregulation and jobs through stimulating economic activity.

There are a number of difficulties (such as the definition of a small business) in the way of giving an accurate count of the number of small businesses, but on the basis of VAT registrations there would seem to be over 1·5 million small businesses in the economy. While accurate information on employment in small firms is not available, these firms probably provide employment for over one quarter of the employed labour force.

The Department is investigating possible methods of improving the quality of information on the level of employment in small firms without increasing the burdens on small businesses.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what is his estimate of the costs for the formation and administration of the deregulation units resulting from the "Burdens on Business" White Paper proposals; and if he will list the costs for each unit.

Mr. Trippier: The enterprise and deregulation unit established to co-ordinate follow-up to "Lifting the Burden" across Government generally has a total staff of 12. In addition, a number of Departments have established their own internal units with, on average, one full-time official engaged on deregulation. The cost of these arrangements is small compared with the prospective benefits of reducing the burden on regulations.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General if he will list the agencies created for industrial development and the agencies created for reducing regulations on small firms.

Mr. Trippier: My Department does not have records of all agencies created to encourage industrial development. However, local enterprise agencies fall into this category, and according to my Department's records there are currently 310 agencies in operation. A list of these has been placed in the Library.

One of the major tasks of the regional enterprise units (REUs) that have recently been established by my Department is to help the work of the enterprise and deregulation unit in promoting business enterprise by identifying burdens on small firms. A list of the REUs has also been placed in the Library.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what is his estimate of the average waiting period between applying for funding from the enterprise allowance scheme and receiving the grant.

Mr. Trippier: It normally takes from two to four weeks from the date an application is made to the date it is approved. The allowance is payable as soon as the business starts, which may be immediately upon approval of the application or up to six weeks later, the choice being left to the individual concerned. The first payment is made two weeks after the business has started.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General for how long individuals can receive grants from the enterprise allowance scheme; and if he will give his estimate of the percentage of businesses still operating one year after the grants have stopped.

Mr. Trippier: The enterprise allowance is payable for a maximum period of 52 weeks. No evidence is available on the percentage of businesses still operating one year after the grant has stopped, but surveys of participants on the pilot schemes show that 77 per cent. of those taking advantage of the full year's allowance were still trading six months later and 61 per cent. two years later.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General if he will list the number of persons joining the enterprise allowance scheme and the percentages of women and minorities participating in the scheme, broken down by year.

Mr. Trippier: The number of persons joining the enterprise allowance scheme with the percentage of women participants are as follows. No information on the percentage of minorities has been collected.

	Number of participants joining	*Percentage of women*
Pilot scheme January 1982—July 1983	3,331	10
National scheme		
August 1983—March 1984	27,629	14·6
April 1984—March 1985	46,037	20·4
April 1985—November 1985	40,302	23·4

SCOTLAND

Unemployment (Glasgow)

Mr. White asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the measures taken to reduce unemployment in the Glasgow travel-to-work area during the last year.

Mr. Allan Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to his question of 20 March.

The Government's full range of special employment measures continues to be available to people in the Glasgow travel-to-work area. During the last year these have comprised and still comprise:

Economic Measures
Regional development grant at the maximum level available;
Selective financial assistance under the Industrial Development Act 1982;
Scottish Development Agency financial assistance (eg to Glasgow eastern area renewal project);
Local enterprise grants for urban projects (the LEG-UP scheme);
Financial assistance under the Housing Acts.

Special Employment Measures
Young workers scheme;
Community industry;
Community programme;
Job release scheme;
Job splitting scheme;
Enterprise allowance scheme;
Voluntary projects programme;
Geographical mobility schemes;
Services for seriously disabled.

Joint Finance Projects

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the projects, the total annual costs and the percentage split between health boards and local authorities, health board area by health board area, for all current capital and revenue for joint finance projects.

Mr. John MacKay: Information held centrally relates only to projects approved before 1 April 1985. The annual costs and the proportionate share met by health boards and other agencies, including local authorities, may vary, or be subject to renegotiation, during the lifetime of the project. I shall write to the hon. Member listing projects, on this limited basis, and shall place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Support Finance

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the anticipated total spending in Scotland for the financial year 1985-86 on support finance; and what the breakdown of expenditure is expected to be between new start projects in 1985-86 and continuing expenditure on projects begun before 1 April 1986.

Mr. John MacKay: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 11 December at column *696*.

Joint Plans

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if any health boards or local authorities have requested an extension to the 31 March 1986 deadline set for the preparation of the first round of joint plans.

Mr. John MacKay: No such request has been made. Joint plans are intended to be for the guidance of the health boards and local authorities concerned. They do not have to submitted formally to my right hon. Friend; nor do they require his approval, although he has indicated that it would be helpful if copies were sent to him.

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the areas in which the health boards and local authorities have confirmed to his Department their intention to prepare the joint plans requested on 24 April in the Scottish Office circular entitled "Community Care; Joint Planning and Support Finance".

Mr. John MacKay: All health boards, in collaboration with local authorities through joint liaison committees, have been asked to prepare joint plans by 31 March 1986. They are not required to confirm their intentions in this regard.

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he intends to take in respect of authorities which do not prepare joint plans by 31 March 1986, either *(a)* to encourage speedy remedial action, or *(b)* to penalise them for their failure to respond.

Mr. John MacKay: Any need for further guidance or other measures to encourage advances in joint planning will be considered after 31 March 1986 in the light of progress made in the preceding year.

Joint Liaison Committees

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will outline the mechanisms which joint liaison committees have adopted for contact with, and for seeking representation from, the voluntary sector.

Mr. John MacKay: This is entirely a matter for the decision of individual joint liaison committees, which are not obliged to inform the Department of the arrangements made. Health boards and local authorities have, however, been advised that voluntary organisations should be invited to take part in the deliberations of joint liaison committees whenever relevant matters are on the agenda.

Agricultural Colleges

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to receive the market research survey on services provided by the Scottish agricultural colleges; what plans he has to publish it; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The Council of Scottish Agricultural Colleges (COSAC) has commissioned a market research survey to assess the options for charging for advisory services provided by the Scottish agricultural colleges. The report of the study team is expected to be presented to COSAC later this month. There are no plans to publish the survey findings.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to receive the Inbucon management survey of the three Scottish agricultural colleges; what arrangements he has made for it to be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The Council of the Scottish Agricultural Colleges has commissioned a study by management consultants to advise on the future management structure and administrative arrangements for a new company which would have overall responsibility for the management of all the services currently provided by the existing Scottish agricultural colleges.

The findings of the study team, which are expected early in the new year, will not be published.

As indicated in the consultation paper on the agricultural advisory services in Scotland, the Secretary of State supports this and other initiatives which the management of the Scottish agricultural colleges has taken in pursuit of a more economic and effective service.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the financial allocations for each of the Scottish agricultural colleges for 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88, in each case breaking down the amount into allocations for advisory, research and development and educational work; and if he will give the projections of staff able to be employed in each college in each year financed by these allocations.

Mr. John MacKay: The financial allocation to each of the three Scottish agricultural colleges for 1985-86 is as follows:

£000's

College		*Advisory*	*R & D*	*Education*	*Total*
East	Maintenance	2,245	2,154	771	5,170
	Capital	136	131	47	314
North	Maintenance	2,567	2,251	1,004	5,822
	Capital	144	126	56	326
West	Maintenance	2,399	2,444	2,203	7,046
	Capital	227	231	208	666

Financial allocations to each college for 1986-87 and 1987-88 have not yet been determined.

The numbers of staff employed by each college at 1 September 1985 were as follows:

	Number
East	354
North	427
West	500

Given the integration of the Colleges' advisory, research and development and education functions with staff employed on more than one activity it is not possible to provide a breakdown of staff numbers by function.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the full staff levels and complements for each of the departments in each of the Scottish agricultural colleges for 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 and projections for 1986-87.

Mr. John MacKay: I am arranging to send to the hon. Member the information requested for the years 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86. Copies will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

I regret that it is not possible to provide projected figures for 1986-87.

Strip Searches

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Scotland for what reasons and in what circumstances male and female prisoners are strip-searched in Her Majesty's prisons in Scotland; and what contribution such searches make to prison security.

Mr. John MacKay: Strip searches of male and female prisoners in penal establishments in Scotland are carried out for security reasons to prevent prisoners having concealed weapons or contraband substances — for example, drugs. The circumstances in which strip searches are carried out are *(a)* as part of normal admission and discharge procedures; *(b)* when a prisoner is being transferred to a segregation unit; *(c)* during routine cell searches and special cell searches where there is reason to believe that contraband or weapons are being concealed; *(d)* following "open" visits; *(e)* on leaving prison to attend a court hearing.

Such searches are crucial to the maintenance of prison security.

Road Works (A92)

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide a breakdown of expenditure on road improvements on the A92 between the Bridge of Don and the Gordon/Banff Buchan district boundary during the period from 1975 to the latest available date.

Mr. Ancram: Expenditure on road improvements on the A92/A952 trunk road between the places specified, during the period 1975 to November 1985, is as follows:

(all figures at cash outturn prices)

	£
Completed schemes	
Parkway Roundabout	96,000
Mill of Waterton	628,000
Fountainbleau	40,000
Stacking lane at Rashierieve	39,000
Pitburg Railway Bridge	56,000
Total	859,000
Preliminary expenditure on future schemes	
North Deeside Roundabout	32,000
Murcar to Balmedie	93,000
Ellon Bypass	50,000
Tipperty	18,000
Total	193,000
Grand Total	1,052,000

Construction Industry (Subcontractors)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to introduce legislation to outlaw labour-only subcontracting in the construction industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: My right hon. Friend has no plans to introduce such legislation and is satisfied that the existing legislation as it affects labour-only subcontracting is operating successfully in Scotland.

Bypasses

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the current programme of trunk road bypasses under construction, at tender stage and at each other stage of planning; and how this compares with the lists, including a comparison of priorities, for the past five years.

Mr. Ancram: There are no trunk road bypasses currently at tender stage. Bypasses under construction or in preparation are as follows:

	Bypasses
	Under construction
A1	Musselburgh and Tranent bypass
A75	Gatehouse of Fleet bypass
A75	Creetown bypass
A9	Alness bypass
A84	Forfar bypass
	In preparation
A1	Tower to Dunglass (bypassing Cockburnspath)
A68	Newtown St. Boswells bypass
A68	Dalkeith bypass
A7	Dalkeith bypass
A7	Middleton bypass
A75	Annan bypass
A75	Ringford bypass
A75	Castle Douglas bypass
A75	Carrutherstown (bypass) to Hetland
A75	Dumfries bypass
A75	Glenluce bypass
A76	New Cumnock bypass
A76	Cumnock and Auchinleck bypass
A76	Mauchline bypass
A76	Kirkconnel-Sanquhar bypass
A77	Maybole bypass
A78	Ardrossan-Saltcoats bypass
M80	Stepps bypass
A82	Lass bypass
A83	Inveraray bypass
A87	Dornie Bridge (bypassing Dornie)
A9	Dunbeath diversion
A9	Dunblane bypass
A91	Auchtermuchty bypass
A92	Ellon bypass
A96	Forres bypass
A96	Auldearn bypass
A96	Inverurie bypass

In addition, feasibility studies are being undertaken for a number of other locations. Information in the form requested is not readily available for the past five years, but further information about the trunk road programme in recent years, together with an indication of priorities, is contained in "Policy for Scottish Roads: 1984" and "Roads in Scotland: 1980", copies of which are in the Library. In the period from 1 April 1980 to date, 20 trunk road bypasses have been opened to traffic, so the momentum of progress is being maintained.

Tobacco Industry (Grants and Loans)

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number and total value of the grants and loans made by his Department in each of the last 10 years for businesses involved in the manufacture, processing, packaging or distribution of tobacco products, including cigarettes.

Mr. Allan Stewart: There have been three offers of regional selective assistance over the past 10 years to companies in Scotland classified to the tobacco industry in the standard industrial classification. Details of grants offered in each year cannot be given as to do so would disclose information relating to individual companies. Information on awards to regional development grants in the form requested is not available.

Sea Fisheries Order

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the scientific evidence to which he has regard before making the Sea Fisheries (Prohibition of Fishing and Fishing Methods) (Scotland) Order 1985 (S.I., 1985, No. 962).

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. Friend was advised by scientists of his Department's marine laboratory in

Aberdeen on the basis of studies undertaken by them. Advice to Ministers is, by convention, treated as confidential.

AIDS

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome notified for each health board area over each of the last five years; what is the current total for 1985; what advice has been given to health boards regarding the isolation, treatment or prevention of the spreading of acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and what action has been taken by each health board in response.

Mr. John MacKay: To date, seven cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) have been registered in Scotland as follows:

	1984	*1985*
Forth Valley Health Board	—	1
Greater Glasgow Health Board	2	—
Lanarkshire Health Board	1	—
Lothian Health Board	—	3

Since August 1983 the Scottish Home and Health Department has issued nine letters of guidance to health boards about various matters relating to this disease with the primary object of preventing its spread. Health boards are fully aware of the need for effective action and have responded appropriately.

Detained Young Persons

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has as to how many young persons under the age of 16 years were detained in the penal system in Scotland at the latest date for which figures are conveniently available.

Mr. John MacKay: On 12 December 1985, seven persons under the age of 16 years were held in Scottish prisons.

Death Statistics

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many deaths in Scotland were attributed, respectively, to all maternal causes, all forms of abortion, spontaneous abortion, illegal abortion and legal abortion in each of the years 1960 to 1984 inclusive.

Mr. John MacKay: The available figures, which are classified by the international classification of diseases (ICD), are given in the tables. Figures for the three time periods are not strictly comparable because of changes in the ICD. Also, before 1968 the ICD did not distinguish between criminal and other abortions and before 1979 it did not distinguish between spontaneous abortion and other forms of abortion. The relevant ICD codes are shown in the headings.

Numbers of direct maternal deaths (Complications of pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium including abortion)—Scotland 1960 to 1984

Year	*All maternal deaths 640-689*	*All forms of abortion 650-652*
1960	35	3
1961	37	5
1962	42	10
1963	39	3
1964	24	4
1965	38	7
1966	24	4
1977	22	—

Year	*All maternal deaths 630-678*	*All forms of abortion 640-645*	*Criminal abortion 642*	*Other abortions 640, 641, 643-645*
1968	14	1	1	—
1969	13	3	2	1
1970	17	—	—	—
1971	14	2	1	1
1972	13	3	1	2
1973	16	2	—	2
1974	16	2	1	1
1975	6	—	—	—
1976	10	—	—	—
1977	13	1	—	1
1978	4	1	—	1

Year	*All maternal deaths 630-676*	*All abortion 630-639**	*Spontaneous abortion 634*	*Illegally induced abortion 636*	*Legally induced abortion 633*
1979	7	1	1	—	—
1980	10	1	—	—	1
1981	13	—	—	—	—
1982	6	—	—	—	—
1983	8	1	1	—	—
1984	8	—	—	—	—

* Excluding 633.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will describe any precautionary measures taken at other nuclear power stations following the site incident at Hinckley Point nuclear power station on 29 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: The South of Scotland Electricity Board will continue to ensure the most stringent observance of all safety procedures in the course of any operations comparable to those during which the site incident at Hinckley Point B occurred. The board will be maintaining close contact with the Central Electricity Generating Board and Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate about the incident at Hinckley Point B and will take account of any lessons to be learnt. The inspectorate is satisfied that it is safe to continue to operate nuclear reactors with the type of gas circulator in use at Hinckley Point B and Hunterston B.

Teachers (Independent Review)

Mr. Ron Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received in

support of an independent review of teachers' salaries and conditions of employment in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Allan Stewart: My right hon. Friend and I continue to receive many letters making representations about the teachers' dispute, a large proportion of which support some form of independent review. As my right hon. Friend said on 11 December, at column 903, in reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang), there is no substitute for direct negotiations among the parties involved.

Tourism

Sir Russell Johnston asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to respond to the recommendation by the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs on 27 March that the tourism function of the Highlands and Islands Development Board should be transferred to the Scottish Tourist Board.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. Friend will announce his response to this and certain other recommendations of the Committee on Scottish Affairs in the near future.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Oral Questions (Northern Ireland)

40. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Lord Privy Seal if, following the Anglo-Irish agreement, he has any plans to vary the time available for Oral Questions to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Biffen: The arrangements for the question roster are under regular review through the usual channels and in accordance with the wishes of the House. There are no current proposals to extend the time allocated to questions to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Personnel Statistics

41. **Sir Anthony Grant** asked the Lord Privy Seal why the number of officers and staff of the House of Commons have increased by 45 per cent. in the decade 1970 to 1980; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: I refer my hon. Friend to the annual report of the Commissioners for Regulating the Offices of the House of Commons and, since 1979, the House of Commons Commission. These reports, which are available in the Library, detail each increase in the staff complement made between 1970 and 1980 and the reasons for it.

SOCIAL SERVICES

NHS Patients (Private Hospitals)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much has been paid by health authorities in the West Midlands region to send patients for treatment at private hospitals; how many patients were sent by each authority; what treatment or urgent or non-urgent operations they were sent for; and by how much this reduced waiting lists in National Health Service hospitals in those areas in each of the last five years.

Mr. Hayhoe: I regret that all the information that the hon. Member is requesting is not collected centrally. Table A sets out the total expenditure under contractual arrangements for patient care in the west midlands since the 1980-81 financial year. This information is not directly comparable with the activity figures in tables B and C which are for calendar years. If the hon. Member requires further information she may like to write to the chairmen of individual district health authorities who may be able to help.

Table A
Expenditure on contractual arrangements for patient care

Area Health Authorities	*1980-81* £	*1981-82* £	*District Health Authorities*	*1982-83* £	*1983-84* £	*1984-85* £
Hereford and Worcester	22,503	68,755	Bromsgrove and Redditch	23,230	22,238	1,424
			Hereford	—	—	—
			Kidderminster	6,209	1,962	16,259
			Worcester	44,367	38,807	32,451
Salop	153,180	133,587	Shropshire	122,106	86,069	85,877
Staffordshire	136,115	157,347	Mid-Staffordshire	22,415	91,720	100,100
			North Staffordshire	160,000	188,409	218,490
			South East Staffordshire	—	67,620	96,467
Warwickshire	642,528	828,278	Rugby	22,233	20,916	23,053
			North Warwickshire	58,096	668,670	737,469
			South Warwickshire	889,682	451,178	507,118
Birmingham	451,641	601,280	Central Birmingham	30,227	23,569	4,028
			East Birmingham	29,611	—	83,899
			North Birmingham	5,605	14,873	13,771
			South Birmingham	34,832	47,692	36,171
			West Birmingham	3,415	—	5,475
Coventry	—	23,438	Coventry	66,399	114,631	119,756
Dudley	26,084	44,127	Dudley	81,692	73,891	110,069
Sandwell	2,397	19,177	Sandwell	34,807	50,111	53,967
Solihull	—	—	Solihull	—	—	—
Walsall	24,580	11,603	Walsall	41,725	33,968	61,485
Wolverhampton	15,127	22,440	Wolverhampton	110,164	60,000	117,689
Total	1,474,155	1,910,032	Total	1,786,795	2,056,324	2,425,018

Notes:

1. The figures are derived from the annual accounts of area health authorities and their successor district health authorities and represent total revenue expenditure on all contractual arrangements for patient care incurred under hospital and community health services. The accounts give no detailed analysis of this expenditure.
2. The accounts of the West Midlands Regional Health Authority show no expenditure of this type.

Table B

Discharges and deaths of in-patients receiving treatment under contractual arrangements with institutions outside the National Health Service. West Midlands Regional Health Authority

District health authority	**1980*	**1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984 (provisional)*
Bromsgrove and Redditch	15	5	3	10	21
Herefordshire			—	—	—
Kidderminster and District			3	3	—
Worcester and District			—	2	6
Shropshire	73	64	55	74	44
Mid Staffordshire	201	217	25	62	55
North Staffordshire			230	291	273
South East Staffordshire			—	66	114
Rugby	918	1,117	—	—	—
North Warwickshire†			—	1,432	1,724
South Warwickshire†			1,057	161	170
Central Birmingham	19	—	—	—	—
East Birmingham			15	24	20
North Birmingham			—	—	—
South Birmingham			14	6	—
West Birmingham			—	—	—
Coventry	—	—	—	156	166
Dudley	21	10	62	56	93
Sandwell	13	16	16	33	50
Solihull	—	—	—	—	—
Walsall	11	19	22	35	27
Wolverhampton	—	11	108	106	125
Regional Total	1,271	1,459	1,610	2,517	2,888

* For 1980 and 1981 the figures relate to Area Health Authorities.

† Responsibility for contractual arrangements with the Warwickshire Orthopaedic hospital (St. Gerards) was transferred from South Warwickshire to North Warwickshire DHA in 1983.

Table C

Number of new out-patients receiving treatment under contractual arrangements with institutions outside the National Health Service. West Midlands Regional Health Authority.

District health authority	**1980*	**1981*	*1982*	*1983*	†*1984*
Bromsgrove and Redditch	—	—	—	—	—
Herefordshire			—	—	—
Kidderminster and District			—	—	—
Worcester and District			—	—	—
Shropshire	—	—	—	—	—
Mid Staffordshire	—	—	—	—	—
North Staffordshire			—	—	—
South East Staffordshire			—	—	—
Rugby			—	—	—
North Warwickshire	2,352	2,285	—	584	1,012
South Warwickshire			2,383	1,513	732
Central Birmingham	—	—	—	—	—
East Birmingham			—	—	—
North Birmingham			—	—	—
South Birmingham			—	—	—
West Birmingham			—	—	—
Coventry	—	—	—	—	—
Dudley	—	—	—	—	—
Sandwell	—	—	—	—	—
Solihull	—	—	—	—	—
Walsall	—	—	—	—	—
Wolverhampton	—	—	—	2	—
Regional total	2,352	2,285	2,383	2,099	1,744

* For 1980 and 1981 the figures relate to Area Health Authorities.

† Provisional.

Rate Rebate (Lambeth)

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what was the date of the first payment of rate rebate to Lambeth council in the financial year 1985-86; and what interest accrued to public funds as a result of it not being paid at an earlier date;

(2) what is the current annual cost of housing benefit in Lambeth and the cost of administering the scheme.

Mr. Major: The first payment on account of rate rebate subsidy to Lambeth for the year 1985-86 was made on 15 July. On the second point, it is not possible to give a figure since the calculation would depend on hypothetical assumptions about how central Government's financing would have been carried out in other circumstances.

Latest estimates provided by the London borough of Lambeth indicate that the cost of housing benefit in 1985-86 is expected to be £49 million and the cost of its administration is expected to be £2·5 million.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply of 22 November, *Official Report*, columns *335-36*, if he will list the additional requirements for which a boarder can qualify as prescribed in schedule 4 to the Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations 1983 (S.I., 1983, No. 1399); and if he will state *(a)* the top limit that can be claimed for laundry and *(b)* the average weekly laundry payment where such a payment is made.

Mr. Newton: Subject to there being a need for the item and provision for it not being made in the boarding charge, a boarder can, in appropriate circumstances, qualify for the following additional requirements:

(a) extra heating; *(b)* old age addition; *(c)* attendance needs; *(d)* extra baths needed on medical grounds; *(e)* blindness; *(f)* boarding out fees for a child prior to adoption; *(g)* special diet due to illness; *(h)* fares to visit certain close relatives or friends in hospital; *(i)* laundry expenses; *(j)* special wear and tear on clothing; *(k)* extra cost of special clothing or footwear; and *(l)* storage of furniture.

The limit for a laundry addition is the amount by which the estimated average cost exceeds £0·55 a week. The latest figure available on the average laundry addition is £1·56 a week which relates to all claimants in receipt of such an addition and not just those in board and lodging.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the number of supplementary benefit claimants in Leyton and Leytonstone in each of the past six years.

Mr. Major: The London postal districts of Leyton and Leytonstone are covered by the Department's office at Leytonstone, although the boundaries are not conterminous. The number of people receiving supplementary benefit from that office on 30 July 1985—the latest available figures—and on comparable dates in the past five years were:

	Number
1980	6,444
1981	7,529
1982	8,252
1983	8,980
1984	9,629
1985	10,340

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

NHS (Overseas Visitors)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services by when he expects charges on overseas visitors using National Health Service facilities will have raised £6 million per year, as he originally estimated in February 1982.

Mr. Hayhoe: This early and provisional estimate was too high. Income figures were given to the hon. Member in my reply to him on 2 December at columns *117-26*.

AIDS

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines he has issued to health authorities on the development of local counselling services for carriers of HTLV III virus.

Mr. Hayhoe: Health authorities were asked on 30 July 1985 to plan for the counselling of people found to be HTLV III antibody positive. The AIDS booklets "General Information for Doctors" and "Information for doctors concerning the introduction of the HTLV III antibody test", issued by the Chief Medical Officer in May and October this year, refer to counselling for seropositive individuals. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of haemophiliac patients have so far been tested for HTLV III antibody.

Mr. Hayhoe: Most of those exposed to the greatest risk of HTLV III infection have been tested.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many spouses of haemophiliacs have so far *(a)* been identified as carriers of HTLV III virus, *(b)* contracted acquired immune deficiency syndrome and *(c)* died.

Mr. Hayhoe: Complete figures for the number of spouses of haemophiliacs who may be infected with HTLV III are not held centrally, as all testing of haemophiliacs and their partners is entirely voluntary. Of the 120 known to have been tested to date, five have been found to be HTLV III antibody positive. From reports received by the communicable disease surveillance centre, it is understood that one of these five has contracted AIDS. None has died.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the length, content and intake of courses for training health professionals in the counselling of acquired immune deficiency syndrome sufferers.

Mr. Hayhoe: St. Mary's hospital Paddington is running a series of two-day courses for health professionals involved in the counselling of people taking the HTLVIII antibody test and those exposed to the AIDS virus. The courses provide up to date information on the AIDS infection and the specialist skills required for related counselling. To date 380 health professionals have been trained and courses for a further 150 people are planned.

As my right hon. Friend announced on 2 December at columns *1-2* in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Chiselhurst (Mr. Sims) a further £100,000 is being provided next year for AIDS counselling training. This money will support counselling courses in addition to those being run by St. Mary's.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give details of the 1986 national information campaign on acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and what agencies will be involved in its planning and execution.

Mr. Hayhoe: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend's reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) on 2 December at columns *1-2*. The Central Office of Information, Reflexions Ltd (the research company), TBWA (the advertising agency) and the Health Education Council are involved in the planning of the campaign.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 2 December, *Official Report*, column *126*, what are the six research projects on acquired immune deficiency syndrome funded by the Medical Research Council; and to which two his Department is contributing money.

Mr. Hayhoe: I understand that the Medical Research Council, which receives grant-in-aid from the science budget of the Department of Education and Science, is currently funding the following six research projects at a total cost of about £431,000.

1. Professor M. W. Adler, Dr. R. S. Tedder, (Middlesex hospital medical school) and Dr. Dorothy Crawford (University college, London): an investigation into the immunology and aetiology of AIDS.
2. Dr. J. Craske (PHLS, Withington hospital, Manchester): an epidemiological study of the relationship of AIDS in patients with disorders of blood coagulation to its possible acquisition through treatment with blood products.
3. Dr. D. J. Jeffries (St. Mary's medical school) and Dr. D. Taylor-Robinson (clinical research centre, Harrow): virological investigations of patients with the acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
4. Dr. A. J. Pinching (St. Mary's hospital medical school): a study on the killing of intra cellular pathogens by macrophages derived from homosexual males with AIDS and related disorders.
5. Professor R. A. Weiss (Institute of Cancer Research, London): retroviruses associated with acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
6. Dr. C. A. Ludlam (University of Edinburgh): clinical and immunological study of haemophiliacs treated exclusively with NHS Factor VIII/IX concentrate.

My Department is contributing a total of £59,000 to Professor Adler's and Dr. Craske's projects.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer of 2 December, *Official Report*, column *126*, what are the problems concerned with discrimination against carriers of the HTLV III virus which he is considering.

Mr. Hayhoe: Experience in this country, the United States and elsewhere indicates the main problems resulting from discrimination may fall mainly in the areas of insurance, employment and education and they are under consideration by the Government.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer on 2 December, if he has any plans to increase funds available from his Department for research into acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: A contribution of up to £250,000, towards the cost of the United Kingdom centre for co-ordination of epidemiological research on AIDS to be set up by the Medical Research Council has recently been agreed.

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if any preparations have been made for the establishment of isolation units in the case of an acquired immune deficiency syndrome epidemic; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: As AIDS is not highly infectious isolation units are not appropriate for AIDS patients. The wide variety of illnesses associated with the infection requires the use of normal district general hospital in-patient and out-patient facilities.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the period after which an unemployed person is no longer entitled to any form of unemployment benefit in the following countries: *(a)* France, *(b)* Germany, *(c)* Japan, *(d)* Italy, *(e)* Switzerland and *(f)* the United Kingdom.

Mr. Newton: Information on the period for which unemployment benefit is paid in countries of the European Community is contained in section VII of the Department's publication, "Tables of Social Benefit Systems in the Member States of the European Communities, Portugal and Spain" (position at 1 January 1985).

The most recent information on Switzerland is contained in "Comparative Tables of the Social Security Systems in Council of Europe Member States not belonging to the European Communities" (situation at 1 July 1984) published by the Council of Europe. Information on Japan is contained in "Social Security Programs Throughout the World 1983", published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Copies of all three publications are in the Library.

Child Benefit

Mr. McTaggart asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the numbers of children in Scotland in receipt of child benefit in each of the last five years for which there are figures available.

Mr. Newton: The information is as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Number of children in Scotland for whom child benefit was in payment	1,261,400	1,236,750	1,208,800	1,185,150	1,156,550

Single Payments

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of S circular S/48/85 and the preceding ruling by the social security commissioners, he will take steps to publicise the fact that claimants may be

entitled to claim for benefits under single payment Regulation No. 26, for which they were ruled ineligible last winter because of invalid guidance.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 6 December at column *394*.

Mentally-ill Patients

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many patients over the age of 50 years in mental illness and mental handicap hospitals died of respiratory or chest related conditions in the years 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: The table shows the number of deaths which occurred in National Health Service (NHS) and non-NHS psychiatric hospitals (including mental handicap hospitals) in England and Wales for persons aged 50 and over for the latest five years, where the underlying cause of death was a respiratory or chest-related disease.

The figures for 1984 are not comparable with earlier years because of a change in coding following a rule of the World Health Organisation. In 1984 some deaths previously coded to bronchopneumonia (ICD 485) have been allocated to other chronic conditions mentioned on the death certificate.

Number of deaths from respiratory and chest-related diseases occurring in NHS and non-NHS psychiatric hospitals, persons aged 50 years and over—England and Wales 1980 to 1984

ICD number 9th revision		*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
460 – 519	Respiratory diseases	4,831	4,827	4,956	4,887	1,469
See below*	Diseases of lower respiratory tract	4,800	4,797	4,916	4,834	1,449
487	Influenza	28	30	36	52	19
162	Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung	173	159	135	159	153
010 – 012	Tuberculosis of lung and pulmonary	7	6	6	3	6

* Diseases of respiratory system excluding acute upper respiratory infections and other diseases of upper respiratory tract ICD 9th revision 466, 480 – 519 excluding 487.

Smoking

Mr. Bellingham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many persons died from smoking-related diseases in the Norfolk North-West constituency in each of the last five years.

Mr. Whitney: It is not possible to be precise. Most deaths associated with cigarette smoking arise from three diseases: lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and "heart attacks" due to obstruction of the arteries of the heart. However, the proportion of deaths attributable to smoking from each of these diseases varies. Furthermore, smoking is also implicated in certain other conditions where no estimate of the numbers of the deaths caused by smoking is available—for example, obstruction of the arteries of the lower limbs.

In 1983 the Royal College of Physicians in its report "Health or Smoking?" estimated that at least 90 per cent. of deaths from lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and obstructive lung disease are attributable to smoking. The total number of deaths from the main conditions involved is given in the table.

Norfolk, North-West Constituency (1984 boundaries)

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*†1984*
Malignant neoplasm of Trachea bronchus and lung (ICD* 162)	66	58	54	57
Bronchitis and Emphysema, Chronic airways obstruction, not elsewhere classified (ICD* 490-492, 496)	42	36	46	66

* International Classification of Diseases 9th revision.

† Figures for 1984 are not comparable with earlier years because of a change in coding rules.

In the same report the Royal College of Physicians also estimated that perhaps 20 per cent. of deaths due to obstruction of the arteries of the heart were related to smoking. The medical term for this condition is "ischaemic heart disease", but it is nowadays very often referred to as "coronary heart disease". The total number of deaths from this condition for the North West Norfolk constituency is as follows, but the proportion of these directly attributable to smoking is less certain as this is only one of a number of causes that give rise to obstruction of the arteries of the heart.

Year	*Ischaemic Heart Disease (ICD* 410-414)*
1981	321
1982	277
1983	288
1984†	284

* International Classification of Diseases 9th revision.

† Figures for 1984 are not comparable with earlier years because of a change in coding rules.

The Royal College of Physicians' estimate of at least 100,000 smoking-related deaths in 1981 is based upon a total of 70,000 deaths from lung cancer, bronchitis and obstructive lung disease and 180,000 from coronary heart disease; that is, it encompasses conditions not included in the ICD categories, such as various other cancers, other vascular diseases, myocardial degeneration and so on.

Because of changes in area coding, figures are not available for 1980.

Low Income Families

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the reason for the assumption in Low Income Families 1981 that families off work sick or unemployed for less than three months had

income equal to their normal income in paid work; and how many more families would be shown as unemployed, sick or living on low incomes if this assumption were discontinued.

Mr. Major: The bulk of data contained in the tables "Low Income Families — 1981" is derived from the family expenditure survey. The practice of equating the incomes of families off work, sick or unemployed for less than three months to their normal income in work, follows the convention adopted by the Department of Employment in its published reports of these surveys. The main purpose of the convention is to provide a more accurate indication of the budgetting behaviour of families. My hon. Friend may wish to refer to note 15A of annex A to the report of the family expenditure survey in 1981 which explains the convention more fully.

The table shows the changes in the estimated numbers of low-income families in 1981 if the income of those sick or unemployed for less than three months at the time of the survey is not equated to their normal income in work.

Employment status

	Unemployed	*Sick*	*In work*
Receiving supplementary benefit	+400,000	+20,000	—
Not receiving supplementary benefit but with income below that level	+160,000	+40,000	−40,000
Not receiving supplementary benefit but with income above, but less than 40 per cent. above, that level	+80,000	+30,000	−120,000

Pensions

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* any geographical area in the United Kingdom where delays are being experienced in making available the new up-rated weekly pension payments.

Mr. Major: People who receive their weekly pension payments from the Department's Office at Newcastle were issued with uprated order books before the date the increases took effect.

The great majority of those who receive their payments from the Department's network of local offices were also issued with their increases by the due date, but a few people living in areas covered by the following offices may have experienced some delays:

Bracknell
Camberwell
Hounslow
Ipswich
Kennington Park
Kirkby (Liverpool)
Leicester
Tottenham
Wood Green (North London)
Surbiton

National Health Service (Rural Areas)

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the difference in the formula for allocation of resources for the National Health Service in rural areas between his Department and the Scottish Office; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: The allocation of resources for the hospital and community health services to regional health authorities in England is based upon the formula recommended in the report of the resource allocation working party published in 1976. A copy of the report is in the Library. Regional health authorities are responsible for allocations to English health districts. The allocation of resources to family practitioner committees for their administrative functions in 1985-86 was based on their level of expenditure before becoming administratively independent of district health authorities on 1 April 1985.

The allocation of resources for the National Health Service in Scotland is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. A. D. Hickson

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will indicate when Mr. A. D. Hickson of 21 Lansdowne Way, Etching Hill, Rugeley will receive the supplementary benefit to which he is entitled from 13 September last (ref. no. 2809/222803).

Mr. Major: A payment of supplementary benefit, including all arrears due, was made to Mr. Hickson on 15 November 1985.

Ship Engine Rooms (Noise)

Viscount Cranborne asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has received any advice from the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council about the effects of noise levels in ships' engine rooms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have received no recommendations from the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council about noise in ships' engine rooms.

The council keeps the occupational deafness scheme under continuous review. I understand it is examining noise levels in a number of occupations not at present covered by the scheme, including work in ships' engine rooms. Its recommendations will be carefully considered.

Hyperbaric Oxygen

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make hyperbaric oxygen treatment for multiple sclerosis patients available on the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: The view of the Medical Research Council and of the Department's neurosciences liaison committee is that the effectiveness of hyperbaric oxygen in the management of multiple sclerosis is at present unproven and I do not therefore consider the expenditure of National Health Service resources on its provision could be justified at

this stage. Our position will be reviewed when the findings of the clinical trials at present being undertaken, and any other relevant data, have been evaluated.

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what evaluation studies have been made of the effects of hyperbaric oxygen treatment on multiple sclerosis patients; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: The Department commissioned a review of research data on the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy in the management of multiple sclerosis in 1983. This review, carried out by Dr. J. Martin and Professor W. I. McDonald and published in the *British Medical Journal* on 31 March 1984, concluded that the research evidence then available was insufficient to substantiate claims that the treatment was effective, and recommended that further clinical trials be undertaken.

We are aware of two voluntary organisations that are currently conducting clinical trials on the use of the therapy. The Multiple Sclerosis Society has conducted trials at the Royal Victoria hospital in Newcastle and at Whipps Cross and St. Thomas' hospitals in London. All three are now completed and involved a total of 204 patients; the results of the Newcastle trial were published in the *Lancet* on 9 February 1985, and publication of the results of the other two trials is awaited. Action for Research into Multiple Sclerosis is conducting clinical trials at the Western infirmary in Glasgow and at the Central Middlesex hospital in London involving a total of 180 patients, and the results are expected in 1986.

Mrs. Dunwoody asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the centres providing hyperbaric oxygen treatment for multiple sclerosis patients.

Mr. Whitney: Facilities for hyperbaric oxygen therapy are provided in a number of National Health Service hospitals but not, as far as I am aware, specifically for the management of patients suffering multiple sclerosis except in the context of controlled clinical trials. I am informed that the therapy is provided for multiple sclerosis sufferers at 45 centres established by Action for Research into Multiple Sclerosis.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number of *(a)* new beds and *(b)* beds closed, including individual hospital wards since May 1979.

Mr. Whitney: From May 1979 to the end of June this year there were 18,325 beds in hospitals or parts of hospitals which have been approved for permanent closure. These are beds no longer sensibly required for patient services. Major hospital schemes (those costing £5 million or more) completed since 1979 have provided almost 12,500 new beds. Many smaller schemes have also provided new beds but full details of these are not available centrally.

Doctors (Computers)

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, following his reply of 28 November, *Official Report*, column *646*, how the cost of the computers loaned to doctors by the medicines manufacturer referred to will be reflected in the prices of National Health Service medicines.

Mr. Whitney: Companies supplying medicines to the National Health Service are obliged to submit audited annual financial returns to the Department under the terms of the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme. These returns reflect the costs and profits incurred by companies in their sales of medicines to the Health Service and are the basis upon which the Department determines whether such costs and profits are reasonable. We are still examining the particular company's returns for the period in which the computers were loaned but at this stage have no reason to doubt that the cost of the loan may be legitimately charged as a cost.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the expenditure of his Department in 1984-85 on housing benefit and housing benefit supplement was expended in satisfying the rate bills of recipients of those benefits.

Mr. Major: About one third of housing benefit expenditure was expended on rate rebates in 1984-85.

Mammographic Screening

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress is being made by the expert group set up in June to consider future policy on mammographic screening; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: An expert working group on breast cancer screening was appointed in July. By the end of the year, it will have met on 4 occasions, considered 36 papers and taken evidence from a number of experts.

I expect to receive its report in the spring.

Disability (Dietary Factors)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what research is being done into dietary factors related to disability in early life, in middle age and in old age; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: The Department is funding research at St. Thomas' hospital, London, into the nutrition of children which, while not directly concerned with dietary factors related to disability, may provide further information in this field.

The Medical Research Council, which receives grant-in-aid from the science budget of the Department of Education and Science, is the main government funded body for the promotion of medical research in the United Kingdom.

Immunisation Policy

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what provisions are being made to improve the national immunisation policy; if there are any sectors of immunisation policy to which he proposes to devote additional resources and publicity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which advises the Department on immunisation matters, reviews national policy on a continuing basis.

Last August, the Department asked health authorities to draw up programmes for increased uptake of childhood immunisation, particularly against measles and whooping cough.

The Health Education Council, with special Government funding, is running a publicity campaign to promote immunisation against whooping cough. This will continue throughout the current whooping cough epidemic. The National Rubella Council, which is funded by the Department, is in the second year of a three year campaign to improve uptake of immunisation against rubella among schoolgirls and adult women of childbearing age.

Construction Industry (Safety)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how much has been claimed in benefits by persons due to accidents in the construction industry in England and Wales in each of the last six years;

(2) if records are kept of beneft claimed by workers involved in accidents in the construction industry and of amounts paid.

Mr. Newton: Records of number of claims and amounts of benefit paid to workers in the construction industry are not held centrally.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many workers in the construction industry in England and Wales claimed benefit for industrial injuries in each of the past six years.

Mr. Newton: Information in the form requested is not available centrally. The following table shows the number of awards of benefit to construction workers in Great Britain from 1976 to 1982. Figures for later years are not yet available.

Year ending 30 September	*Awards of injury benefit*	*Awards of disablement benefit*
1976-77	70,300	*
1977-78	69,000	*
1978-79	*	*
1979-80	57,100	6,810
1980-81	49,300	5,810
1981-82	45,300	5,330

* Not available.

Applications and Appeals (Ayr)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current average time taken between refusal of an application by an officer and an appeal against that refusal being heard by a tribunal in the area covered by the Ayr Office; and how this compares with the Scottish and United Kingdom averages, respectively.

Mr. Major: The information available relates to the period between the lodging of an appeal against a decision by an adjudication officer and the hearing of that appeal by a social security appeal tribunal.

The most recent information relates to the last quarter of 1984. At that time the average time for the hearing of appeals relating to all social security benefits was 11·8 weeks in Scotland and 13·9 weeks in Great Britain. Equivalent figures are not available for the United Kingdom or for localities smaller than a Region.

Residential Homes

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the criteria used by his Department for licensing *(a)* a nursing home and *(b)* an old people's home; how often each is inspected; what is the minimum number of beds, nurses and other medical staff necessary, including visiting doctors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: Registration of nursing homes is a function exercised by District Health Authorities on behalf of the Secretary of State, and in accordance with part II of the Registered Homes Act 1984 and the Nursing Homes and Mental Nursing Homes Regulations. The legislation provides for every home to be inspected not less than twice in every period of twelve months; does not prescribe a minimum number of beds; and requires the person registered to provide adequate professional, technical, ancillary and other staff and to make adequate arrangements for patients in the home where necessary to receive medical and dental services, and to provide or make arrangements for other facilities and services.

Residential care homes, which include homes for elderly people, with places for four or more people are registered by local social services authorities under part I of the 1984 Act and in accordance with the Residential Care Homes Regulations 1984. Authorities have to inspect registered homes at least once every 12 months. Those registered to run homes have to employ sufficient suitably qualified and competent staff; make arrangements for residents to receive, where necessary, medical and dental services; and provide, or make arrangements for, other facilities and services appropriate to the needs of residents.

Family Planning Association

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has received any recent representations concerning the Family Planning Association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: Copies of an anonymous letter about staff and management matters at the Family Planning Association have been received. I understand that the association's solicitors have issued a statement contending that the letter contains libellous allegations about senior staff of the association.

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any Government funds are made available through the Health Education Council for the Family Planning Association.

Mr. Hayhoe: The Health Education Council funds the family planning information service, which is operated jointly by the council and the Family Planning Association. Funding in the current financial year is £290,000.

Rate Rebates

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) to how many of the local authorities which failed to set a rate by 1 April 1985 his Department delayed payment of its contribution to rate rebates;

(2) if he will list the local authorities that continued to pay rate rebates after 1 April 1985 but before they had set a rate.

Mr. Major: Payments on account of rate rebate subsidy were not made to ten authorities who did not set a rate on time since rate rebates are properly payable under the statutory housing benefits scheme only when a rate has

been set. The hon. Member might like to consult the authorities concerned for information about rate rebates they paid before setting a rate.

Limited List Prescribing

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will list all changes, with dates, which have taken place in the limited list of medicines available under the National Health Service since the introduction of the list.

Mr. Hayhoe: All changes to the products affected by the selected list scheme are contained in the following Amending Regulations: S.I. 1985 No. 540, S.I. 1985 No. 803 and S.I. 1985 No. 1712. I will send my hon. Friend a copy of each of these regulations.

Children (Statistics)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of children aged under 18 years in the population, the number of children in care and the proportion of children in care in each of the years 1964 to 1984 inclusive.

Mr. Whitney: The information readily available is for England and Wales and is given in the table. The numbers of children in care in England and Wales for each year 1964-83 and the corresponding proportions for 1976-83 are given in "Children in Care in England and Wales", published annually, copies of which are available in the Library.

Number of children aged under 18 years in the population, number of children in care and the number of children in care per 1,000 population aged under 18 years, in England and Wales, 1964-84

At 31 March	Number of children aged under 18 years in the population* (in thousands)	Number of children in care†	Number of children in care per 1,000 population aged under 18 years
1964	12,985	66,281	5·1
1965	13,143	67,099	5·1
1966	13,130	69,157	5·3
1967	13,165	69,405	5·3
1968	13,254	69,358	5·2
1969	13,384	70,188	5·2
1970	13,509	71,210	5·3
1971	13,597	87,377	6·4
1972	13,666	90,586	6·6
1973	13,722	93,188	6·8
1974	13,755	95,867	7·0
1975	13,698	99,120	7·2
1976	13,599	100,628	7·4
1977	13,455	101,158	7·5
1978	13,272	100,646	7·6
1979	13,093	100,085	7·6
1980	12,936	100,158	7·7
1981	12,776	96,896	7·6
1982	12,591	93,238	7·4
1983	12,369	86,552	7·0
1984	12,148	78,889	6·5

* Estimates at 30 June of the previous year.
† The number of children in care includes a small number who were aged 18 or 19 years.

Death Statistics

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many deaths in England and Wales were attributed, respectively, to all maternal causes, all forms of abortion, spontaneous abortion, illegal abortion and legal abortion, in each of the years 1960 to 1984 inclusive.

Mr. Hayhoe: The available figures are given in the tables. Because of changes in the international classification of diseases (ICD), figures from 1979 to date are not comparable with those of earlier years.

Before 1979 it is not possible to distinguish between spontaneous abortion and other forms of abortion, and the statistics for this period include maternal deaths where the interval between the onset of the maternal condition and death is up to one year.

From 1979, the category "All abortion" is defined as pregnancy with abortive outcome, excluding ectopic pregnancy. A maternal death is defined as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and the site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.

Numbers of direct maternal deaths (complications of pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium including abortion)

England and Wales *1960-84*

Year	All maternal deaths ICD (8) 630-678	All forms of abortion ICD (8) 640-645	Criminal abortion ICD (8) 642	Other abortions ICD (8) 640, 641, 643-645
1960	310	62	30	32
1961	274	54	23	31
1962	299	57	29	28
1963	243	49	21	28
1964	227	50	24	26
1965	221	52	21	31
1966	223	53	30	23
1967	172	34	17	17
1968	200	50	22	28
1969	155	35	15	20
1970	146	32	11	21

Year	All maternal deaths ICD (8) 630-678	All forms of abortion ICD (8) 640-645	Criminal abortion ICD (8) 642	Other abortions ICD (8) 640, 641, 643-645
1971	134	27	6	21
1972	112	26	7	19
1973	88	12	4	8
1974	81	11	2	9
1975	77	8	1	7
1976	78	7	1	6
1977	74	6	1	5
1978	68	5	—	5

Year	All maternal deaths ICD (9) 630-676	All abortion ICD (9) 630-639 excl 633	Spontaneous abortion ICD (9) 634	Illegally induced abortion ICD (9) 636	Legally induced abortion ICD (9) 635
1979	74	6	1	—	2
1980	70	3	1	—	1
1981	57	4	1	—	1
1982	42	4	1	—	2
1983	54	2	2	—	—
1984	52	3	—	—	1

"Reform of Social Security"

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, out of all the responses to the Green Paper, "Reform of Social Security", how many gave positive support to the proposal for a lower rate of supplementary benefit for under-25s; and which they were.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

National Health Service Hospitals

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give, for each year since 1979 and for each district health authority, the total number of National Health Service hospitals;

(2) if he will give, for each year since 1979 and for each district health authority, the total number of beds in National Health Service hospitals.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. *133*]: The information requested is given in the tables.

Number of National Health Service hospitals in England

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Northern Regional Health Authority						
Hartlepool	4	4	4	4	4	4
North Tees	2	2	2	2	2	2
South Tees	18	16	15	14	13	13
East Cumbria	*	*	*	11	11	11
South Cumbria	*	*	*	10	10	10
West Cumbria	7	7	7	7	7	7
Darlington	5	5	5	5	5	5
Durham	7	7	7	7	7	6
North West Durham	4	3	3	3	3	3
South West Durham	8	8	8	8	8	8
Northumberland	16	16	16	16	16	16
Gateshead	8	7	7	7	7	7
Newcastle upon Tyne	14	14	13	14	14	14
North Tyneside	7	7	6	6	6	7
South Tyneside	6	6	7	7	7	6
Sunderland	8	8	8	8	8	8
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority						
Hull	13	13	11	10	9	10
East Yorkshire	12	12	12	12	12	12
Grimsby	7	7	7	7	8	5
Scunthorpe	11	11	11	10	10	10
Northallerton	7	7	7	8	8	8
York	16	16	16	16	14	12
Scarborough	7	6	6	6	6	6
Harrogate	10	9	9	9	11	10
Bradford	21	20	20	20	20	20
Airedale	9	9	9	9	9	9
Calderdale	4	4	4	4	4	4
Huddersfield	7	7	7	7	7	7
Dewsbury	6	6	6	6	6	6
Leeds Western	*	*	*	11	12	10
Leeds Eastern	*	*	*	7	7	7
Wakefield	8	8	8	8	7	8
Pontefract	6	6	6	5	5	5
Trent Regional Health Authority						
North Derbyshire	20	19	19	19	19	19
South Derbyshire	31	28	27	28	28	29
Leicestershire	37	37	38	37	37	38
North Lincolnshire	17	16	15	14	14	13
South Lincolnshire	12	12	12	12	13	13
Bassetlaw	3	3	3	3		3

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Central Nottinghamshire	13	13	13	13	13	13
Nottingham	17	16	16	14	14	13
Barnsley	3	3	3	3	3	4
Doncaster	*	*	*	7	7	7
Rotherham	*	*	*	10	10	10
Sheffield	27	28	26	25	24	25
East Anglian Regional Health Authority						
Cambridge	*	*	*	7	8	7
Peterborough	12	13	14	12	13	12
West Suffolk	*	*	*	5	5	5
East Suffolk	*	*	*	18	18	17
Norwich	25	25	25	25	25	25
Great Yarmouth	9	9	9	10	10	10
West Norfolk and Wisbech	12	12	8	7	7	7
Huntingdon	*	*	*	4	4	2
North West Thames Regional Health Authority						
North Bedfordshire	8	8	8	7	7	7
South Bedfordshire	6	6	6	6	6	5
North Hertforshire	6	6	6	6	6	6
East Hertfordshire	8	7	7	7	7	7
North West Hertfordshire	7	7	7	7	7	7
South West Hertforshire	7	7	7	6	6	6
Barnet	15	15	13	13	13	13
Harrow	3	3	3	3	3	3
Hillingdon	7	7	6	6	6	6
Hounslow and Spelthorne	*	*	*	6	6	6
Ealing	8	6	6	6	6	6
Brent	8	8	8	8	8	7
Paddington	10	9	9	10	10	10
Hammersmith and Fulham	5	4	4	3	3	3
Victoria	7	7	7	8	7	7
North East Thames Regional Health Authority						
Basildon and Thurrock	8	8	8	8	8	8
Mid Essex	7	7	7	7	7	7
North East Essex	15	15	15	15	15	14
West Essex	9	7	7	7	7	7
Southend	5	5	5	5	5	5
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	10	10	10	10	10	9
Hampstead	*	*	*	4	4	4
Bloomsbury	*	*	*	15	15	16
Islington	*	*	*	5	5	4
City and Hackney	8	8	9	10	10	10
Newham	9	8	8	8	8	5
Tower Hamlets	8	7	6	5	5	4
Enfield	5	5	5	3	3	3
Haringey	5	5	5	5	4	4
Redbridge	6	5	5	4	4	4
Waltham Forest	11	11	11	11	11	10
South East Thames Regional Health Authority						
Brighton	15	15	14	15	14	15
Eastbourne	7	7	7	7	7	8
Hastings	11	11	10	10	10	10
South East Kent	12	10	9	9	10	10
Canterbury and Thanet	20	20	19	19	19	19
Dartford and Gravesham	9	9	9	9	9	8
Maidstone	7	7	7	7	8	6
Medway	10	10	10	10	10	11
Tunbridge Wells	15	15	16	16	16	15
Bexley	3	3	3	3	3	3
Greenwich	9	9	7	7	7	7
Bromley	9	9	9	9	9	9
West Lambeth	*	*	*	4	4	4
Camberwell	5	5	5	5	5	5
Lewisham and North Southwark	9	7	7	7	7	7
South West Thames Regional Health Authority						
North West Surrey	13	13	12	12	12	12
West Surrey and North East Hants	5	5	5	5	5	6
South West Surrey	8	8	8	9	9	9
Mid Surrey	11	11	9	10	10	10
East Surrey	13	13	13	13	14	13

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Chichester	5	5	5	5	5	6
Mid Downs	9	9	9	9	9	8
Worthing	5	5	5	5	5	5
Croydon	10	9	9	9	9	8
Kingston and Esher	*	*	*	6	6	6
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	*	*	*	6	6	6
Wandsworth	12	10	8	8	9	8
Merton and Sutton	17	16	16	16	16	15
Wessex Regional Health Authority						
East Dorset	17	17	15	15	18	18
West Dorset	17	17	17	17	17	18
Portsmouth	19	18	18	19	19	21
South West Hants. and Southampton	25	25	26	26	27	27
Winchester	12	12	12	13	14	14
Basingstoke	8	8	8	8	8	8
Salisbury	5	5	6	6	6	8
Swindon	9	9	9	9	9	10
West Wiltshire and Bath	27	27	27	27	27	30
Isle of Wight	8	8	8	8	9	9
Oxford Regional Health Authority						
East Berkshire	11	11	12	12	12	12
West Berkshire	19	18	18	18	18	16
Aylesbury	*	*	*	6	6	6
Wycombe	8	8	8	8	8	7
Milton Keynes	*	*	*	4	4	4
Kettering	5	5	5	5	5	5
Northampton	10	8	8	8	8	8
Oxfordshire	29	28	27	27	27	30
South Western Regional Health Authority						
Bristol and Weston	18	18	20	20	19	18
Frenchay	12	12	12	12	12	12
Southmead	14	14	13	13	13	12
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	30	30	30	30	30	29
Exeter	30	30	30	29	28	28
North Devon	*	*	*	10	10	10
Plymouth	*	*	*	27	26	26
Torbay	16	17	17	18	19	19
Cheltenham	*	*	*	15	15	15
Gloucester	*	*	*	19	20	21
Somerset	31	30	31	31	31	31
West Midlands Regional Health Authority						
Bromsgrove and Redditch	8	8	8	9	9	8
Herefordshire	15	15	15	15	15	13
Kidderminster and District	7	7	7	7	7	7
Worcester and District	11	11	11	11	11	10
Shropshire	23	23	23	23	23	21
Mid Staffordshire	10	11	11	11	12	9
North Staffordshire	19	19	19	19	19	21
South-East Staffordshire	7	7	7	7	7	7
Rugby	3	3	3	3	3	2
North Warwickshire	*	*	*	6	6	6
South Warwickshire	*	*	*	12	12	12
Central Birmingham	*	*	*	9	10	11
East Birmingham	1	1	1	1	1	1
North Birmingham	8	8	8	8	8	8
South Birmingham	*	*	*	9	9	8
West Birmingham	*	*	*	8	8	8
Coventry	6	6	6	7	7	7
Dudley	10	10	10	10	10	11
Sandwell	7	5	5	5	5	5
Solihull	*	*	*	7	7	7
Walsall	6	6	6	6	6	6
Wolverhampton	8	8	8	8	8	8
Mersey Regional Health Authority						
Chester	8	8	8	8	6	6
Crewe	13	12	10	9	9	8
Halton	6	6	6	6	6	6
Macclesfield	10	10	10	11	12	9
Warrington	5	4	3	3	3	3
Liverpool	17	17	17	17	17	17
St. Helens and Knowsley	5	5	5	5	5	5

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Southport and Formby	8	8	8	7	7	7
South Sefton	2	2	2	2	2	2
Wirral	13	11	10	11	7	5
North Western Regional Health Authority						
Lancaster	6	6	6	6	6	6
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	9	9	9	9	9	9
Preston	*	*	*	6	6	6
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	11	11	11	11	12	12
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	8	8	8	8	8	8
West Lancashire	5	5	5	5	5	5
Chorley and South Ribble	*	*	*	3	3	3
Bolton	8	7	6	7	7	6
Bury	6	6	6	6	7	7
North Manchester	6	6	6	6	6	6
Central Manchester	4	4	4	4	4	6
South Manchester	4	4	4	4	4	
Oldham	5	5	4	4	4	
Rochdale	5	5	5	5	5	5
Salford	9	9	9	9	9	9
Stockport	10	10	9	10	10	9
Tameside and Glossop	5	5	6	6	6	5
Trafford	9	9	9	8	8	9
Wigan	9	9	9	9	9	6
Special Health Authorities						
The Hospital For Sick Children	3	3	3	3	3	3
National Hospitals For Nervous Diseases	4	4	4	4	4	4
Moorfields Eye Hospital	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	1	1	1	1	1	1
National Heart and Chest Hospitals	5	4	4	4	4	4
The Royal Marsden Hospital	2	2	2	2	2	2
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's	*	*	*	5	5	5

* Comparable figures not readily available because of NHS restructuring on 1 April 1982.
† Figures are based on a count of hospitals which provide residential facilities during the year. Day hospitals and clinics are therefore not included.

Average daily number of available beds in National Health Service hospitals in England

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Northern Regional Health Authority						
Hartlepool	592	614	600	627	636	705
North Tees	956	971	954	952	973	970
South Tees	2,282	2,232	2,122	2,066	2,069	1,973
East Cumbria	*	*	*	1,552	1,532	1,524
South Cumbria	*	*	*	872	862	847
West Cumbria	1,113	1,094	1,045	1,052	1,078	1,087
Darlington	1,310	1,336	1,326	1,307	1,319	1,264
Durham	1,192	1,188	1,181	1,156	1,165	1,107
North West Durham	717	697	685	681	664	642
South West Durham	1,921	1,890	1,847	1,828	1,800	1,719
Northumberland	3,996	3,988	3,870	3,827	3,766	3,727
Gateshead	1,368	1,378	1,357	1,362	1,383	1,368
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,479	3,570	3,567	3,517	3,566	3,488
North Tyneside	719	724	723	719	733	740
South Tyneside	771	762	828	825	829	821
Sunderland	2,426	2,379	2,356	2,338	2,351	2,349
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority						
Hull	2,145	2,128	2,024	1,955	1,948	1,935
East Yorkshire	2,184	2,113	2,004	1,934	1,951	1,904
Grimsby	797	800	806	800	807	800
Scunthorpe	993	983	962	936	931	913
Northallerton	437	448	448	444	413	406
York	2,985	2,960	2,933	2,847	2,548	2,473
Scarborough	689	701	674	688	694	682
Harrogate	995	927	954	959	1,142	1,068
Bradford	2,721	2,719	2,724	2,711	2,680	2,621
Airedale	1,528	1,533	1,501	1,464	1,402	1,376
Calderdale	1,370	1,385	1,344	1,357	1,302	1,258
Huddersfield	2,625	2,389	2,391	2,391	2,321	2,235
Dewsbury	777	778	785	756	761	752
Leeds Western	*	*	*	3,327	3,218	3,172
Leeds Eastern	*	*	*	2,734	2,726	2,698
Wakefield	2,607	2,505	2,473	2,321	2,309	2,273
Pontefract	854	848	873	865	883	904

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Trent Regional Health Authority						
North Derbyshire	1,722	1,674	1,701	1,668	1,673	1,684
South Derbyshire	4,208	4,323	3,913	3,935	3,929	3,734
Leicestershire	5,140	5,221	5,221	5,225	5,149	5,070
North Lincolnshire	2,815	2,749	2,693	2,653	2,581	2,420
South Lincolnshire	1,894	1,868	1,835	1,794	1,801	1,819
Bassetlaw	403	408	412	424	424	419
Central Nottinghamshire	1,997	1,967	1,949	1,934	1,888	1,851
Nottingham	4,198	4,088	4,041	4,029	4,000	3,958
Barnsley	962	1,013	1,014	971	1,032	1,073
Doncaster	*	*	*	1,946	1,954	1,929
Rotherham	*	*	*	1,244	1,250	1,246
Sheffield	5,233	5,075	5,032	4,922	4,800	4,799
East Anglian Regional Health Authority						
Cambridge	*	*	*	1,926	1,933	1,875
Peterborough	1,122	1,120	1,149	1,144	1,129	1,161
West Suffolk	*	*	*	1,236	1,241	1,247
East Suffolk	*	*	*	2,668	2,637	2,537
Norwich	3,928	3,979	3,991	3,822	3,915	3,697
Great Yarmouth	852	862	875	1,000	995	991
West Norfolk and Wisbech	830	882	833	817	831	841
Huntingdon	*	*	*	300	320	378
North-West Thames Regional Health Authority						
North Bedfordshire	1,233	1,259	1,230	1,224	1,243	1,216
South Bedfordshire	1,653	1,649	1,649	1,630	1,606	1,549
North Hertfordshire	849	851	857	858	855	855
East Hertfordshire	829	763	772	791	765	742
North-West Hertfordshire	3,288	3,310	3,277	3,198	3,175	3,185
South-West Hertfordshire	2,385	2,308	2,237	2,233	2,176	2,124
Barnet	2,841	2,800	2,771	2,748	2,670	2,551
Harrow	908	902	914	938	935	878
Hillingdon	1,628	1,480	1,528	1,526	1,499	1,406
Hounslow and Spelthorne	*	*	*	1,548	1,497	1,447
Ealing	1,709	1,713	1,753	1,725	1,663	1,622
Brent	2,316	2,332	2,263	2,273	2,203	2,059
Paddington	1,365	1,276	1,236	1,216	1,211	1,187
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,041	989	989	965	953	902
Victoria	2,185	2,053	2,047	2,981	2,892	2,807
North East Thames Regional Health Authority						
Basildon and Thurrock	1,893	1,880	1,922	1,960	1,976	1,984
Mid Essex	1,282	1,276	1,260	1,260	1,271	1,267
North East Essex	3,381	3,244	3,137	3,066	2,972	2,853
West Essex	1,256	1,174	1,187	1,214	1,210	1,199
Southend	1,937	1,941	1,924	1,942	1,933	1,912
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	3,283	3,238	3,183	3,095	3,033	2,984
Hampstead	*	*	*	1,963	1,919	1,894
Bloomsbury	*	*	*	2,487	2,490	2,344
Islington	*	*	*	1,177	1,105	1,018
City and Hackney	1,990	1,867	1,743	1,887	1,884	1,853
Newham	941	924	936	887	845	877
Tower Hamlets	1,561	1,484	1,605	1,433	1,396	1,363
Enfield	1,234	1,217	1,137	1,087	1,114	1,076
Haringey	1,236	1,122	1,143	1,157	1,109	1,028
Redbridge	1,655	1,655	1,650	1,633	1,644	1,630
Waltham Forest	3,311	3,318	3,245	3,051	2,842	2,667
South East Thames Regional Health Authority						
Brighton	1,896	1,851	1,770	1,794	1,803	1,796
Eastbourne	1,714	1,710	1,702	1,660	1,593	1,487
Hastings	1,064	1,016	974	995	955	927
South East Kent	1,004	1,043	1,081	1,087	1,093	1,073
Canterbury and Thanet	2,926	2,838	2,762	2,743	2,693	2,524
Dartford and Gravesham	2,646	2,552	2,478	2,454	2,290	2,125
Maidstone	1,741	1,697	1,680	1,689	1,680	1,618
Medway	991	982	972	992	994	1,011
Tunbridge Wells	2,419	2,396	2,338	2,268	2,213	2,174
Bexley	1,653	1,667	1,635	1,585	1,543	1,468
Greenwich	1,777	1,666	1,623	1,598	1,611	1,586
Bromley	2,591	2,491	2,466	2,377	2,296	2,116
West Lambeth	*	*	*	2,100	2,119	2,066
Camberwell	1,432	1,366	1,332	1,289	1,279	1,232
Lewisham and North Southwark	2,336	2,257	2,208	2,185	2,194	2,058

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
South West Thames Regional Health Authority						
North West Surrey	2,138	2,041	2,001	1,996	1,970	1,886
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	1,743	1,773	1,712	1,704	1,688	1,725
South West Surrey	857	872	930	959	951	927
Mid Surrey	2,901	2,835	2,592	2,579	2,466	2,356
East Surrey	2,776	2,666	2,597	2,512	2,444	2,267
Chichester	1,255	1,244	1,250	1,237	1,225	1,204
Mid Downs	1,576	1,572	1,625	1,647	1,676	1,621
Worthing	933	925	952	945	980	982
Croydon	3,192	3,089	3,006	2,929	2,860	2,728
Kingston and Esher	*	*	*	1,564	1,517	1,457
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	*	*	*	979	970	916
Wandsworth	2,871	2,689	2,543	2,476	2,494	2,534
Merton and Sutton	2,687	2,610	2,510	2,495	2,477	2,390
Wessex Regional Health Authority						
East Dorset	2,126	2,135	2,093	2,128	2,187	2,233
West Dorset	1,704	1,702	1,693	1,693	1,653	1,640
Portsmouth	3,058	3,032	3,037	3,028	2,978	2,835
South West Hampshire and Southampton	3,112	3,106	3,129	3,073	3,037	3,017
Winchester	921	915	910	899	875	867
Basingstoke	1,634	1,623	1,617	1,598	1,573	1,545
Salisbury	999	959	960	970	968	1,030
Swindon	1,478	1,435	1,382	1,336	1,347	1,377
West Wiltshire and Bath	3,044	3,029	2,974	2,947	2,838	2,737
Isle of Wight	946	909	868	875	855	794
Oxford Regional Health Authority						
East Berkshire	1,773	1,775	1,759	1,726	1,668	1,642
West Berkshire	2,987	2,820	2,758	2,704	2,626	2,489
Aylesbury	*	*	*	1,610	1,556	1,546
Wycombe	778	737	724	760	757	742
Milton Keynes	*	*	*	209	209	354
Kettering	849	875	896	918	891	902
Northampton	2,116	2,129	2,163	2,068	2,087	2,013
Oxfordshire	3,288	3,246	3,155	3,120	3,024	3,034
South Western Regional Health Authority						
Bristol and Weston	2,276	2,278	2,254	2,220	2,140	2,105
Frenchay	2,968	2,941	2,894	2,811	2,734	2,666
Southmead	2,175	2,089	2,060	2,005	1,917	1,802
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	2,670	2,693	2,747	2,745	2,691	2,621
Exeter	3,848	3,792	3,738	3,613	3,471	3,134
North Devon	*	*	*	640	647	659
Plymouth	*	*	*	2,226	2,200	2,167
Torbay	1,021	1,048	1,057	1,075	1,177	1,170
Cheltenham	*	*	*	932	942	939
Gloucester	*	*	*	2,248	2,201	2,088
Somerset	3,478	3,440	3,392	3,347	3,339	3,326
West Midlands Regional Health Authority						
Bromsgrove and Redditch	1,227	1,206	1,101	1,081	1,023	986
Herefordshire	1,174	1,151	1,126	1,106	1,064	1,019
Kidderminster and District	1,313	1,238	1,214	1,226	1,094	1,093
Worcester and District	1,684	1,645	1,619	1,630	1,603	1,567
Shropshire	2,603	2,573	2,578	2,573	2,564	2,480
Mid Staffordshire	1,372	1,399	1,372	1,309	1,319	1,309
North Staffordshire	3,492	3,499	3,504	3,448	3,406	3,358
South East Staffordshire	1,514	1,483	1,482	1,474	1,451	1,468
Rugby	327	327	328	334	324	318
North Warwickshire	*	*	*	1,212	1,210	1,165
South Warwickshire	*	*	*	1,893	1,866	1,834
Central Birmingham	*	*	*	1,729	1,793	1,829
East Birmingham	966	966	988	997	990	972
North Birmingham	1,879	1,753	1,680	1,658	1,595	1,507
South Birmingham	*	*	*	2,723	2,525	2,353
West Birmingham	*	*	*	2,247	2,202	2,130
Coventry	1,871	1,937	1,930	1,937	1,909	1,839
Dudley	1,492	1,476	1,510	1,523	1,544	1,514
Sandwell	747	771	805	851	858	872
Solihull	*	*	*	1,140	1,102	1,057
Walsall	1,762	1,697	1,676	1,628	1,598	1,614
Wolverhampton	1,543	1,503	1,484	1,510	1,506	1,479
Mersey Regional Health Authority						
Chester	2,031	1,943	1,911	1,847	1,836	1,771
Crewe	2,310	2,201	2,180	1,789	1,760	1,692

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Halton	452	438	445	449	406	358
Macclesfield	1,572	1,526	1,548	1,863	1,758	1,668
Warrington	2,991	2,974	2,917	2,797	2,705	2,620
Liverpool	4,024	4,003	3,805	3,766	3,740	3,561
St. Helens and Knowsley	2,734	2,561	2,606	2,620	2,535	2,462
Southport and Formby	1,324	1,275	1,250	1,299	1,281	1,207
South Sefton	1,755	1,709	1,740	1,750	1,681	1,668
Wirral	2,789	2,703	2,622	2,341	2,149	2,022
North Western Regional Health Authority						
Lancaster	2,645	2,601	2,508	2,512	2,406	2,352
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	1,564	1,576	1,664	1,733	1,732	1,737
Preston	*	*	*	2,318	2,239	2,196
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	2,825	2,781	2,746	2,706	2,665	2,624
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	2,591	2,591	2,522	2,513	2,516	2,438
West Lancashire	886	862	854	851	851	867
Chorley and South Ribble	*	*	*	374	378	357
Bolton	1,361	1,315	1,328	1,303	1,294	1,285
Bury	716	740	786	801	812	822
North Manchester	2,041	2,038	2,026	1,982	1,950	1,831
Central Manchester	1,137	1,201	1,227	1,254	1,250	1,242
South Manchester	2,408	2,423	2,389	2,401	2,417	2,355
Oldham	1,045	1,028	1,004	1,003	1,029	1,019
Rochdale	953	904	875	879	869	827
Salford	3,098	3,089	3,017	3,008	2,972	2,876
Stockport	1,677	1,692	1,759	1,816	1,793	1,749
Tameside and Glossop	869	965	981	941	917	942
Trafford	836	864	869	837	827	814
Wigan	1,479	1,450	1,430	1,446	1,467	1,426
Special Health Authorities						
The Hospital for Sick Children	517	506	544	494	474	418
National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	357	355	345	356	351	341
Moorfields Eye Hospital	208	204	204	208	210	181
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	472	492	497	501	498	506
National Heart and Chest Hospitals	603	570	577	556	552	540
The Royal Marsden Hospital	361	361	350	340	343	333
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's Hospital	*	*	*	891	900	917

* Comparable figures not readily available because of NHS restructuring on 1 April 1982.

Review of Nursing Skill Mix

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* the districts and the units within each district which those engaged in the review of nursing skill mix have already visited, together with a list of those projected for such visits in the future;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the terms of reference of the review of nursing skill mix currently being conducted by his Chief Nursing Officer on behalf of the National Health Service Management Board; what are the reasons for conducting this inquiry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1985, c. *209*]: I regret that my earlier reply contained a typing error. The second sentence of the second paragraph should read:

"In all the above districts, units for the care of the mentally ill, the mentally handicapped, and the elderly, intensive care units and special care baby units were visited".

DEFENCE

HMS Resolution (Crewmen)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Defence what health records his Department has kept of the 300 crewmen of the Polaris submarine HMS Resolution.

Mr. Lee: Comprehensive medical records are maintained for all nuclear submariners throughout their service career. In addition the defence radiological protection service maintains permanent radiation dose records for nuclear submariners whose jobs involves potential exposure to radioactivity, such as those working on the reactors of Polaris submarines. These radiation dose records are forwarded to the national registry for radiation workers run by the national radiological protection board.

Bolton and Bury (Defence Establishments)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish a list of existing and proposed defence establishments in Bolton and Bury.

Mr. Lee: The defence establishments in Bolton and Bury are as follows:

1. Army Careers Information Officer, Bolton
2. TAVRA Centre, Bolton
3. TAVRA Centre, Bury
4. Army Regimental Headquarters, Bury
5. Army Training Camp and Area, Holcombe Moor

We have no plans at present to create a new establishment in the area, but the size and number of establishments throughout the country are of course kept under continuous review.

Pensions

Mr. Forman asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much it would cost to bring the pre-March 1973 rate of forces' family pension up to the current one-half rate.

Mr. Lee: An estimated £27 million per year for pensions currently in issue.

Faslane (Construction Work)

Mrs. McCurley asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the construction work planned at the Clyde submarine base at Faslane.

Mr. Lee: Yes. Now that the construction work for the Trident project at Faslane is more defined it has become clear that the noise levels during some of the construction phase will be greater than those predicted in the EIA prepared for the outline planning notification.

Accordingly, we have decided to introduce a scheme of noise insulation for residential properties where the daytime levels of noise are likely to exceed 75 dB(A) Leq 12 hours and to offer to purchase (or insulate if preferred) those houses where levels are likely to exceed 80 d(A) Leq. About 30 houses in all are affected. The Property Services Agency, acting on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, will be in touch with the householders concerned shortly.

VC10 Tankers

Mr. Eastham asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the time scale for the proposed VC10 tanker conversions; and what is the anticipated commencement date.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The programme for converting the first batch of nine VC10s to tankers is nearing completion. We are considering a number of options for the conversion of further VC10 aircraft to the tanker role. No decision has yet been made and it is too soon to specify the programme time scale.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when the Super VC10s and VC10s were purchased for the Royal Air Force for conversion to tanker aircraft;

(2) what is the total cost of the conversion programme for the Royal Air Force VC10s and Super VC10s;

(3) what is the length of the conversion programme for the Royal Air Force VC10 tankers;

(4) when the programme for conversion of the VC10s and Super VC10s purchased by the Royal Air Force began.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall answer shortly.

Nimrod

Mr. Eastham asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the progress of the major servicing of Nimrods;

(2) what consideration has been given to the offer made by British Aerospace, Woodford, to examine the possibility of some special pricing arrangement if follow-on-aircraft can be provided for continuity of work in 1986; what response has been made; and if he will make a statement;

(3) when he expects to announce whether future work can be allocated to British Aerospace, Woodford; and if he will make a statement;

(4) whether the first major service account in respect of Nimrod aircraft has been completed by British Aerospace, Woodford, on time; and if he will make a statement;

(5) whether the second major service account in respect of Nimrod aircraft placed with British Aerospace, Woodford, is currently proceeding on time; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The first Nimrod MR Mk 2 aircraft has already completed its major servicing at British Aerospace, Woodford, and has been returned to service on schedule. The second is currently undergoing its major servicing which, I understand, is also proceeding to programme. We have no plans at present to allocate any further major servicing work to BAe Woodford beyond that already scheduled. We intend, however, to review the situation again in the middle of next year and will at that time take the BAe offer into account.

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his assessment of the present efficiency of the GEC Avionics radar in the airborne early warning Nimrod.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The radar for the Nimrod AEW Mk3 is still under development. It has not yet reached its full performance potential.

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on GEC's performance on the Nimrod airborne early warning contract.

Mr. Norman Lamont: As I told my hon. Friend on 26 November, at column *736*, the Nimrod AEW programme causes the Government considerable anxiety. It remains a procurement exercise of which neither the Ministry nor industry can be particularly proud.

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many Nimrod airborne early warning aircraft he has ordered; and what is the latest estimated cost of each aircraft when completed.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Eleven aircraft. Final costs will depend on the outcome of our evaluation of GEC Avionics' proposals for the further development of the Nimrod AEW mission system avionics to an acceptable standard of operation.

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he is considering accepting the Nimrod airborne early warning aircraft at a lower level of performance specification than originally required;

(2) what would be the cost to public funds of the cancellation of the Nimrod airborne early warning project.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have nothing to add to the replies I gave to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 29 October, at column *474*, and to my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) on 9 December at column *545*.

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the effect on United Kingdom air defence if the Nimrod airborne early warning system is not in service by 1986.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Nimrod AEW system is planned to provide an important component of the United Kingdom's overall air defence capability and the United Kingdom's contribution to the NATO mixed AEW force. The delay in the introduction of the system is therefore a matter of concern. In the meantime, however, the RAF's Shackletons still provide a useful contribution to AEW capability and the air defence of the United Kingdom.

British Aerospace

Mr. Eastham asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his assessment of the performance of British Aerospace, Woodford, on Ministry of Defence contracts *(a)* as regards work standards and *(b)* as regards performance on completion dates and price, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Ministry of Defence is generally satisfied with the work standards and overall performance of British Aerospace, Woodford.

14 Signals Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many former service men of 14 Signals Regiment, who have been discharged since 3 February 1984, have been discharged under Queen's Regulations 1975, paragraph 9.414, and under which subsection of section 'D'.

Mr. Lee: This information could not be provided except at disproportionate costs.

9 Signals Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many former service men of 9 Signals Regiment who have been discharged since 3 February 1984 have been discharged under Queen's Regulations 1975, paragraph 9.414; and under which subsection of section 'D'.

Mr. Lee: This information could not be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Royal Air Force (Aircrew)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men have entered the Royal Air Force college, Cranwell, to train as pilots since 31 December.

Mr. Lee: Two hundred and eighteen.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force pilots have graduated from Royal Air Force Valley since 31 December.

Mr. Lee: Eighty-four.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force pilots have graduated from Royal Air Force Shawbury since 31 December.

Mr. Lee: Thirty.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many of the 46 navigators and 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement, are currently serving with Royal Air Force Germany;

(2) how many of the 147 pilots and 69 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force this year were serving their last posting with Royal Air Force Germany;

(3) how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served between 12 and 16 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Royal Air Force for non-completion of engagement;

(4) how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served between eight and 12 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Royal Air Force for non-completion of engagement;

(5) how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between eight and 12 years;

(6) how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between four and eight years;

(7) how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served under four years;

(8) how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between 12 and 16 years;

(9) how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served less than four years; and what is the average amount that they have had to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement;

(10) how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served between four and eight years; and what is the average amount that they have had to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement;

(11) how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between 12 and 16 years;

(12) how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement have served between eight and 12 years;

(13) how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement have served between four and eight years;

(14) how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement have served under four years;

(15) how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement in the current year have served between 12 and 16 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement;

(16) how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served under four years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement;

(17) how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served between four and eight years; and what is the average amount they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement;

(18) how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement in the current year have served between eight and 12 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement;

(19) how many of the 74 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement are serving currently with fast jet squadrons in *(a)* Royal Air Force Germany, *(b)* Strike Command or *(c)* fast jet training schools;

(20) how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year were serving with fast jet squadrons in *(a)* Royal Air Force Germany, *(b)* Strike Command or *(c)* fast jet training schools.

Mr. Lee: I shall reply shortly.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force pilots have graduated from Royal Air Force Finningley since 31 December.

Mr. Lee: Fifty-seven.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many navigators have graduated from Royal Air Force Finningley since 31 December.

Mr. Lee: Fifty-three.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many servicemen have entered the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell, since 31 December to train as navigators.

Mr. Lee: Seventy-two.

Signals Regiments

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the current strength of 14 Signals Regiment;

(2) what is the current strength of 9 Signals Regiment;

(3) what was the strength of 9 Signals Regiment on 2 February 1984;

(4) what was the strength of 14 Signals Regiment on 2 February 1984.

Mr. Lee: Details of the strengths of operational units are classified.

Royal Dockyards

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is his Department's total work force in the Plymouth area; in what departments they work; and under whose overall responsibility they come;

(2) what is the total strength of his Department's work force in the Rosyth area; in what departments they work; and under whose immediate responsibility they come.

Mr. Lee: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Ulster Defence Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* the new training procedures for the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Mr. Stanley: Training in all branches of the armed forces is kept under review in an effort to identify possible improvements and a number of such improvements in the training of the UDR have either recently been set in hand or are about to be introduced, as follows:

a. The basic training of part-time members of the regiment is to be increased from nine to 14 days. The extra five days will be completed within the recruits' first three months of service.

b. Until now UDR officers, full or part-time, have attended a two-week course at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, but from next year selected permanent cadre officers will be eligible to attend the six-month standard military course taken by potential officers in the Regular Army.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 17 December 1985

PRIME MINISTER

King's College Hospital

Q50. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Prime Minister if she will make an official visit to King's college hospital.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Double Taxation

Q101. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Prime Minister if the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Canada) Order 1985 has yet come into force.

The Prime Minister: Not yet, but the intention is that it will come into force later this month and take effect for 1986 and subsequent years.

Engagements

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 17 December.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty The Queen.

ENVIRONMENT

Water (Metering)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the progress of his inquiry into domestic water metering.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman) on 11 December at column *668*.

Housing Defects Act

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities which have repurchased homes under section 3(5) of the Housing Defects Act, indicating the number of properties involved in each case.

Mr. John Patten: In my reply of 30 October, at column 533, to the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald), I gave the numbers of dwellings then known to have been repurchased under the Housing Defects Act. Seventythree local authorities in England have now reported that a total of 541 dwellings were purchased during the first half of the current financial year. I regret that information on the number of repurchases specifically under section 3(5) of the Act is not currently available.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent consideration has been given to a home counties weighting being introduced in calculating rate support grant for counties such as Hertfordshire.

Mrs. Rumbold: We have in the past considered representations on this subject from a number of the home counties. My predecessor wrote to my hon. Friend on 31 January. We have received no further representations from Hertfordshire since that date.

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent consideration has been given to rate support grant for counties such as Hertfordshire being no longer based on rateable values as a measure of ability to pay rates.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 requires block grant to be calculated according to the gross rateable value of each authority. However, we have over the past year been conducting wide-ranging studies of the whole local government finance system. We hope to publish our proposals around the turn of the year. There will then be extensive consultations.

Ordnance Survey

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what financial targets he has set the Ordnance Survey for the financial year which ends on 31 March 1986; and when they were set.

Mrs. Rumbold: After several months of discussion, the following targets have been set:

1. to recover 35 per cent. of the total cost of core activities;
2. to maximise revenue on commercial activities and to recover not less than 110 per cent. of total costs of that category;
3. to recover 100 per cent. of the total cost of both public sector repayment and overseas business categories.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has yet set a financial target for the Ordnance Survey for the financial years beginning on 1 April 1986, 1 April 1987 and 1 April 1988.

Mrs. Rumbold: Targets for the three years to March 1989 are currently under discussion and an announcement will be made when they are finalised.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about future arrangements for the management of the Ordnance Survey.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Following discussion with the Ordnance Survey advisory board I have decided to set up a management board for the Ordnance Survey composed of executive and non-executive directors. It will replace the present advisory board. The advisory board agreed that a management board was the most suitable structure for the Ordnance Survey, but recommended that the new

management board should have an independent chairman. After careful consideration, I have concluded that in the case of the Ordnance Survey this would create needless problems of accountability to Ministers and Parliament. I have therefore decided that the Director General, who is the accounting officer, should be chairman of the management board and report directly to Ministers as at present. In this way the chain of command and responsibilities remain clear and unaltered. The executive directors will be five Ordnance Survey senior managers.

I am pleased to announce that Mrs. Jean Denton, Mr. David Feeny and Professor Jean Millar have agreed to serve as independent non-executive directors of Ordnance Survey. They will bring valuable private sector experience into the management of Ordnance Survey. They will also have direct access to departmental Ministers as necessary.

The management board will be primarily responsible for reviewing policy, planning and the monitoring of performance in order to ensure that Ordnance Survey:

1. continues to flourish as an efficient and cost-effective organisation, satisfying current and future user needs;
2. meets the financial objectives set by the Secretary of State;
3. reduces Exchequer support by increased involvement in the commercial market place;
4. remains in the forefront of technological change.

Ministers, however, will continue to have final responsibility for ensuring that Ordnance Survey gives value for money and is set challenging and realistic performance targets.

In particular, one of the early matters which the board will consider will be the creation of a sub-committee, composed of independent and Ordnance Survey members, to advise generally on scientific and technical matters, and with particular reference to the needs of digital mapping. Such a group was recommended by the advisory board and accepted by Ordnance Survey.

I believe the new arrangements will provide Ordnance Survey with better strategic direction and will contribute to the sound development of the organisation. I would like finally to express my gratitude to the members of the advisory board for their good work and advice over the past three years, and to thank them for their services.

GLC (Scientific Services)

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what provision is to be made for the work of the scientific services branch of the Greater London council after the abolition of the Greater London council.

Mr. Tracey: This is a matter for the boroughs and other successor bodies. I understand that it is on the agenda for the London Co-ordinating Committee meeting on 18 December.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) in how many planning appeals decided between July 1983 and September 1985 he did not accept the inspector's report where the number of homes proposed involved *(a)* 200 to 300, *(b)* 300 to 400, *(c)* 400 to 475, and *(d)* 475 or more;

(2) how many planning appeals decided between July 1983 and September 1985 involved the proposed construction of *(a)* 100 homes or more, *(b)* 200 homes or more, *(c)* 300 homes or more, *(d)* 400 homes or more and *(e)* 475 homes or more.

Mr. Tracey: This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning appeals involving residential development were decided between July 1983 and September 1985; how many of these were successful; and in how many cases he did not accept the inspector's report.

Mr. Tracey: The information is only readily available for the calendar year 1984. In that period 5,340 appeals involving residential development were decided; 1,311 of these were successful and seven were decided by my right hon. Friend contrary to inspectors' recommendations. It should be noted, however, that only about 5 per cent. of all appeals are decided by my right hon. Friend following submission of an inspector's report.

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning appeals were decided between July 1983 and September 1985; and in how many of these cases he did not accept the inspector's report.

Mr. Tracey: 28,161 appeals were decided in the period July 1983 to September 1985. Thirty-eight were decided by my right hon. Friend contrary to inspector's recommendations. It should be noted, however, that only about 5 per cent. of all appeals are decided by my right hon. Friend following submission of an inspector's report.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) further to the answer of 10 December, *Official Report*, column *589*, to the hon. Member for Ynys Môn, if he will state why lead is not regarded as the most suitable containment material for nuclear waste; why no studies have been carried out by his Department; and if he will make a cost and efficiency comparison between lead, mild steel and stainless steel, and concrete as containment material for nuclear waste;

(2) further to the answer of 10 December, *Official Report*, column *589*, to the hon. Member for Ynys Môn, if he will give further details of the studies into mild steel and stainless steel containers for nuclear waste.

Mrs. Rumbold: Lead is not regarded as suitable containment material because of its high commodity value, its relatively poor mechanical strength and the pollution hazards that may arise from its use in the long term. In these circumstances we have seen no need to initiate detailed studies on the use of lead containers and the question of making cost and efficiency comparisons between lead and other materials consequently does not arise.

Studies funded by my Department and the European Community on the corrosion of carbon steel external packaging for high-level radioactive waste have been carried out and a report of the first phase, which has been completed, is publicly available from the British Library. Research and development work is continuing with the support of European Community funding. A three-year programme is under way to study the use of steel containers for intermediate-level waste with joint funding from my Department and NIREX.

Wildlife Inspectorate

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement about his Department's Wildlife Inspectorate.

Mr. Waldegrave: I informed the House on 12 December 1984 that there had been serious allegations against members of the Wildlife Inspectorate. With the full co-operation of my Department these allegations were investigated by the police.

The Director of Public Prosecutions concluded on the evidence available that no criminal offence had been committed, and advised that no further action should be taken. As I told the House on 21 May, I called for a thorough review of the management and structure of the inspectorate. Subsequently, when the threat of a private prosecution had been dropped, I also asked the director of establishments to arrange for a full investigation into the specific complaints which had been made.

The investigating officer has now considered all the evidence made available to the Department, including transcripts of various tapes. He is satisfied on the evidence that the inspector concerned did not prompt or encourage others to make a criminal entry into private property, nor did he indicate that he would be prepared to supply unregistered birds to be planted on a private individual in order to obtain a conviction. The investigating officer considers, however, that there is evidence that the inspector was indiscreet and acted improperly in the way he pursued his discussions with other people, and that this exposed the Department to criticism. There were also faults of supervision on the part of his superior officer. The necessary disciplinary procedures have been instituted.

As a result of the management review, steps will be taken to strengthen the management of the inspectorate, to separate enforcement from the duties of normal inspection, and to improve the instructions and guidance which wildlife inspectors must follow.

The inspectorate plays a major and positive role in bird protection. I am satisfied that these further measures will strengthen management control and improve the inspectorate's performance, so that it is better able to deal with the increased volume and greater sensitivity of its work in bird protection, and with the new challenges arising from the implementation of CITES.

GLC Precept

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a Green Paper setting out options for 1986-87 to replicate the equalisation effect of the Greater London council precept, showing the options for calculating contributions from boroughs of different kinds and options for distribution to boroughs.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: No. There has been a two-year period of consultation with local government on this issue. I will announce tomorrow my decisions on the London arrangements within the 1986-87 rate support grant settlement.

WALES

Hospitals (Children)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those hospitals in Wales that have separate outpatient facilities for children.

Mr. Mark Robinson: This information is not held centrally.

Social Workers

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many social workers are employed by each local authority in Wales; and what proportion of these have a certificate of qualification of social work.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The numbers of social workers employed by each local authority in Wales at 30 September 1984, is given in the table. Information about qualifications is available centrally only for whole-time staff.

Local authority	*Number of whole-time social workers**	*Percentage of whole-time social workers* with a certificate of qualification†*	*Number of part-time social workers**
Clwyd	163	81·0	12
Dyfed	123	78·9	—
Gwent	186	76·9	13
Gwynedd	91	64·8	17
Mid Glamorgan	224	75·4	27
Powys	38	55·3	2
South Glamorgan	194	90·2	24
West Glamorgan	149	62·4	18

*The figures include only those staff designated as senior social workers, social workers or community workers.

†This includes the certificate of qualification in social work (CQSW) of the CCETSW and also the following equivalent qualifications: qualifications in medical or psychiatric social work or family case-work obtained by specialist or applied social studies course (including the certificate of the Institute of Medical Social Workers); the certificate or subsequently the letter of recognition issued by the Central Training Council in Child Care; the certificate in social work of the Council for Training in Social Work or qualification as a probation officer.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Latent Damages

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Attorney-General what action has been taken on the proposals of the Law Reform Committee on latent damages.

The Solicitor-General: Following publication, on 29 November 1984, of the Law Reform Committee's 24th report on latent damage (Cmnd. 9390), the Lord Chancellor's Department consulted a broad range of interested groups. On 18 June this year the Lord Chancellor announced that the Government proposed to introduce legislation based on the committee's recommendations. It is hoped to introduce a Bill later in the current Session.

Land Registry

Mr. Rooker asked the Attorney-General if he will arrange for an office of the Land Registry to be opened in Birmingham; and if he will make a statement.

The Solicitor-General: The Land Registry recognises that its future commitments may well be met by acquiring premises in new locations.

Preliminary inquiries are being made, but at this time there are no firm proposals.

SCOTLAND

Reprocessing Plant (Dounreay)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many objections, inclusive of petition signatories, he had received in respect of the proposed European demonstration fast reactor fuel reprocessing plant at Dounreay by 1 December.

Mr. Ancram: Up to 13 December there have been 662 individual objections to the proposal. In addition, there have been approximately 2,750 signatures to various petitions. It is not known how many individuals have signed one or more of the petitions.

There have also been 761 representations in support of the proposed development.

School Meals

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate, for primary and secondary maintained schools in schools in Scotland, the number of pupils receiving free school meals where the entitlement derives from families' *(a)* receipt of supplementary benefit, *(b)* receipt of family income supplement and *(c)* local authority discretionary powers.

Mr. Allan Stewart: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give figures for each year since 1975 for primary and secondary maintained schools in Scotland for the total number of pupils in attendance, the number of pupils taking school meals on payment and free and the number of pupils bringing their own food.

Mr. Allan Stewart: The information taken from the annual school meal census is as follows:

Year	*Number of pupils in attendance on census day*		*Number of pupils taking meals on payment*		*Number of pupils receiving free meals*		*Number of pupils taking own food*	
1975	933,675		343,487		121,974		*	
1976	911,143		345,438		161,801		*	
1977	930,119		335,839		117,785		*	
1978	909,093		269,532		155,711		*	
1979	899,941		286,622		142,986		*	
1980	876,816		258,690		122,618		*	
1981	867,786		214,956		114,711		71,793	
1982	823,646		191,665		124,547		73,551	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
1983	434,043	341,440	108,470	66,423	82,066	43,053	61,314	18,409
1984	402,523	317,879	106,814	72,471	80,846	41,545	60,004	17,104
1985	399,619	311,737	103,298	75,948	86,570	43,072	61,751	14,052

Note: The information on the numbers, separately, of primary and secondary school pupils is not available prior to 1983 and the figures for 1975 to 1982 include nursery and special schools.

* Prior to 1981 statistics of pupils taking their own food were not collected centrally.

CIVIL SERVICE

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Chapman asked the Minister for the Civil Service how many non-departmental public bodies are currently in existence; and when the annual list of such bodies will be published.

Mr. Luce: On 1 April 1985, there were 1,653 non-departmental public bodies. That is 28 fewer than last year and over 500 fewer than in 1979. These bodies are listed in "Public Bodies 1985" published today. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

TRANSPORT

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. Maples asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has given further consideration to the future of the Woolwich ferry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: The Woolwich ferry currently provides a useful link in east London's transport infrastructure.

My initial view had been that responsibility for the ferry should pass to the two boroughs between which it plies. However, I am now persuaded that this arrangement would not be satisfactory as the ferry has an importance

that goes much wider then the two borough areas. I have decided, therefore, that it would be more appropriate for my Department to take responsibility for the ferry. I would propose to invite the London borough of Newham to act as my agent to employ the necessary staff to maintain and operate the ferry service.

I have written to the boroughs of Newham and Greenwich advising them of my decision so that detailed arrangements can be concluded.

GLC (Flyovers and Tunnels)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport what approaches he has received from London borough councils concerning the retention as a single coherent unit of that part of the Greater London council engineering staff and equipment concerned with the maintenance and servicing of flyovers and tunnels for vehicles and pedestrians; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I have written to the hon. Member.

Dartford Tunnel

Mr. Hayes asked the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the reply of 29 November, *Official Report*, column *717*, when he will be announcing the terms and conditions under which proposals will be invited for a third crossing at Dartford.

Mrs. Chalker: I have nothing to add to the reply given by my right hon. Friend on 29 November. However, I have recently appointed Messrs. Mott, Hay and Anderson as consultants to assemble the basic data relevant to the provision of additional capacity at Dartford.

Temporary Spare Wheels

Mr. Ian Mills asked the Secretary of State for Transport what tests have been carried out on temporary spare wheels for passenger cars; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Transport and Road Research Laboratory tests on temporary spare wheels have shown that a car's braking and cornering abilities remain satisfactory under normal conditions but if the car is driven at its limits of braking or cornering it could be more difficult to control than if fitted with a normal wheel. A temporary spare wheel should not be used at a speed exceeding 50 mph and must be replaced by a normal wheel as soon as possible.

Mr. Ian Mills asked the Secretary of State for Transport what response he has made to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe regulations on vehicles fitted with temporary spare tyres and wheels.

Mrs. Chalker: In the near future we shall be consulting on draft regulations to require vehicles supplied with temporary spare tyres to meet the requirements of ECE regulation 64.

Traffic Lights A5120-M1

Mr. John Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the traffic lights on the A5120 junction 12 with the M1 to be operative; what has caused the delay in their operation; and what has been the cost of installation.

Mrs. Chalker: The signals, which cost £42,000 to install, should be in operation by Christmas. There have been problems with the computer control mechanism.

Leighton Linsdale Bypass

Mr. Madel asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether, following the letter from the Minister of State of 5 December, to the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West about the Leighton Linsdale bypass, it remains his policy to give a 100 per cent. grant for this scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The letter sent to Bedfordshire county council on 5 December drew attention to defects in its orders for the bypass and invited it to consider how to remedy them. My right hon. Friend has for the moment deferred a decision on the scheme following the public inquiries held in the summer. The approval in principle of its grant application still stands, but payment of the grant will depend on the satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures for the scheme.

Accident Statistics

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what was the average total cost to public funds of a nighttime fatality on an unlit stretch of motorway in 1984; and what was the average total cost for a lit stretch of motorway;

(2) what was the average total cost to public funds of a daytime fatality on a motorway in 1984.

Mrs. Chalker: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatalities there were in each of the past three years *(a)* on an unlit stretch of a motorway at night, *(b)* on a lit stretch of a motorway at night and *(c)* during daytime on a motorway.

Mrs. Chalker: The information is as follows:

Motorway fatalities by lighting conditions: Great Britain

	1982	*1983*	*1984*
Unlit, at night	62	54	61
Lit, at night	40	24	33
Daytime	104	109	117

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were killed on the United Kingdom's roads through the actions of drunken drivers in each of the past three years and to date in 1985.

Mrs. Chalker: Causes of accidents are not identified in accident reports. The numbers of deaths in road accidents, in which a driver was positively breath-tested or refused or failed to provide a sample of breath, were as follows:

Death in drinking and driving accidents: Great Britain

	Number
1982	451
1983	340
1984	388

Figures for 1985 are not yet available.

Channel Fixed Li[illegible]

Mr. Robert Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the implications of the ban on commercial vehicle movements during Sundays and bank holidays in France for the projected level of use of such a link by heavy goods vehicles, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to the reply*, 9 December 1985, c. *450*]: The Government's assessment of the fixed link of necessity takes account of this ban which presently affects the pattern of utilisation of the ferries. But I view this French restriction with great concern, and will be raising it with them in the context of the Channel fixed link.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

School Meals

16. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to seek to improve the nutritional content of school meals.

Mr. Chris Patten: The nutritional content of the school meals which they are responsible for providing is a matter for the individual local education authorities. An authority's school meals organiser can get advice from a wide range of authoritative sources. I believe they are well aware of the importance of the nutritional factor.

Youth Training Scheme

18. **Mr. Redmond** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will next meet the chairman of the Manpower Services Commission to discuss the youth training scheme.

Mr. Chris Patten: There are regular contacts between the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission at many levels about matters of mutual interest including YTS.

Freedom of Speech

21. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he is having with the authorities at universities and other educational institutions about measures they propose to take to ensure freedom of speech within their premises; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean).

Departmental Publications

22. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on his Department's publication, "Selected National Education Systems: a Description of Six Countries as an Aid to International Comparisons."

Sir Keith Joseph: The Department makes various international statistical comparisons to aid policy evolution and publishes, periodically, statistical bulletins which summarise the work undertaken. Comparisons of this nature are never straightforward and the differences between the educational systems of the countries concerned need to be well understood. This booklet has been produced as an aid to all making such comparisons.

Teachers (Pay and Conditions)

23. **Mr. Madel** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science which trade unions representing teachers have met him to discuss pay and conditions since the beginning of the current pay dispute in the teaching profession; how many meetings between him and these trade unions have taken place; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Keith Joseph: Since February 1985 I have had formal meetings with national representatives of all six school teacher unions, at their request, to discuss—but not negotiate upon—a range of matters touching upon pay and conditions. There have been, with one such union or another, 12 such meetings.

Teachers' Pay Dispute

24. **Mr. Neillst** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the current teachers' pay dispute.

25. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' dispute.

27. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' dispute.

31. **Mr. Powley** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what expectation he has of an early settlement to the teachers' pay dispute.

34. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' dispute.

37. **Mr. Jim Callaghan** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the current situation in the teachers' pay dispute.

38. **Mr. Litherland** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the current situation in the teachers' pay dispute.

52. **Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the teachers' pay dispute.

54. **Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' pay dispute.

56. **Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' dispute.

66. **Mr. Squire** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the teachers' dispute.

67. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the present teachers' pay dispute.

Sir Keith Joseph: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member

for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo), the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), my hon. Friends the Members for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) and for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth), the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) and my hon. Friends the Members for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Merchant), for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) and for Leicester, South (Mr. Spencer).

45. **Dr. Mawhinney** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate how many teacher-days teaching has been lost nationally in the current teachers' dispute.

Sir Keith Joseph: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 22 November to my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller). I regret that the information available centrally does not enable any reliable estimate to be made.

63. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a further statement on the teachers' dispute; and if he has any plans to make more Government money available before Christmas as a contribution towards the resolution of the dispute.

Sir Keith Joseph: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo), the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), my hon. Friends the Members for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) and for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth), the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) and my hon. Friends the Members for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Merchant), for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) and for Leicester, South (Mr. Spencer).

The Government remain ready to see very substantial sums of additional money spent on teachers' pay in return for a bargain which would secure progress towards its objectives for better schools. So far, however, the unions have refused to seize the opportunity presented by the conditional investment of an additional £1,250 million over four years.

Mr. Madel asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether, in the light of the teachers' pay dispute, he will hold discussions with vice chancellors of universities and directors of polytechnics as to what effect this dispute may have on performance at A-levels in 1986 and on the position of potential students in places of higher education; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Keith Joseph: Although the three teacher unions engaged in disruption claim that their action is not directed against pupils sitting public examinations in 1986, there can be no doubt that some pupils' preparation for those examinations has been disrupted. I consider that indefensible. I understand that it is normal practice for universities and polytechnics to take into account in considering admissions, any particular problems reported by head teachers as having affected a pupil's performance in GCE A-level examinations, and that this would apply to reports of industrial action.

Students (University Placings)

26. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to how many applicants, whose principal qualifications were Scottish Examination Board certificates, were refused admission to a first choice university place in England and Wales.

Mr. Walden: The Universities' Central Council on Admissions is not able to provide this information at present but may be able to in the future.

Class Sizes and Pupil-Teacher Ratios

28. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the average class size and pupil-teacher ratio in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The average size of classes taught by one teacher in maintained primary and secondary schools in England improved over the period 1979 to 1985; from 25.9 to 24.9 in primary schools and from 21.0 to 20.4 in secondary schools. Pupil to teacher ratios also improved: within primary schools from 23.1 to 22.2 and within the secondary schools from 16.7 to 16.1. The overall pupil to teacher ratio improved from 18.9 to 17.8. The Government recognise that their policies for better schools imply some further limited improvement in the overall pupil to teacher ratio but the extent and pace of this improvement will depend on future public expenditure plans, changes in the cost of employing staff, and the staffing decisions of individual local authorities.

Concessionary School Transport

29. **Mr. Galley** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he is satisfied with the working of current policies for concessionary school transport.

Mr. Chris Patten: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to amend the provisions on school transport in the Education Act 1944.

Open University

30. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will next meet the vice-chancellor of the Open university to discuss the level of student fees.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend met the vice-chancellor with the chairman of the university's council on 9 December. A range of issues was discussed including the level of student fees.

71. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received regarding the problems of admission of new applicants fo places at the Open university.

Mr. Walden: Four letters on this subject have been received from hon. Members, and the issue has also been raised in recent discussions with the Open university.

University Funding

32. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on current and projected funding for the university sector.

Mr. Walden: I refer the hon. Member to the statement that my right hon. Friend made on 12 November, at

columns 104-108, in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley).

Selective and Non-Selective Systems (Comparisons)

33. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information is available to him to compare the achievements of pupils and the cost of education in selective and non-selective systems.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Department regularly collects data giving information on examination results for individual local authorities but not for individual schools. Reliable comparisons of achievements in selective and non-selective systems require data, which are not available, on the social background factors for pupils and their attainments on entry to individual schools. Data on costs for individual schools or school systems are not collected by the Department.

University Research Staff

35. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of university research staff are on short-term contracts.

Mr. Walden: This information is not collected centrally.

Higher Education

36. **Mr. Conway** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what comparisons are available to him of the proportion of young people entering higher education in the United Kingdom and other European Economic Community countries, respectively.

Mr. Walden: Readily available information is shown in the following table:

All new entrants to higher education as a percentage of the relevant young person's age group

	Year	*Age group**	*New entrants to higher education per relevant population†*
United Kingdom	1983	18-20	‡30·1
Belgium	1981	18-20	‖12·9
Denmark	1982	—	35·3
France	1982	18-20	34·1
Germany, Federal Republic of	1982	19-21	27·8
Ireland	1982	—	24·6
Italy	1983	19-21	27·6
Netherlands	1982	18-20	26·1
Spain	1980	—	28·3

— Not available.
* Age group encompassing at least 80 per cent. of new entrants.
† New entrants (all ages) to full-time and part-time higher education as a percentage of the average population in the most relevant age range
‡ Part-time new entrants included to aid international comparisons. Overseas students are excluded, as are postgraduates and others with higher education qualifications. Excludes students studying for higher education qualifications outside of the public education system other than nursing and other paramedical students at DHSS establishments. If included the United Kingdom figure would be around 40 per cent.
‖ University only.

58. **Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of 18-year-olds took up places in higher education in the last year for which statistics are available.

Mr. Walden: The Department's usual way of monitoring participation in higher education is the age participation index. This is defined as the number of full-time and sandwich home domiciled initial entrants to higher education aged under 21 expressed as a percentage of the average population of 18 and 19-year-olds. Initial entrants are those entering a higher education course for the first time. The age participation index for Great Britain in 1984 was 13·7.

59. **Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to meet the University Grants Committee to discuss the level of financial support for universities in the next five years.

61. **Dr. McDonald** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to meet the University Grants Committee to discuss their responses to the Green Paper, "The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s," on the amount of research being undertaken by universities.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend has no meeting with the University Grants Committee arranged at present.

69. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received on the Green Paper on higher education; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend has no plans to make a statement about responses to the Green Paper on higher education until the Government make the further statement of policy on higher education promised in the Green Paper itself.

City and Guilds Vocational Examination Schemes

39. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has yet met the new director general of City and Guilds to discuss new vocational examination schemes.

Mr. Chris Patten: No. The City and Guilds of London Institute is an independent body established by royal charter and is free to develop new vocational certification schemes to meet the needs which it identifies. Officers of the Department and Her Majesty's inspectors, however, have regular contacts with the institute at all levels; and the director-general is a member of the review group on vocational qualifications. Any request for a meeting from the chairman and director of the institute would, of course, be sympathetically considered.

Nordic Language and Culture

40. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he is satisfied that there will continue to be adequate provision in British higher education for study and teaching of the language and culture of Nordic countries.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend knows of no special grounds for concern about the adequacy of provision in this area. Earlier this year the University Grants Committee invited universities to review the scope

for rationalising small departments in all disciplines and offered guidance on the considerations involved. As a follow-up to that advice, and as part of its current planning exercise, the committee will be giving attention to future provision for Scandinavian and other less widely studied languages and cultures.

Nursery Schools, Liverpool

41. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many nursery school places have been established in Liverpool during 1983-84 and 1984-85, respectively.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Department does not have information in the form requested. In January 1984, there were 5,630 full-time and part-time pupils in nursery schools and classes maintained by Liverpool LEA; and in January 1985, 5,804.

Lunchtime Supervision (Funding)

42. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the capacity of local authorities to put to use the new money being made available for lunchtime supervision of schoolchildren.

Mr. Chris Patten: From discussions which the Department has had with representatives of the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities we expect that local education authorities will be able to take advantage of the additional resources being made available to assist them to introduce reliable and adequate arrangements for midday supervision. It is too early to predict the pace at which local education authorities will be able to introduce new arrangements.

Special Schools (Governing Bodies)

43. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the number of non-maintained special schools that are refusing to comply with the regulations on parental representation on governing bodies; and what action his Department takes when this happens.

Mr. Chris Patten: According to the available information, no non-maintained special school has refused to comply with the requirement that there should be a parent representative on its governing body.

Burnham Committee

44. **Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the implications of the recent reconstitution of the Burnham committee teachers' panel for the prospects for a settlement of the teachers' pay dispute.

Sir Keith Joseph: In effecting this reconstitution my purpose was not to influence the conduct of the current pay negotiations but to ensure that the teachers' panel reflected the significant changes in union membership that had taken place over recent years.

General Certificate of Secondary Education

46. **Mr. Jack Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if the programme for the introduction of the new general certificate of secondary education is on schedule; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Preparations for the introduction of the GCSE are proceeding according to the timetable set by my right hon. Friend in June 1984. The Secondary Examinations Council and the GCSE examining groups are well on course in their plans for the start of the national programme of in-service training in January next year.

Graduates (Projections)

47. **Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to meet the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the impact on industry of the projection of future graduates in the Green Paper; "The Development of Higher Education in the 1990s"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: The higher education Green Paper was discussed at a meeting of the National Economic Development Council on 5 November. My right hon. Friend and representatives of the CBI were present. The CBI is also planning to give my right hon. Friend a formal response to the Green Paper shortly.

Student Maintenance (Deeds of Covenant)

48. **Mr. Nicholls** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he is satisfied with the operation of deeds of covenant in relation to students' maintenance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: The operation of deeds of covenant are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. However, my understanding is that many parents choose to pay their parental contribution to their student child's grant by means of a deed of covenant, rather than direct to the child, because of the tax advantages of this method of payment. It is, of course, for each family to decide on the method of payment which is most beneficial in their particular circumstances.

Nutrition Courses

49. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to increase the number of in-service training courses on nutrition offered by his Department.

Mr. Chris Patten: My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

16 and 17-year-olds (Financial Support)

50. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to extend financial support to 16 and 17-year-olds in full-time education; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Short) on 29 November 1985 at column 689.

Nutrition

51. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will earmark additional finance for local education authorities for publicising nutrition problems and promoting healthy eating in schools.

Mr. Chris Patten: No. The level of resources for the provision of education about nutrition and related matters is for local education authorities to determine within the total resouces available to them.

57. **Mr. Ashton** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he intends to take to seek to ensure that local education authorities act on the findings of the recent reports by the National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education and the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food.

Mr. Chris Patten: Earlier this year a discussion paper by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, "Home Economics from 5 to 16", was given wide circulation. It drew attention to the importance of developing healthy attitudes and behaviour in relation to nutrition and included reference to the dietary advice contained in the report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA). The Department has also drawn the attention of the school examining boards to the COMA report and asked that they take its recommendations into account in their home economics syllabuses. It is for individual local education authorities to determine their response to nationally-available guidance on nutrition.

University Staff-Student Ratio

53. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will indicate what average student academic staff ratio he expects for the university sector for the coming year.

Mr. Walden: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the Minister of State gave him on 12 December 1985.

Women Students

55. **Mr. Kilroy-Silk** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what evidence he has of the trend in applications to universities or polytechnics by women students.

Mr. Walden: Over the last five years the numbers and percentages of women applicants to United Kingdom universities through the Universities' Central Council on Admissions scheme have been as follows:

Year of entry	*Women applicants*	*Percentage women applicants*
1981	66,723	39·9
1982	69,967	40·8
1983	71,072	41·1
1984	72,661	41·8
1985	75,110	42·5

Similar figures for polytechnics will be available in due course for students entering in 1986 and thereafter.

School Leavers (Statistics)

60. **Mr. Caborn** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of school leavers with three A levels continued on to a first degree course at a university or polytechnic in the last year for which statistics are available.

Mr. Walden: It is estimated that 65 per cent. of English school leavers in 1983-84 with three or more A-level passes intended directly to pursue a full-time degree course.

Pupils (Qualifications)

62. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many pupils in maintained schools left school with no qualifications in the most recent year for which statistics are available.

Mr. Chris Patten: It is estimated that 70,300 (9·9 per cent.) of all leavers from English maintained secondary schools in 1983-84 did not hold a graded result on GCE or CSE examinations.

Open University Student Association

64. **Mr. Sheerman** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to meet representatives of the Open university's student association to discuss funding of the university.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

Universities (Funding Support)

65. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to seek to set any limit on the amount of private funds universities are allowed to raise.

Mr. Walden: No.

Parental Choice

68. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he is satisfied with the operation of the Education Act 1980 in affording parents a choice of schools.

Mr. Chris Patten: Yes.

Teachers Appraisal (Inner City Areas)

70. **Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he has taken to investigate problems of teacher assessment in inner city areas.

Mr. Chris Patten: I am very conscious that the appraisal of teachers' performance will have to have careful regard to the circumstances in which teachers work, including the age, ability, aptitude and social background of their pupils. This is one of a range of important questions which I would like to be under investigation now as part of an education support grant project into teacher appraisal. This project would have started in April had it not been blocked by the opposition of the teacher unions.

Business Skills and Taxation

72. **Mr. Cash** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to incorporate into the core curriculum practical knowledge of business skills and taxation.

Mr. Chris Patten: Detailed decisions on the school curriculum are for the schools themselves, but my right hon. Friend has made clear our view that it is desirable that all pupils should be equipped by the age of 16 with some economic awareness and understanding. We are continuing to encourage the development of links between schools and employers, a process which will be reinforced by the activities associated with Industry Year 1986.

Pupils (Special Needs)

Mr. Freud asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will list in the *Official Report* a breakdown of pupils of compulsory school age with special educational needs being educated in mainstream schools under the headings *(a)* curriculum types and *(b)* aspects of disability as these appear on form 7, by listing the number of pupils in each category and the percentage of all children with special educational needs represented in each category (i) for England and (ii) for each local education authority in England at the latest date for which figures are available and for January 1984 if different; and if he will indicate whether the figures refer to pupils with statements under the 1981 Act or to pupils for whom statements are pending or appropriate.

Mr. Chris Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

ENERGY

Fuel Supplies

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Energy* what proportion of Britain's energy needs is met by *(a)* oil, *(b)* gas, *(c)* coal, *(d)* nuclear fuel and *(e)* other sources; and what were the figures in 1979, 1974, 1970, 1964 and 1959.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The following table gives the proportions of primary energy consumption met by each of the fuels, based on the volume of coal or coal equivalent. The use of fuels for non-energy purposes is included.

per cent

	1959	*1964*	*1970*	*1974*	*1979*	*1983*	**1984*
Petroleum†	25·1	35·3	47·2	48·2	41·7	36·7	45·7
Natural gas	—	0·1	5·1	14·8	19·1	22·9	23·5
Coal‡	74·1	62·8	44·4	33·0	34·9	34·2	24·2
Nuclear electricity	0·2	1·1	2·7	3·4	3·7	5·5	6·0
Other	0·6	0·6	0·7	0·6	0·6	0·7	0·6

* The proportions for 1984 were affected by the coal industry dispute.
† Excluding petroleum for marine bunkers.
‡ Including other solid fuels.
Hydro-electricity, excluding pumped storage.

British Gas Corporation

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Energy how much has been paid into or out of the Exchequer in respect of *(a)* the British Gas Corporation and *(b)* the electricity supply industry in each year since 1975.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Payments of corporation tax and gas levy by the British Gas Corporation since 1981-82 are as follows. The electricity supply industry paid no corporation tax over the period from 1975-76 to 1984-85, and the British Gas Corporation paid neither corporation tax nor gas levy from 1975-76 to 1980-81.

British Gas Corporation

Financial Year	*Corporation Tax* £ *million*	*Gas Levy* £ *million*
1981-82	154	383
1982-83	196	471
1983-84	234	522
1984-85	131	500

In addition, the industries pay a range of general taxes levied by the Government on United Kingdom industry generally which are not separately indentifiable.

Net repayments of Government loans, and interest on outstanding loans, are as follows:

£ *million*

Financial year	*Net repayment of Government loans*		*Interest on outstanding loans*	
	BGC	*ESI*	*BGC*	*ESI*
1975-76	77	(95)	136	272
1976-77	136	320	125	301
1977-78	510	110	106	281
1978-79	606	7	59	296
1979-80	109	(837)	7	274
1980-81	—	(296)	—	412
1981-82	—	449	—	464
1982-83	—	(25)	—	387
1983-84	—	857	—	379
1984-85	—	553	—	295

( ) represents additional borrowing.

Since the full repayment of Government loans in 1979-80, the British Gas Corporation has been investing funds surplus to its requirements on interest-earning deposit with the public sector. These remain in the ownership of the corporation.

Gas and Electricity

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the estimated income from standing charges for gas and electricity for each year since 1979.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The estimated incomes from standing charges for the British Gas Corporation and the

electricity supply industry in England and Wales are some £600 million and £550 million, respectively, per year at present. Information in the detail requested is not readily available, and is a matter for the industries. I have therefore asked the chairmen to write to the hon. Member.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Falkland Islands

Mr. Eastham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will estimate the cost of building the new Falklands hospital per head of *(a)* the normal resident population of the Falkland Islands and *(b)* the total number of people who could use its facilities.

Mr. Raison: The cost of the new hospital will be about £4,500 per head of the civilian population. This figure taken in isolation is misleading, however, because the hospital has been designed to cater for the needs of both the civilian and military communities, and includes such facilities as an operating theatre and intensive care unit. The cost per head of the total number of people who could use its facilities cannot be given because it is the policy not to disclose information about force levels.

Mr. Eastham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Falkland Islands Company has been asked to contribute to the cost of the new hospital in Port Stanley.

Mr. Raison: No.

EMPLOYMENT

Temporary Employment and Training Schemes

Mr. Pendry asked the Paymaster General what are the numbers of persons in Tameside on temporary employment or training schemes.

Mr. Alan Clark: None of our employment or training schemes is temporary. Some 6,000 people were taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the measures in Tameside at the end of November.

British Dental Association

Mr. Weetch asked the Paymaster General whether the British Dental Association is registered as a trade union with the certification officer.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. The British Dental Association is a listed trade union and has been issued with a certificate of independence.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Paymaster General if he will list all parliamentary constituencies in which unemployment has been reduced by 5 per cent. or more since September 1984, giving the percentage reduction in each case.

Mr. Alan Clark: I am sending a copy of a computer printout giving the requested information, which is also available from the Library. The printout shows those parliamentary constituencies where unemployment has been reduced by 5 per cent. or more between September 1984 and November 1985. The change will be affected by seasonal factors.

Castleford

Mr. Lofthouse asked the Paymaster General (1) how many persons were employed in the Castleford travel-to-work area in the glass manufacturing industry in each of the last five years;

(2) many persons were employed in the Castleford travel-to-work area in manufacturing industries, excluding glass manufacture, in each of the last five years;

(3) how many persons were employed in the Castleford travel-to-work area in each of the last five years in the coal mining industry.

Mr. Alan Clark: Comprehensive employment statistics for travel-to-work areas are not available except for dates when censuses of employment are taken. In the six years from 1978 to 1984, these censuses have been taken triennially. The available information for the years 1978 and 1981 is given in the following table. More up-to-date employment figures for travel-to-work areas will become available following the publication of the 1984 census of employment in the spring of 1986.

Information for the glass manufacturing industry alone cannot be given without indirectly disclosing confidential information relating to individual undertakings. The table therefore gives figures for a broader group of industries comprising the manufacture of glass, bricks, fireclay and refractory goods, pottery, cement abrasives and other building materials.

Employees in employment in the Castleford travel-to-work area:
(thousands)

Industry and Order or Minimum List Heading (MLH) of the Standard Industrial Classification 1968	*June 1978*	*September 1981*
Coal mining (MLH 101)	12·3	12·4
Bricks, pottery, glass, etc. (Order XVI)	4·0	3·1
Manufacturing industries (Orders III-XIX) excluding Order XVI	14·1	12·7

As results of the 1978 census are not available for the new travel-to-work areas announced last year, figures are given for the travel-to-work areas as defined before last year's review.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Tactical Options Manual

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether any advice was given by legal staff in his Department to the Association of Chief Police Officers before it produced the tactical options manual;

(2) if the tactical options manual prepared by the Association of Chief Police Officers is available to the Metropolitan police; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he has approved the tactical options manual prepared by the Association of Chief Police Officers for use in the Metropolitan police area;

(4) what legal advice and guidance he gives to police forces on possible police tactics *(a)* in the Metropolitan police area and *(b)* generally.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The tactical options manual was issued by ACPO in 1983 with the approval of my noble Friend Lord Whitelaw who was then Home Secretary. No legal advice was given to ACPO by the Home Office. The manual is available to the Metropolitan police as to other

forces. The guidance it contains is subject to the overriding principle, set out in section 3 of the Criminal Law Act 1967, that the police shall use no more force than is reasonable in the circumstances.

Association of Chief Police Officers

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list his responsibilities in relation to the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The purpose of the association is to protect the interests and co-ordinate the views of chief police officers. The costs of its secretariat are met from common police services funds, which are provided jointly by central Government and the police authorities. My right hon. Friend has no other responsibilities in relation to the association.

Advancement of Women

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he will take to implement paragraph 231 of the United Nations Nairobi forward-looking strategies for women;

(2) what steps he is taking following the United Nations Nairobi forward-looking strategies for women to establish national machinery to deal with violence against women, and to provide institutionalised forms of assistance to women victims.

Mr. Waddington: Paragraph 231 of the Nairobi declaration is concerned with violence against women and children. My right hon. Friend's primary responsibility in this connection is for the adequacy of the criminal law. There is a substantial body of law dealing with violent crime and the protection of women and children from unwanted sexual attention. During the past decade, much has been done to improve the law in this area; most recently, the Sexual Offences Act 1985 increased the maximum penalties for attempted rape to life imprisonment and for indecent assault on a female to ten years. We shall continue to keep the adequacy of the law under review.

Compensation is available from public funds to innocent victims of violent crime, who may also obtain advice and guidance from victim support schemes and, in cases of rape, from rape crisis centres. These voluntary schemes receive a measure of financial assistance from central and local government in various forms.

Immigration

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the effect on immigration of the new rules concerning maintenance and accommodation requirements.

Mr. Waddington: The immigration rules which came into force on 26 August strengthened and clarified the maintenance and accommodation requirements. Before a spouse or fiance(e) is admitted to this country, the entry clearance officer must be satisfied that the parties will be able to maintain themselves and their dependants adequately without recourse to public funds and that there will be adequate accommodation for the parties and their dependants without recourse to public funds in accommodation of their own or which they occupy themselves. For the purposes of the immigration rules, public funds means supplementary benefit, housing benefit, family income supplement and housing under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977.

The requirements are designed to prevent the admission of those who have no realistic prospects of supporting themselves without substantial recourse to public funds. At a time of restraint on public expenditure and strain on the country's resources, it is right to prevent the admission of those who would with their families become a serious burden on the state. The object of the tests is not, however, just to add another immigration hurdle for genuine applicants. We cannot yet say what the impact in terms of numbers of these requirements will be.

Data Protection

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of the Metropolitan police towards disclosure to the Data Protection Registrar of the use of electoral registers in machine-readable form.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis informs me that use by the Metropolitan police of electoral registers in machine-readable form would be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984 in the same way as any other machine-readable data held by the Metropolitan police, and would be registered accordingly.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will take steps to include on the form for registration as an elector a statement that the voter's personal data will be disclosed to any organisation which pays the appropriate fee.

Mr. Mellor: No.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he is giving to the police about whether the use of electoral registers in machine readable form should be disclosed to the Data Protection Registrar.

Mr. Giles Shaw: No specific guidance has been given to the police about whether the use of electoral registers in machine-readable form should be disclosed to the Data Protection Registrar. However, as I explained to the hon. Member in an answer to his earlier question on this matter on 28 October, if the police were to obtain copies of the electoral register in machine-readable form, the use of this data would be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984 in the same way as any other data they hold.

Thames Valley Police

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department by how many officers the establishment of Thames Valley police would need to be increased to bring the police to population ratio up to the national average.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The authorised police establishment of the Thames Valley police of 3,317 would need to be increased by 729 to bring the force's ratio of population per police officer up to the average, on 31 December 1984, of 454 to one for police forces outside London in England and Wales. The increase in establishment would need to be 1,148 to bring the forces's ratio up to the average of 411: 1 for all forces in England and Wales.

Police (Expenditure)

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces have a lower net expenditure per thousand population than Thames Valley; and which have a higher net expenditure.

Mr. Giles Shaw: "Police Statistics 1984-85 Actuals", published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, show that the net expenditure of Thames Valley police per thousand of the population was £37,455 in the financial year 1984-85, the second lowest of 41 police forces in England and Wales. The expenditure figure for each of these forces is as follows. No figures were given for the Merseyside police and the West Yorkshire police.

Net expenditure per thousand population in 1984-85

	£
Avon and Somerset	44,967
Bedfordshire	43,025
Cambridgeshire	40,368
Cheshire	39,277
Cleveland	51,559
Cumbria	45,332
Derbyshire	41,298
Devon and Cornwall	43,161
Dorset	43,233
Durham	48,254
Dyfed Powys	40,548
Essex	38,991
Gloucestershire	44,674
Greater Manchester	54,278
Gwent	44,598
Hampshire	39,199
Hertfordshire	39,673
Humberside	49,508
Kent	41,042
Lancashire	46,719
Leicestershire	42,761
Lincolnshire	42,890
Norfolk	37,097
Northamptonshire	41,971
Northumbria	50,786
North Wales	42,339
North Yorkshire	43,367
Nottinghamshire	44,997
South Wales	49,751
South Yorkshire	44,788
Staffordshire	42,204
Suffolk	40,077
Surrey	43,614
Sussex	41,922
Thames Valley	37,455
Warwickshire	40,372
West Mercia	41,098
West Midlands	49,591
Wiltshire	41,147
City of London	57,649
Metropolitan	98,822

Police (Gas Spray Guns)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what stocks are held by *(a)* the Metropolitan police and *(b)* other forces of the L9A1 gas spray gun and associated supplies; when these were first obtained; for what purposes; what tests have been carried out; in what circumstances they are intended to be used and with what safeguards; and who will have authority to authorise their use.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I understand from the Commissioner that the Metropolitan police does not hold any stocks of this equipment, and has not carried out any tests with it. I am not aware that any other force in England and Wales holds the equipment or has tested it.

Mrs. Cherry Groce

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the make and type of bullet used by the police in the shooting incident involving Mrs. Cherry Groce.

Mr. Giles Shaw: It would not be right for me to comment while this case is the subject of an investigation by a senior police officer under the supervision of the independent Police Complaints Authority.

Data Protection Tribunal

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of people who are members of the Data Protection Tribunal; and how many of them are women or belong to an Asian or Afro-Caribbean ethnic group.

Mr. Waddington: The Data Protection Tribunal consists of the chairman, two deputy chairmen and 28 lay members, of whom one is a woman. No information was sought about the ethnic origins of members of the tribunal before their appointment.

Police Computers

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has for each constabulary of the capital cost for the mainframe equipment used by that constabulary and the recurrent costs in maintaining that computer.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The information requested is not available centrally.

Broadcasting

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, following his answer of 9 December, if he will now take steps to keep detailed records of the outcome of contacts between the Broadcasting Department and the British Broadcasting Corporation and Independent Broadcasting Authority on the content and timetabling of programmes.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I see no necessity for such a record to be maintained.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the content or timetabling of any programmes broadcast or projected under the aegis of the British Broadcasting Corporation or Independent Broadcasting Authority have been altered as a result of contacts between those bodies and the Broadcasting Department in the last month.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I am not aware of any alterations.

Probation Service (Clients)

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when information on the ethnic origin of clients of the probation service will be available.

Mr. Mellor: We are carrying out a survey of the extent to which area probation services are collecting information

about ethnic origin. Our next step will be to consult the probation service organisations about the means whereby accurate and useful national data could be collected.

Riot Damages Act 1886

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he plans to seek to make amendments to the Riot Damages Act 1886 to provide protection for private motor vehicles parked in streets and buses belonging to public transport companies.

Mr. Giles Shaw: No.

Sergeant Mark Parsons

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, on why Sergeant Mark Parsons lied to Miss Patricia Jarrett of Tottenham on entering her mother's house; and what disciplinary measures have been or are to be taken.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The circumstances of the search of Miss Jarrett's mother's house are the subject of an investigation into complaints made by the family against officers of the Metropolitan police. The Director of Public Prosecutions is considering the investigation report. Depending upon his conclusion whether criminal charges should be brought against any officer, it will be for the Commissioner to decide on possible disciplinary charges. A decision by a chief officer not to prefer disciplinary charges following a complaint is subject to review by the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr. Floyd Jarrett

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, as to the legal status of Mr. Floyd Jarrett *(a)* at the time that his keys were taken from him and *(b)* at the time that they were used to enter his mother's home.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I understand that Mr. Jarrett was under arrest throughout the period he spent at Tottenham police station.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, in rank order, the general level of payment made by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for major injuries of various kinds.

Mr. Mellor: The compensation payable varies a good deal according to the individual circumstances of each case. Information concerning the amounts paid in respect of different kinds of injury is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The board published in its 20th report (Cmnd. 9399, paragraph 35) the "guideline figures" which it regards as the appropriate starting points for some types of injury, to be supplemented as necessary according to the seriousness of the particular case.

Drink-Driving

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were disqualified from driving following convictions for driving whilst incapable through drink in each of the past three years.

Mr. Mellor: The available information relates to the number of driving licence disqualifications imposed by the courts for offences of driving etc., after consuming alcohol or taking drugs and is published in table 10 of Home Office statistical bulletin 28/85 'Offences Relating to Motor Vehicles, England and Wales, 1984'. In 1982, 1983 and 1984 there were, respectively, about 64,000, 86,000 and 89,000 such disqualifications.

Foreign Visitors (Visas)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if there are any plans to introduce visa requirements for entrance to the United Kingdom by people from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

Mr. Waddington: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) on 5 December, at column 311.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he proposes to end visa requirements for entrance by people from Sri Lanka.

Mr. Waddington: We are keeping the visa requirement under review, but we have no plans to withdraw it at present.

Dr. Sathananthan

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will review the arrangements under which Dr. Sathananthan is enabled to prescribe heroin to registered addicts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 December 1985, c. 464]: The matter involves a number of important issues which we now have under review. I am afraid we can make no further comment at this stage.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Anglo-Irish Agreement

73. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what respects the wording of the Dublin version of the Anglo-Irish agreement differs from the London version, and why; and which text is authoritative.

Mr. Eggar: In accordance with standard international practice, precedence is given to the United Kingdom in the original retained in London and to the Republic of Ireland in the original retained in Dublin. In addition, and in line with long established precedent in bilateral treaties with the Republic, each country's original of the agreement uses its own nomenclature in reference to itself and to the other country. There are no substantive differences between the texts, both originals of which are authoritative.

EC Council of Ministers (Middle East)

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the European Economic Community Council of Ministers will next discuss the problems of the middle east.

Mr. Rifkind: The Council of Ministers has no plans to discuss the problems of the middle east in the near future.

Angola-United States Talks

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on recent talks between the United States Government and the MPLA Government of Angola concerning Cuban troop withdrawal and Namibian independence.

Mr. Rifkind: A meeting between representatives of the Governments of the United States and Angola was held in Lusaka at the end of November. A further meeting is likely to take place shortly. The content of the discussions remains confidential.

Namibia (Political Parties)

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met with leaders of the Democratic Turnhalle party of Namibia, the Kavango Alliance party, Rehoboth Baster Veriging, South West Africa Peoples' Organisation. SWANU, South West Africa Peoples' Organisation-D, The Labour party of Namibia, and the Rehoboth Free Democratic party; and whether he has any plans to meet the leaders of these Namibian political parties in the future.

Mr. Rifkind: My right hon. and learned Friend met the leader of the South West Africa People's Organisation on 26 June. Her Majesty's Government are willing to have contact with all the parties to the United Nations plan for Namibia. Whilst he has not met the leaders of the other named political parties, we do keep in touch informally with all shades of political opinion in Namibia. My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to meet the leaders of any Namibian political parties in the near future.

Hong Kong

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the annual report on Hong Kong will be laid before Parliament.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall be laying the annual report on Hong Kong before Parliament on 18 December. Copies of the Governor of Hong Kong's annual address to the Legislative Council, and the Financial Secretary's budget speech and half yearly economic review will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Western Sahara

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings his Department has had with representatives of the Polisario Front concerning diplomatic recognition of the Democratic Republic of the Western Sahara; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: There has been occasional informal contacts between Polisario representatives and Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials. These do not denote any change in our neutral policy towards the Western Sahara dispute. We do not recognise the Democratic Republic of the Western Sahara.

Morocco

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on arms sales to Morocco from 1979 to the present time.

Mr. Renton: It is not the practice to publish details of defence sales. Most of Morocco's military equipment is of United States and French origin. United Kingdom arms sales in recent years have been modest.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the British embassy in Morocco is giving to United Kingdom companies involved in exploiting phosphate deposits in Morocco.

Mr. Rifkind: Moroccan phosphate deposits are exploited exclusively by the Moroccan Office Cherifien des Phosphates (OCP). Our posts at Rabat and Casablanca offer assistance to British companies wishing to do business with OCP and the full range of British Overseas Trade Board services is available.

Simonstown Naval Base

Miss Maynard asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the agreement with the Republic of South Africa on the Simonstown naval base is currently in operation; and whether the accompanying agreement to supply South Africa with arms has been abrogated in accordance with the decision of the United Nations Organisation to ban arms exports to that country; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: I have been asked to reply.

I assume that the hon. Lady is referring to the provision for South African purchase in the United Kingdom of certain naval vessels in the agreement on defence of the sea routes round southern Africa that was signed at the same time as the agreement relating to the transfer of the Simonstown naval base on 30 June 1955. Both agreements were terminated simultaneously by an exchange of letters which entered into force on 16 June 1975 and which were subsequently presented to Parliament in Cmnd. 6229.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Children's Homes and Hostels (Inquiry)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what preconditions Mr. Colin Wallace sought to impose before being interviewed by the committee of inquiry into children's homes and hostels in Northern Ireland; to what extent these were met; and what reasons Mr. Wallace gave for not taking part in the interview.

Mr. Needham: These are matters principally for the committee of inquiry I understand, however, that among other things Mr. Wallace sought permission to disclose to the committee material, including if necessary classified material, gained in the course of his employment with the Ministry of Defence. Mr. Wallace was given permission to disclose any such information relevant to the inquiry.

I understand that Mr. Wallace has recently indicated that he is prepared to meet the committee.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Hamilton (Grants and Loans)

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will state the total amounts offered to firms in the Hamilton constituency under regional and industrial grants policy for each year of the last 10 years.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I regret the information is not available for all regional and industrial grants because it would be too costly to transfer the historic records to the computer data base. For the same reason a manual search to match addresses is also ruled out. However, the new regional development grants are being recorded and regional selective assistance under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act is available for past years. The details for RSA in the Hamilton constituency are:

	Value of offers £'000
1975-76	86
1976-77	40
1977-78	21
1978-79	122
1979-80	81
1980-81	1,499
1981-82	767
1982-83	1,205
1983-84	1,322
1984-85	225
1985-86*	1,144

* 1 April-30 November 1985.

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of the number of firms to whom offers of grants and loans have been made under the regional industrial policy referred to in his letter of 27 November to the hon. Member for Hamilton.

Mr. Peter Morrison: It is not the practice to disclose details of financial assistance given to individual companies other than in accordance with the arrangements announced by the then Secretary of State for Industry on 31 July 1974. Details are also withheld where it is thought that an individual company could be identified prior to publication in *British Business*. However, the number and value of offers of regional selective assistance and the number of approvals and amount of new regional development grant in the Hamilton constituency were as follows in the period 29 November 1984 to 31 October 1985:

	Number	*Value £'000*
RDG II	40	1,781
RSA	4	644

Financial Services Bill

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the advice of the City fraud squad is being sought in the course of the preparation of the Financial Services Bill.

Mr. Howard: The police have had ample opportunity to comment on the Government's White Paper "Financial Services in the United Kingdom: a New framework for investor protection", on which the forthcoming Financial Services Bill is to be based. The Financial Services Bill will not deal with the powers of the police.

Tied Public Houses

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to refer the licensed tied house system to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Howard: Reference to the Commission of the tied house system under the monopoly provisions of the Fair Trading Act, is a matter for the Director General of Fair Trading.

Industrial Grants (Worsley)

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, of the £9,300 offered to firms in the Worsley constituency under the new industrial grants regime in the last year, how much of that total was actually taken up.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I can now update the figure given in my right hon. and learned Friend, the Secretary of State's letter of 27 November to £32,337 offered under the new regional policy between 29 November 1984 to 12 December 1985. All of this has been accepted by the applicants concerned.

Companies

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans for changing the present rules on the registration of company charges.

Mr. Howard: Yes. There is general agreement that the Companies Act provisions on registration of charges and the wider law of security over movable property are unsatisfactory. I have therefore asked Professor Aubrey Diamond to examine the need for reform and to make recommendation on the nature of any reforms required. In particular, he will consider whether there is still a case for a single system of registration applicable to all such interests on the lines proposed by the Crowther committee in 1971 and whether charges created by companies should be part of such a system or continue to be registered separately at the companies registration offices. I have asked Professor Diamond to report by the end of next year. Subject to his recommendations, the next stage will be to formulate detailed proposals for reform. We shall want to press ahead with this as quickly as possible but at this stage I cannot give any indication as to when legislation might be brought forward.

Company Law

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any specific proposals for the simplification of parts of company law.

Mr. Howard: Yes. My Department has received numerous representations suggesting that the ultra vires rule as applied to companies has outlived its usefulness and is an unnecessary burden on companies and creditors alike. I have therefore asked Dr. Dan Prentice of Oxford university to examine the legal and commercial implications of abolishing the rule as it applies to companies registered under the Companies Act and to

make recommendations on legislative changes which may be necessary consequent on abolition. Dr. Prentice will start work shortly and will report by 31 May 1986. He will consult widely in the course of the study but once his report is available, my Department will, in any case, issue a consultative document inviting comments on any proposed changes. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, any necessary legislation will be brought forward at the first available opportunity. In addition, I am proposing to commission a similar study in relation to registration of company charges. I will make an announcement about this shortly.

Insolvency Act 1985

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make known his intentions for the implementation of the Insolvency Act 1985.

Mr. Howard: In exercise of the powers given to him by section 236 of the Insolvency Act 1985 the Secretary of State intends to make a number of commencement orders during the course of next year to effect the staged introduction of the new legislation.

Of the main provisions in the Act those relating to the disqualification and personal liability of directors will be brought into force in April 1986. We shall then start to set up the machinery for dealing with applications from insolvency practitioners for licences. Such licensing, including the ban on unlicensed practice, will take effect in December 1986 when the administrator procedure and all the other new and revised insolvency procedures relating to receivership, voluntary arrangements, winding-up and bankruptcy will be brought into force. The Department is about to begin consultations with insolvency practitioners and interested bodies on the proposed contents of rules and other secondary legisation without which those procedures cannot work. In addition, in April 1986 the Government intend to introduce a Bill to consolidate with the Insolvency Act 1985 the parts of the Companies Act 1985 that relate to receivership and winding-up. These parts have already been substantially amended by the Insolvency Act 1985 and we consider that their consolidation with the provisions in that Act will greatly aid coherent understanding of the legislation and related rules and will facilitate its better operation.

Westland plc

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress of discussions aimed at securing the future of Westlands as an independent helicopter manufacturer with its own research and development capacity.

Mr. Butcher: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 16 December.

European Regional Development Fund

Sir Peter Blaker asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the proposed European regional development fund non-quota regulations have yet been approved by the Council of Ministers; and if he will make a statement on the implications for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Council of Ministers has today adopted four regulations which complete the second and final set of non-quota measures under the fund.

One of the regulations concerns Ireland and Northern Ireland and the others concern certain areas affected by the decline in the textile, shipbuilding and fishing industries. The United Kingdom already benefits from non-quota aid to textile and shipbuilding areas, and the relevant new regulations extend this aid to certain areas in other member states.

The regulation which concerns Ireland and Northern Ireland extends the geographical scope of EC Regulation 2619/80 so as to include the whole of Northern Ireland except the urban area of Belfast. Activities eligible for aid are also extended so as to include investment aid to small firms, promotion of innovation and the setting up of economic promotion agencies. The new fisheries areas regulation provides in respect of the United Kingdom for aid to the travel-to-work areas of Hull, Grimsby and Blackpool (which includes Fleetwood). Activities in which the fund may participate include redevelopment of fishing ports and industrial and urban sites, investment aids to small firms, promotion of innovation and tourism.

The aid will be available in support of five-year programmes which will have to be prepared and then approved by the EC Commission before the fund contribution can be paid. The detailed arrangements have yet to be worked out.

I welcome this further expected contribution from the fund towards helping regional problems in the United Kingdom.

Morocco (Phosphate)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the amount of imported phosphate from Morocco from the year 1975 until the present time.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Tobacco Sales

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what information he has on the number of cigarettes, cigars and individual packets of other tobacco products which have been sold through retail outlets in Great Britain in each of the last 10 years; and if he will estimate what proportion of those sales may have been made to young people under the age of 16 years.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 December 1985]: I regret that detailed information on the quantity of sales through retail outlets, including estimates of the proportion of sales to young people under the age of 16 years, is not available. However, Customs and Excise statistics of the quantities released for consumption are as follows, and some information on the incidence of smoking by young people is given in the recent survey by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys on "Smoking among secondary school children in 1984", a copy of which is in the Library.

Quantities Released for Consumption‡

	Cigarettes (millions)	*Cigars* (tonnes)*	*Other tobacco† (tonnes)*
1977	124,923	3,410	12,689
1978	125,686	3,410	10,399
1979	124,524	3,264	9,697
1980	121,975	3,181	9,482
1981	109,822	2,874	9,769
1982	102,449	2,695	9,580
1983	102,611	2,654	9,093
1984	99,864	2,540	8,492

Notes

* Information on the number of cigars released is not collected.

† This includes hand-rolling tobacco and other smoking and chewing tobacco.

‡ Covers both home manufactured and imported tobacco products. Data in the above form for 1976 and earlier years are not readily available.

Grant Aid (Worsley)

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total amount of grant aid paid to firms in the Worsley constituency, under the old rules, during the same period of time £9,300 was offered under the rules introduced a year ago.

Mr. Peter Morrison [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *25*]: No grant has been paid to firms in the Worsley constituency under the terms of the old regional policy, since the new schemes were introduced on 29 November 1984.

Regional Policy

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list for each constituency in the north-west region which lie within the assisted areas the total offered under the new regional industrial policy.

Mr. Peter Morrison [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *717*]: The figures quoted in the letter of 27 November of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State have been updated to take into account the last three weeks. There are a number of differences and the particularly large ones are noted at the end of his reply. The information the hon. Gentleman has requested is therefore as follows:

Constituency	*Amount offers (£'000)*
Ashton-under-Lyne	140·0
Birkenhead	449·0
Blackburn	525·0
Bolton, North East	208·0
Bolton, South East	91·5
Bolton, West	175·0
Bootle	722·7
Bury, North	137·0
Bury, South	40·0
Chorley	186·3
City of Chester	849·2
Crosby	143·0
Eddisbury	275·4
Ellesmere Port and Neston	152·9
Halton	1,406·5
Heywood and Middleton	385·0
High Peak	1,620·0
Hyndburn	368·0
Knowsley, North	605·7
Knowsley, South	8,500·0
Leigh	1,228·4
Littleborough and Saddleworth	468·0
Liverpool, Broadgreen	394·8
Liverpool, Garston	1,687·5
Liverpool, Mossley Hill	56·5
Liverpool, Riverside	1,036·0
Liverpool, Walton	583·7
Liverpool, West Derby	33·0
Makerfield	1,108·6
Manchester, Blackley	25·0
Manchester, Central	1,461·0
Manchester, Gorton	135·0
Oldham, Central 7 Royton	35·0
Oldham, West	1,194·2
Penrith and The Border	66·0
Rochdale	356·0
Rossendale and Darwen	357·5
Salford, East	118·0
Southport	362·1
St. Helens, North	912·3
St. Helens, South	1,588·2
Stalybridge and Hyde	71·0
Stretford	55·0
Wallasey	290·2
Warrington, South	30·0
West Lancashire	1,432·9
Wigan	755·8
Wirral, South	547·1
Wirral, West	248·3
Workington	684·9
Worsley	32·3

Some of these differences can be attributed to further RSA/RDG made offers between 28 November and the date of the latest computer printout, 12 December. Also my reply (unlike the Secretary of State's letter) does not include payments made under the transitional arrangements.

Particularly large differences are noted however in the cases of:

	Secretary of State	*Draft PQ*
City of Chester	292,500	849,200
Knowsley, North	447,100	605,700
Liverpool, Broadgreen	207,600	394,800
Liverpool, Riverside	653,800	1,036,000
Makerfield	984,000	1,116,600
Penrith and the Border	141,000	66,000
Southport	269,600	362,100
St. Helens South	1,335,700	1,588,200
Wallasey	162,600	290,200
Wigan	520,700	755,800
Wirral, South	321,000	547,100
Wirral, West	184,500	248,300
Workington	515,000	684,900
Worsley	9,300	32,300

In all cases except Penrith and The Border the figure is higher; in the case of Penrith and The Border the difference has arisen because it does not include an offer made under the transitional arrangements. Exclusion of transitional arrangements (since my answer refers only to payments made under the new regional industrial policy) also removes from the list reference to Copeland, Fylde, Lancaster and Wyre.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Business Expansion Scheme

Mr. Rowe asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is the scale of equity investment under the business expansion scheme, and in small unincorporated businesses in particular; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will give the latest numbers of businesses assisted through investment under the business expansion scheme.

Mr. Moore: In 1983-84 about £105 million was invested in 715 companies. The information for 1984-85 is not yet complete but information currently available shows that over £100 million was invested in more than 500 companies. Of these 500, about 100 also received investments in 1983-84. Relief under the business expansion scheme is available only in respect of purchases of shares in unlisted companies. Unincorporated businesses are therefore excluded.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of extending the 30 per cent. small companies rate of corporation tax to the first £100,000 profits of every company or, as the case may be, group so that on no profits the marginal tax rate exceeds the 35 per cent. standard rate.

Mr. Moore: Of the order of £30 million in a full year at the rates due for the 1986 financial year.

Workplace Nurseries

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will seek to exempt war widows from tax on the benefit from a child in a workplace nursery;

(2) how many individuals have been the subject of tax claims to date arising from a child in a workplace nursery; and how many of these have been *(a)* male and *(b)* female;

(3) how many employers to date have been approached by the Inland Revenue for details of their workplace nurseries, for taxation purposes;

(4) when the Board of Inland Revenue specifically decided to tax the benefit of workplace nurseries; when was the first occasion that a local tax office issued a tax claim on the benefit of a workplace nursery; and why this claim was issued;

(5) what is his estimate of the amount of tax to be collected each year through the taxation of the benefit of children in workplace nurseries.

Mr. Moore: Benefits in kind are a form of remuneration and it would not be appropriate to exempt a specific section of the community from tax on them. The benefit of an employer-subsidised nursery place, in common with other benefits in kind, has been taxable in the hands of directors and certain employees (currently those earning at a rate of £8,500 a year or more) since legislation was first introduced by the Labour Government in 1948. It is the employer's duty to return details of all benefits provided which are subject to tax to the Inland Revenue. The Inland Revenue taxes benefits as they are returned, but details of individual assessments or codings are not kept centrally. Nevertheless, in view of the uncertainty caused in the past by advice given in an Equal Opportunities Commission manual and in some editions of the *Which? Tax Saving Guide*, the Board of Inland Revenue announced on 24 April 1985 that tax would not be sought on this particular benefit for periods before 6 April 1985 and that any tax already collected would be repaid.

I regret that because this benefit is thought to be provided for only a small number of employees the detailed statistical information requested on the number of employers and employees concerned is not held centrally and it is therefore not possible to make a firm estimate of the tax yield.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he intends to seek to create any categories of whole or partial exception from liability to tax on the benefit from a child in a workplace nursery.

Mr. Moore: No. Under existing law, employees earning at a rate of less than £8,500 a year (including the value of the benefit) are not subject to tax on the benefit of an employer-subsidised nursery place unless the employer provides the benefit by way of vouchers or meets costs directly incurred, and due from, the employee.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue in a full year from the imposition of value added tax at the standard rate upon supplies which are presently zero rated.

Mr. Brooke: It is estimated that the net additional full-year revenue, at 1985-86 prices, would be of the order of £6·9 billion.

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue in a full year from the imposition of value added tax at the standard rate on each of *(a)* children's clothing, *(b)* children's shoes, *(c)* fuel, *(d)* all food currently zero-rated, *(e)* books, *(f)* newspapers and periodicals and *(g)* new construction.

Mr. Brooke: It is estimated that the net additional full year revenue, at 1985-86 prices, would be of the following order:

	£ million
(a) Children's clothing	225
(b) Children's shoes	50
(c) Fuel	1,400
(d) All food currently zero-rated	3,500
(e) Books	90
(f) Newspapers and periodicals	300
(g) New construction	875

Income Tax Reliefs

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will estimate the revenue cost of the major income tax reliefs.

Mr. Moore: Estimates of the costs of all the main income tax reliefs are given in table 2.18 of the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1985-86 to 1987-88", Vol. ii (Cmnd. 9428-ii). The costs relate to 1984-85. Estimates for 1985-86 will be published in January.

Building Societies

Mr. Heddle asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer of 6 December, *Official Report*,

column 355, if he will outline if any steps will be taken to protect building societies which opt for company status from being taken over by foreign institutions or companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The consultative paper proposed that all individual or related shareholdings in a building society which converted to a company should, in normal circumstances, be less than 15 per cent. for the first five years of the new company's life. No special proposals are made for restricting the nationality or place of incorporation of shareholders in former building societies. Foreign ownership would not necessarily raise issues of public interest but if an acquisition did appear to give rise to public concern, it could be examined under the normal merger control provisions of the Fair Trading Act.

Mr. Portillo asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how he intends to seek to deter societies from anticipating the wider powers proposed for them in the Building Societies Bill.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It would be irresponsible and ultra vires for a building society to seek to steal a march on its competitors by anticipating Parliament passing the Bill and the latter coming into effect. The Government would take a serious view of jumping the gun in this way and I would hope that all societies would resist the temptation to do so. But in order to reassure societies that they will not be disadvantaged in relation to others by behaving responsibily, the Bill includes provisions which would penalise a society if it were to anticipate the powers being properly available to it.

Before a society can legitimately exercise any of the wider powers, it will have to pass the necessary special resolution in general meeting and register a memorandum adopting those powers. The society will have to support the application for registration of the memorandum with a statement by the chairman and chief executive, on behalf of the society, that in the previous 12 months it had not performed any functions which would be covered by the powers to be conferred by the mormorandum but which were not within the society's existing powers. Thus a society which anticipated one or more of the wider powers to be made available under the new legislation would then find that it could not properly adopt them until it ceased exceeding its powers, and allowed a year to pass in which it did not exceed them.

This provision will be supported by a provision for the Registry of Friendly Societies to challenge a memorandum sumbitted to it for registration, if it considers that there may have been anticipation of any new power, notwithstanding the certificate to the contrary, and by provisions for the Building Societies Commission to require a society to desist from an activity which is outside the powers which it has legally adopted.

Bingo

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many premises, not licensed under the Gaming Act 1968, have registered with Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85, respectively in relation to bingo prize money or card money exceeding £400 in a day or £1,000 collectively in a week; and how much duty from the registration of premises with Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in relation to bingo prize money or card money was received in 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85, respectively.

Mr. Brooke: Separate statistics for licensed and unlicensed bingo clubs are not maintained, so that information in the form requested is not readily available. It is however known that the number of unlicensed clubs registered to pay bingo duty was 204 in September 1982, 288 in May 1983 and 350 in November 1985. The bingo duty currently paid by these clubs is estimated at £2·7 million per annum.

Customs Surveillance

Dr. David Clark asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which customs surveillance was withdrawn from a Pakistani ship anchored in the Tyne in November which had previously been the subject of investigations into drug smuggling.

Mr. Brooke: I presume the vessel to which the hon. Member refers is the MV Tarbella which was berthed on the Tyne throughout the month of November. During the period of its stay the Tarbella was subjected to the degree of customs control consistent with perceived risk factors. In the interests of maintaining effective controls, it is not the policy of customs to disclose specific details of their operations.

Dr. David Clark asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if sufficient resources are available for full customs surveillance of all ships entering ports in the north-east of England.

Mr. Brooke: Customs apply selective controls to all arriving goods, passengers and ships and no attempt is made to maintain full surveillance of all ships entering ports in the United Kingdom. In the north-east of England the number of ships arriving has decreased and the level of surveillance is well above the national average.

Customs Officers

Dr. David Clark asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the numbers of customs officers in the north-east of England ports in each of the last five years.

Mr. Brooke: The numbers of customs officers in the north-east of England in each of the last five years were:

	Number
1981	153
1982	145
1983	145
1984	149
1985	154

Drug Trafficking

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to see that customs officers have adequate capital equipment, such as X-ray machines to assist in the detection of drug imports; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 December 1985, c. 653]: About £10 million will be invested over the next three years in the development and provision of equipment to help in the detection and deterrence of drug imports.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Revenue Allocations

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give, for each area or district health authority wholly or partly in Greater London including the special health authorities, the total revenue allocations they have received in each year since 1978-79 at 1979 prices.

Mr. Hayhoe: The table shows expenditure by area health authorities and boards of governors for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals for the years 1978-79 to 1981-82, and by district health authorities, special health authorities and boards of governors for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals for the years 1982-83 to 1984-85. The figures are expressed at 1978-79 price levels as measured by the gross domestic product deflator.

Revenue expenditure out-turns

Area Health Authorities	*1978-79 £000*	*1979-80 £000*	*1980-81 £000*	*1981-82 £000*	*District Health Authorities*	*1982-83 £000*	*1983-84 £000*	*1984-85 £000*
Barnet	33,681	34,395	37,723	37,716	Barnet	36,542	36,186	35,864
Brent and Harrow	43,366	44,590	48,695	49,922	Harrow	21,213	21,044	20,516
					Brent	27,498	28,084	27,695
Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow	76,165	76,569	82,168	85,711	Hounslow and Spelthorne	27,812	27,844	28,111
					Ealing	21,103	21,205	22,173
					Hammersmith and Fulham	27,185	27,056	27,819
Hillingdon	26,152	26,380	28,868	28,948	Hillingdon	28,348	28,337	29,197
Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster	89,844	90,047	97,011	98,997	Paddington	33,081	33,144	33,141
					Victoria	41,439	41,424	40,723
Barking and Havering	33,411	34,239	38,941	38,058	Barking/Havering/Brentwood	38,034	38,429	38,311
Camden and Islington	82,975	83,189	90,569	91,521	Hampstead	35,776	35,877	36,402
					Bloomsbury	65,828	65,786	65,478
					Islington	25,788	25,121	24,739
City and East London	92,218	91,432	99,042	101,285	City and Hackney	43,275	44,062	44,055
					Newham	18,714	18,891	19,137
					Tower Hamlets	36,961	37,568	36,252
Enfield and Haringey	37,989	38,248	41,949	41,148	Enfield	18,579	18,778	18,742
					Haringey	22,302	21,944	21,347
Redbridge and Waltham Forest	47,376	49,049	54,497	54,557	Redbridge	19,579	19,599	19,791
					Waltham Forest	34,029	33,410	33,074
Greenwich and Bexley	50,204	51,289	53,810	52,375	Bexley	18,667	18,822	19,286
					Greenwich	33,107	32,769	32,377
Bromley	27,090	27,519	29,879	30,064	Bromley	29,311	29,038	28,692
Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham	125,568	126,072	136,292	138,623	West Lambeth	43,109	43,235	42,791
					Camberwell	35,123	35,266	34,400
					Lewisham and North Southwark	58,053	59,256	58,404
Croydon	28,085	28,548	31,577	31,345	Croydon	31,136	31,409	31,673
Kingston and Richmond	24,366	24,838	26,692	26,742	Kingston and Esher	21,954	21,968	21,871
Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth	91,192	93,374	99,715	101,573	Richmond/Twickenham/ Roehampton	18,815	19,342	18,583
					Wandsworth	49,407	49,311	48,916
					Sutton and Merton	35,193	35,776	35,665

Revenue expenditure outturns

Boards of governors for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals	*1978-79 £000's*	*1979-80 £000's*	*1980-81 £000's*	*1981-82 £000's*	*Special health authorities- boards of governors for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals*	*1982-83 £000's*	*1983-84 £000's*	*1984-85 £000's*
Hospital for Sick Children	13,936	13,918	15,680	16,227	Hospital for Sick Children	16,022	16,411	15,626
National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	8,559	8,634	8,987	8,934	National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	8,987	9,179	9,131
Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital	3,880	3,889	4,114	4,192		—	—	—
Moorfields Eye Hospital	6,372	6,372	6,917	7,030	Moorfields Eye Hospital	6,890	6,966	6,911
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	7,456	7,534	8,733	9,150	Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	9,197	9,429	9,432
St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin	1,496	1,399	1,567	1,677		—	—	—
National Heart and Chest Hospitals	12,947	12,841	14,273	14,771	National Heart and Chest Hospitals	14,672	15,374	15,481
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital	5,889	5,850	6,425	6,567		—	—	—

Boards of governors for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals	1978-79 £000's	1979-80 £000's	1980-81 £000's	1981-82 £000's	Special health authorities-boards of governors for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals	1982-83 £000's	1983-84 £000's	1984-85 £000's
St. Peter's Hospitals	3,550	3,479	3,565	3,910		—	—	—
Royal Marsden Hospital	9,676	10,054	10,614	11,202	Royal Marsden Hospital	10,660	11,189	11,138
					Hammersmith	17,758	18,299	
Queen Charlotte's Hospital for for Women	4,921	5,135	5,724	5,624	Queen Charlotte's Hospital for Women	5,573	5,692	22,878
Eastman Dental Hospital	1,937	1,973	2,341	2,427	Eastman Dental Hospital	2,372	2,446	2,521

Notes:

1. The figures are derived from health authorities' summarised accounts. The figures for 1984-85 are provisional.

2. The 1982 reorganisation of the National Health Service resulted in substantial and complex boundary changes and changes in management responsibility, and it is therefore not possible to make direct comparisons between the pre- and post-1982 authorities. In addition to these changes there was a major restructuring of the boards of governors for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals as follows:

(a) Bloomsbury health authority now manages the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear hospitals, the Royal National Orthopaedic hospitals and St. Peter's hospitals.

(b) West Lambeth health authority now manages St. John's hospital for diseases of the skin.

(c) Hammersmith hospital was given special health authority status.

Dental Services

Mr. Weetch asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what allowance is given for laboratory expenses in the following items of the general dental service: fee scale, full upper and lower acrylic dentures, porcelain crown under item 10*(c)*, gold crown under item 10*(a)*(ii)*(a)* and bonded crown under item 10*(d)*(i).

Mr. Hayhoe: The fee scale for items of treatment under the general dental service are determined following the recommendations of the dental rates study group. The detailed calculations underlying its recommendations are not published.

Pensions

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing the amounts of flat rate earnings related pensions payable in April 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008, in the manner of, and using the same assumptions as in the reply of 5 July 1983 to the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden) *Official Report*, column *52*.

Mr. Major: The following table shows the amount of flat rate and earnings-related pension a contracted-in single man or woman retiring in April of each year with a full contribution record might have received under the state scheme under existing legislation. The amount of earnings-related pension is based on actual average earnings for full-time males and females from 1978-79 to 1984-85, derived from the new earnings survey. For those retiring in 1983, 1984 and 1985, allowance has been made for upratings in November of each year. For those retiring in 1986 and later, an estimate for average earnings in 1985-86 and the upper and lower earnings limits for 1985-86 have been used for all years, expressed in constant 1985-86 earnings terms. It is assumed that earnings remain constant throughout a person's working life.

These estimates reflect actual average earnings more closely than those given in the reply of 5 July 1983, at columns *51-53*, to my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden).

£ per week

Earnings	Amounts of retirement pension (including flat-rate pension of £38·30)						
	1983	1984	1985	1986	1988	1993	1998*
Men							
¼ average	39·15	39·25	39·55	39·75	40·10	40·90	41·75
½ average	42·15	43·00	43·95	44·75	46·30	50·20	54·05
¾ average	45·15	46·70	48·40	49·80	52·55	59·45	66·35
Average	48·15	50·40	52·80	54·80	58·75	68·70	78·65
1½ average†	51·95	55·25	58·70	61·55	67·30	81·65	96·00
2 average†							
Women							
¼ average‡	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
½ average	40·00	40·35	40·85	41·25	41·95	43·75	45·55
¾ average	41·95	42·75	43·70	44·50	46·00	49·80	53·60
Average	43·85	45·15	46·55	47·75	50·05	55·85	61·65
1½ average	47·70	49·90	52·25	54·25	58·15	67·95	77·80
2 average	51·50	54·65	57·90	60·65	66·20	80·00	93·85

* The figures for 1998, 2003 and 2008 are identical.

† The figures for men on 1½ and 2×average earnings are identical, because they are above the upper earnings limit.

‡ Below lower earnings limit—no pension entitlement.

Non-psychiatric Services (Merseyside)

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the capital investment in non-psychiatric services *(a)* in the St. Helens and Knowsley area health authority for the period 1975 to 1985 and *(b)* in each of the other Merseyside districts during the same period.

Mr. Whitney: Information is contained in the tables. Figures for 1974-75 to 1981-82 relate to the old area health authorities. The split between expenditure on the psychiatric and non-psychiatric services for this period is not available centrally.

Table I

Mersey Regional Health Authority Capital Expenditure 1974-75—1984-85

	St. Helens Area Health Authority	Sefton Area Health Authority	Liverpool Area Health Authority	Wirral Area Health Authority	Cheshire Area Health Authority	Regional Headquarters	Totals
1974-75	650,824	1,360,392	6,195,770	3,419,798	3,236,316	1,260,241	16,123,341
1975-76	989,985	1,188,378	6,336,586	4,859,288	5,356,560	1,574,062	20,304,859
1976-77	1,316,178	1,203,781	9,068,893	6,338,641	4,631,941	1,287,001	23,846,435
1977-78	826,921	779,409	9,148,890	5,637,805	5,478,950	1,388,824	23,260,799
1978-79	1,067,518	1,512,959	9,332,208	7,234,943	5,608,123	1,550,430	25,946,181
1979-80	940,018	2,061,856	6,271,238	4,674,837	9,723,158	2,839,391	26,510,498
1980-81	1,916,150	3,494,473	5,564,943	4,466,524	14,885,314	2,245,632	32,573,036
1981-82	1,730,781	3,523,589	4,382,775	6,064,255	17,816,694	2,518,681	36,036,775
Totals	9,438,375	14,764,837	56,301,303	42,696,091	66,737,056	14,664,262	204,601,924

	Southport and Formby	South Sefton	St. Helens and Knowsley	Liverpool	Wirral	Chester	Crewe	Halton	Macclesfield	Warrington	Regional Head Quarters	Totals
1982-83	1,891,776	1,833,672	3,829,097	4,570,359	3,045,476	4,533,118	2,435,743	3,527,313	6,070,539	2,200,594	2,673,226	36,610,913
1983-84	1,666,619	2,363,891	3,542,453	5,278,996	2,757,166	2,707,740	2,443,838	4,489,858	3,877,370	2,440,693	4,519,580	40,088,224
1984-85	3,626,031	1,227,612	2,398,495	8,931,466	3,293,953	2,076,999	3,063,006	3,650,610	2,460,601	1,986,544	7,205,726	39,921,043
Totals	7,184,426	5,425,175	9,770,045	18,780,821	9,096,615	9,317,857	7,942,587	11,667,781	12,408,510	6,627,831	14,398,532	112,620,180

1982-83 Transfer of Rainhill Hospital
To reconcile expenditure with the Psychiatric split, compare St. Helens and Liverpool expenditure in total.

Table II

Capital Expenditure

		1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
St. Helens & Knowsley	Psychiatric	669	928	714
	Non-Psychiatric	2,309	2,614	1,684
Southport & Formby	Psychiatric	201	36	53
	Non-Psychiatric	1,691	1,630	3,573
South Sefton	Psychiatric	—	6	61
	Non-Psychiatric	1,834	2,358	1,167
Liverpool	Psychiatric	1,036	149	631
	Non-Psychiatric	4,385	5,130	8,300
Wirral	Psychiatric	25	478	33
	Non-Psychiatric	3,019	2,279	3,261
Chester	Psychiatric	261	713	1,079
	Non-Psychiatric	4,273	1,995	998
Crewe	Psychiatric	8	142	390
	Non-Psychiatric	2,428	2,302	2,673
Halton	Psychiatric	205	202	427
	Non-Psychiatric	3,323	4,288	3,223
Macclesfield	Psychiatric	624	827	1,123
	Non-Psychiatric	5,447	3,050	1,338
Warrington	Psychiatric	1,254	1,474	1,013
	Non-Psychiatric	946	967	974
TOTALS	Psychiatric	4,283	4,955	5,524
	Non-Psychiatric	29,655	26,613	27,191

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the planned capital investment in non-psychiatric services *(a)* in the St. Helens and Knowsley area health authority for the next 10 years and *(b)* for each of the other Merseyside districts during the same period.

Mr. Whitney: Forecast capital expenditure on the psychiatric and non-psychiatric services over the next decade for the St. Helens and Knowsley health authority and the nine other districts within the Mersey regional health authority is set out in the table.

Mersey Regional Health Authority Forecast Capital Expenditure

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	Total
St. Helens and Knowsley											
Psychiatric	620	814	1,202	1,092	2,309	2,257	1,696	416	—	—	10,406
Non-Psychiatric	683	1,372	2,262	946	262	260	520	988	1,040	1,040	9,373
GRAND TOTAL	1,303	2,186	3,464	2,038	2,571	2,216	1,404	1,040	1,040	1,040	19,779
Southport and Formby											
Psychiatric	110	343	792	256	1,240	466	—	—	—	—	3,207

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	Total
Non-Psychiatric	5,116	8,637	6,228	3,505	3,372	2,818	1,508	219	—	250	31,653
GRAND TOTAL	5,226	8,980	7,020	3,761	4,612	3,284	1,508	219	—	250	34,860
South Sefton											
Psychiatric	482	1,195	906	1,241	2,340	2,496	1,664	—	—	—	10,324
Non-Psychiatric	87	421	850	—	156	260	780	1,300	2,960	1,820	8,634
GRAND TOTAL	569	1,616	1,756	1,241	2,496	2,756	2,444	1,300	2,960	1,820	18,958
Liverpool											
Psychiatric	2,062	1,403	1,091	1,546	1,924	2,111	1,956	1,383	624	416	14,525
Non-Psychiatric	4,610	8,622	7,694	3,422	1,664	572	790	936	1,071	1,404	30,785
GRAND TOTAL	6,672	10,025	8,785	4,968	3,588	2,683	2,755	2,319	1,695	1,820	45,310
Wirral											
Psychiatric	51	—	—	—	156	364	988	1,456	1,248	156	4,419
Non-Psychiatric	2,600	4,209	1,890	1,439	1,051	1,352	416	780	520	156	14,413
GRAND TOTAL	2,651	4,209	1,890	1,439	1,207	1,716	1,404	2,236	1,768	312	18,832
Chester											
Psychiatric	354	423	—	—	129	104	260	128	104	260	1,762
Non-Psychiatric	91	—	371	208	1,560	1,768	1,041	—	—	—	5,039
GRAND TOTAL	445	423	371	208	1,689	1,872	1,301	128	104	260	6,801
Crewe											
Psychiatric	113	128	125	125	125	104	780	811	229	125	2,665
Non-Psychiatric	197	259	346	—	208	780	3,141	2,704	1,040	364	9,039
GRAND TOTAL	310	387	471	125	333	884	3,921	3,515	1,269	489	11,704
Halton											
Psychiatric	180	189	230	1,180	1,300	372	404	416	—	—	4,271
Non-Psychiatric	1,015	—	—	—	—	260	780	2,080	1,820	260	6,215
GRAND TOTAL	1,195	189	230	1,180	1,300	632	1,184	2,496	1,820	260	10,486
Macclesfield											
Psychiatric	796	1,794	1,401	731	156	520	676	1,144	1,144	416	8,778
Non-Psychiatric	173	—	—	—	260	1,768	2,912	1,779	4,670	3,922	15,484
GRAND TOTAL	969	1,794	1,401	731	416	2,288	3,588	2,923	5,814	4,338	24,262
Warrington											
Psychiatric	639	143	—	447	—	208	—	1,071	208	—	2,716
Non-Psychiatric	33	1,773	2,334	1,998	85	364	1,976	1,820	1,300	1,040	12,723
GRAND TOTAL	672	1,916	2,334	2,445	85	572	1,976	2,891	1,508	1,040	15,439
TOTAL											
Psychiatric	5,407	6,432	5,747	6,618	9,879	9,002	8,433	6,825	3,557	1,373	63,073
Non-Psychiatric	14,605	25,293	21,975	11,518	8,618	10,202	13,864	12,606	14,421	10,256	143,358
TOTAL District	20,012	31,725	27,722	18,136	18,297	19,204	22,297	19,431	17,978	11,629	206,431
RHA/DMRU											
Regional RES	2,681	4,624	2,451	4,645	6,694	6,570	6,088	5,464	6,984	8,233	54,434
BLOCK	15,247	9,949	8,631	7,419	7,765	8,166	8,361	8,361	8,341	8,341	90,581
TOTAL	37,940	46,298	38,804	30,200	32,756	33,940	36,746	33,256	33,303	28,203	351,446

£3·3 million has been set aside from the Regional Reserve to develop a cook/chill production unit in St. Helens and Knowsley. Of this £2·4 million will be repaid by the District from savings achieved.

Anti-tuberculosis Vaccines

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the number of anti-tuberculosis vaccines necessary for use only by a selected group of patients at risk is sufficient to qualify for discounts from the manufacturers.

Mr. Whitney: The Department receives a discount on the price of the intradermal vaccine it provides centrally to the National Health Service. The supplier decides the terms on which percutaneous and isoniazid resistant vaccines are offered to other customers.

NHS (Pay)

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the minimum and maximum salary paid to audio-visual technicians and to senior audio-visual technicians in the National Health Service; what representations have been made since the re-organisation of the National Health Service in 1974 regarding the improvement of salary scales and career prospects of these staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: The current salary scale for audio-visual technicians ranges from £4,700 to £5,205 and that for the senior grade from £5,655 to £6,516. Pay and conditions of service for audio-visual technicians are matters for negotiations within the professional and technical staffs B Whitney Council. The staff side of that council proposed in 1977 that all medical illustration staff, including audio-visual technicians, should be grouped together in one grading structure. I understand that the management side of that council found no need for such a change.

Benefit Statistics

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the proportion of couples referred to in is reply to the hon. Member for Kensington, 26 November, *Official Report*, columns *542-4*, and in other publications by his Department, as married couples, who are in fact single men and women living in shared accommodation.

Mr. Whitney: The only information available on the proportion of couples who describe themselves as married but are not actually married to each other comes from the general household survey and relates only to couples in which the woman is under 50 years of age. For the years 1981-83 combined the proportions are as follows:

*Couples according to number of dependent children** *(a)*	*Percentage of couples with women under age 50 who are not legally married to each other†* *(b)*
0	4·7
1	3·3
2	1·6
3 or more	2·7

Notes:

* Dependent children are those aged under 16, or 16 to 18 and in full-time education.

† Information about whether a couple are legally married is collected only from women. The figures cover divorced and widowed as well as single women.

Local Offices (Interviewing Boards)

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if any guidelines are issued to interviewing boards for persons applying for posts in local Department of Health and Social Security offices.

Mr. Major: Comprehensive guidelines, issued by the Civil Service Commission, are given to members of local recruitment boards in the Department. Issues covered by the guidelines include personal preparation, the general principles of selection, aspects of interviewing and assessment and the importance of avoiding discrimination of any kind.

Family Practitioner Committees

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will list in the *Official Report* those family practitioner committees which have been criticised by his Department's director of audit or other officials from his Department for having made insufficient provision for internal audit; whether he will estimate the annual expenditure necessary to remedy those identified shortcomings; and whether he will now revise his earlier view that internal audit for family practitioner committees should not attract additional Government funding.

Mr. Hayhoe: In their preliminary review of the accounts of family practitioner committees for the financial year 1985-86 statutory auditors have, to date, issued reports on the inadequate provision for internal audit at the following committees:

Oxfordshire FPC
Suffolk FPC
Cambridgeshire FPC
Norfolk FPC
Buckinghamshire FPC
Coventry FPC
Staffordshire FPC
Birmingham FPC
Walsall FPC
Solihull FPC
Dudley FPC
Warwickshire FPC
Wolverhampton FPC
Sandwell FPC
Shropshire FPC

Form F.ID

Mr. Weetch asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average time taken to process the form F.ID; and what is the average cost of such processing.

Mr. Major: It is estimated that the average staff time taken by local social security offices to process form F.ID is 45 minutes and that the average staff cost of such processing is £6·20.

Leeds General Infirmary

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about the need for and cost of structure repairs at Leeds general infirmary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: I regret that such information on the state of individual hospitals is not held centrally.

Private Contractors

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, by district health authority areas, the number of private contractors, and the work on which they were engaged who have had their contracts terminated due to unsatisfactory standards of work since January 1982.

Mr. Hayhoe: Health authorities engage contractors on a wide variety of work and full details of the termination of these are not collected within the Department.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of people on the waiting list for acute surgery in each London health district from November 1982 until the latest available date.

Mr. Whitney: I shall let the hon. Member have the available information as soon as possible.

Primary Health Care (Expenditure)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the expenditure on primary health care per head of population for each year since 1979 in *(a)* the Islington health authority area, *(b)* Barnet and *(c)* Sutton Coldfield.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Middlesex Hospital

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received regarding the temporary closure of the Middlesex hospital.

Mr. Whitney: By 13 December we had received 20 representations about the Middlesex hospital. The whole hospital has not closed; 260 beds are available for emergency admissions between now and 12 January 1986. Outpatients and other services continue. The accident and emergency department remains open until January, the date of its scheduled amalgamation with the Department at University College hospital.

Drug Misuse

Dr. Michael Clark asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make a statement on the current position of the Government's drug misuse education and information campaign.

Mr. Whitney: The campaign of information and education about the misuse of drugs, and in particular heroin misuse, has been running since February. It features a set of leaflets for parents, two television commercials and a series of poster and press advertisements.

As the next stage, the Government have launched a video training package entitled "Working with Drug Users" for professionals likely to encounter drug misuse in the course of their work. The package consisting of almost three hours of video material with associated notes and handouts is designed for use in training courses. The primary objectives of this material are to demystify drugs and to encourage and assist professional workers such as general practitioners, social workers and probation officers to work with drug users. "Working with Drug Users" is intended to fill a significant gap in existing materials and will be available for loan or purchase anywhere in Great Britain.

An announcement about the next stage in the campaign will be made early in the new year.

Health Authorities

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how he proposes to distribute resources to health authorities in 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: Current spending on the hospital and community health services in England will increase by £650 million to nearly £10·3 billion in 1986-87, an increase of 6·7 per cent., or 2·2 per cent. more than forecast inflation. I am today informing regional health authorities how this extra cash is to be shared out.

I am continuing the policy of redistributing resources between different parts of the country. Those regions which have historically received less than their fair share of resources or which have rapidly growing populations will receive the largest increases, ranging up to 8 per cent.

In addition, all regions will retain the benefits of their growing cost improvement programmes. These are planned to amount to £150 million in the current year, and we expect to see further increases in 1986-87. The Thames regions, with their higher unit costs, have delivered higher levels of cost improvement than elsewhere in the country and I expect them to continue to do so.

The capital allocations to regions will be 4·5 per cent. higher overall than this year, and will be distributed mainly under the RAWP process. Regions will be able to supplement this cash by the proceeds of sales of surplus land and property, which they will be able to retain. Receipts are already running at £50 million a year and we expect them to rise very substantially. Taken together, the cash increase and increased receipts from sales will enable health authorities to carry through major programmes of investment in hospitals and community services.

Regions' revenue increases and capital allocations under RAWP are shown in the table.

The decisions on 1986-87 allocations reaffirm our commitment to distributing resources more fairly across the country. Substantial progress has been made since the arrangements recommended by the resource allocation working party (RAWP) were introduced in 1977, and next year all but the two North Thames regions will be within 4 per cent. of their target share of resources. As regions move closer to their targets it becomes increasingly important that the targets are themselves a reasonably accurate measure of need. I have therefore asked the NHS management board to review the operation of the formula, in particular the way in which relative needs in different parts of the country are measured, taking account of such factors as the patterns of illness across the country, and the special problems of the inner cities.

Health Authority Resource Distribution 1986-87

Regional Health Authority	*Revenue Increase Per cent.*	*Capital RAWP Share £ million*
Northern	6·7	36·8
Yorkshire	6·8	49·5
Trent	7·7	55·1
East Anglian	7·7	22·1
North West Thames	5·7	37·0
North East Thames	5·7	43·0
South East Thames	5·8	43·6
South West Thames	5·8	33·7
Wessex	7·7	46·6
Oxford	7·3	25·1
South Western	7·0	45·5
West Midlands	8·0	76·5
Mersey	6·0	28·5
North Western	6·4	62·3
TOTAL	6·7	605·3

Notes:

1. The total capital allocation to regional health authorities in 1986-87 is £683 million, including dental hospital re-equipment; inner cities bias; strategic shifts; 35 per cent. teaching hospital support; and the health authority central fund.

2. Cash figures are subject to Parliamentary approval of the Department's estimates.

Vaccine Damage Payments

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made any estimate of the cost of providing a scheme comparable to the industrial injuries scheme for all those who have received vaccine damage payments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 December 1985]: To provide a weekly pension for all those who have received a vaccine damage payment at rates equivalent to industrial injuries disablement benefit would cost around £2·5 million a year. It is not possible to estimate the total cost of a scheme comparable with the industrial injuries scheme because of lack of information.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, for the financial years 1983-84 and 1984-85, for England, what were *(a)* the costs of producing and distributing literature about exemption from prescription charges, *(b)* the costs of inspection for fraud in claiming exemption from prescription charges and *(c)* the cost of administering the sale of pre-payment certificates.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *766*]: Separate figures for England concerning the cost of producing literature about exemption from prescription charges are not available. The costs of producing the explanatory leaflet P11 for England, Wales and Scotland and the poster for display in England and Wales in the financial years 1983-84 and 1984-85 were £75,669 and £83,088, respectively.

The costs of distributing leaflets form part of the overall administration cost of the authorities which undertake this and are not separately identified.

The costs of inspection for fraud in claiming exemption from prescription charges and of administering the sale of pre-payment certificates are part of the overall administration costs of family practitioner committees and are not separately identified.

Trauma Research

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Eccles on 3 December, *Official Report*, column *211*, if he will now indicate what research is being funded by his Department into the effects of trauma on patients who have surgery performed upon them in National Health Service hospitals; if he will give his estimate of the number of people who suffer from trauma following industrial injuries, accidents in the home, as well as road accidents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *766*]: The Department looks to the Medical Research Council, which is the main Government-funded agency carrying out biomedical research from its grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science, to support research in this field.

Information available centrally on the number of people who suffer from trauma following industrial injuries, accidents in the home and road accidents relates to inpatients only and is given in the table.

Inpatient discharges (including deaths) of injury cases treated in National Health Service non-psychiatric hospitals in 1983, England

Place of accident	*Estimated number*
Road traffic	59,710
Home	81,140
Work	14,620
Other or unspecified	371,310
TOTAL	526,780

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 18 December 1985

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Spearing asked the Attorney-General how many senior and middle ranking posts are currently filled in the establishment of the Metropolitan police solicitors' department and provincial prosecuting offices; and how many equivalent posts there are in the reorganised Crown Prosecution Service.

The Solicitor-General: Local authorities employ a variety of different arrangements for grading staff in prosecuting solicitors' departments. Staff in the Metropolitan police solicitor's department enjoy the same terms and conditions as civil servants, although they are not in fact civil servants. For the purpose of this answer I have taken senior posts in the Crown Prosecution Service to be those at grade 5 in the Civil Service (the grade which will ordinarily be applicable to chief Crown prosecutors) and above; middle ranking posts are taken to be those at grade 6 (the grade which will ordinarily be applicable to branch Crown prosecutors).

It is anticipated that the Crown Prosecution Service will have 69 posts at grade 5 or above. There are at present 11 such posts in the Metropolitan police solicitor's department involving responsibility for work which will be transferred to the Crown Prosecution Service. In county prosecuting solicitors' departments 10 posts attract a salary on scales which, after abatement to take account of differences between Civil Service and local government pension schemes, have the same or a higher maximum salary than that for grade 5.

Comparable figures for grade 6 posts are not yet available on a national basis. However, in the metropolitan counties outside London there will be 36 posts at grade 6 (maximum salary £22,926). There are at present no posts in prosecuting solicitors' departments which, after abatement to take account of differences between Civil Service and local government, have the same of a higher maximum salary than that for grade 6 (other than those which will become grade 5 or above).

PRIME MINISTER

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Strang asked the Prime Minister when the Government expect to complete their study of the Australian Royal Commission's report on British nuclear tests.

The Prime Minister: The Royal Commission was appointed by and has presented its report to the Australian Government. Her Majesty's Government will be discussing with the Australian Government those recommendations which affect the United Kingdom, and cannot complete their study of the report without taking these discussions into account.

Mr. Strang asked the Prime Minister what arrangements the Government have made with the Australian Government to discuss the Royal Commission report on British nuclear tests and its recommendations which affect the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister: The report has only just been published and we are, of course, studying it in detail. At his request, I have agreed with Senator Gareth Evans, Australian Minister for Resources and Energy, that discussions between officials should be held in Canberra shortly to discuss those recommendations which affect the United Kingdom.

Reprocessing Plant, Dounreay

Mr. Wallace asked the Prime Minister what representations Her Majesty's Government have received from foreign Governments regarding the proposed reprocessing plant at Dounreay.

The Prime Minister: None. The Norwegian and Japanese Governments have however asked for information about the proposed development and this has been supplied.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to transfer civil servants from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Education and Science to augment the divisions in the Ministry of Defence with responsibility for the strategic defence initiative; and if he will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Yes. One civil servant from each of the Departments mentioned by the hon. Gentleman has already been transferred to the SDI participation office which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence recently set up within the MOD.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Cleaning and Maintenance

Mr. Greenway asked the Lord Privy Seal which Department of the House is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the gentlemen's and ladies' lavatories in the Palace; and what steps are being taken to improve the standard of hygiene and ensure that adequate supplies of toilet rolls, towels and soap are available.

Mr. Biffen: The Property Services Agency is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of lavatories in the House of Commons. Routine cleaning is carried out on a regular basis, supplemented by occasional deep hygiene cleaning. The authorities of the House are responsible for supplies of toilet rolls, towels and soap. Certain problems have occurred recently, due to sickness among a high proportion of the directly employed labour staff, but steps are being taken to alleviate these problems. All the arrangements are kept under review.

SCOTLAND

NHS (Privatisation)

113. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what advice he has given to health board members about possible conflicts of interests arising from privatisation proposals.

Mr. John MacKay: The general obligation of chairmen and members to declare any interests related to specific contracts is set out in the National Health Service (Health Boards: Membership, Procedure and Payment of Subscriptions) (Scotland) Regulations 1975. The standing orders of health boards also cover declarations of interest.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether he requires health board chairmen to disclose to him particular financial interests which could lead to a conflict of interest when awarding contracts for hospital catering services;

(2) whether he requires health board members to dislose to him particular financial interests which could lead to a conflict of interest when awarding contracts for hospital cleaning services.

Mr. John MacKay: No, but under the National Health Service (Health Boards: Membership, Procedure and Payment of Subscriptions) (Scotland) Regulations 1975 chairmen and members of boards are required, if they have any interest in a particular contract and if they are present at a relevant meeting of a board or one of its committees, to declare that interest and take no part in the discussions about the award of the contract.

Civil Servants

Mr. Gow asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many civil servants there are in his Department employed *(a)* in Scotland and *(b)* outside Scotland; and how many in each category were born in Scotland.

Mr. Younger: The number of Scottish Office staff in post (full-time equivalents) on 1 December 1985 comprised 9,849 based in Scotland and 31 outside Scotland. Information about place of birth would be disproportionately costly to obtain.

Ambulance Drivers

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the reasons for the lower level of pay received by a Scottish ambulance driver relative to his English and Welsh counterparts in recent years.

Mr. Younger: Ambulancemen and women in Scotland receive the same nationally agreed basic rates of pay as their English and Welsh counterparts. Within the single ambulance service which operates in Scotland a policy of employing reliefs means that the level of overtime working is not as high as it is in many services in England and Wales. Another factor contributing to lower earnings in Scotland is the absence of an up-to-date bonus scheme. Bonus schemes can be implemented by local agreement, and over 50 per cent. of the ambulance work force in England and Wales are covered by bonus schemes which can boost earnings considerably. The introduction of a current bonus scheme in Scotland has been unacceptable to the trade unions concerned because of the loss of jobs which would be required to finance it.

List D Schools

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many children and young people are liable to be displaced as a result of the closure of list D schools;

(2) if he will list the list D schools which will remain open after 1 April 1986;

(3) further to his reply of 20 November, *Official Report*, column *195*, if he will give the number of children placed in list D schools as a condition of a supervision requirement imposed by a children's hearing.

Mr. Younger: Six hundred and sixty seven children are currently placed in list D schools following decisions by children's hearings.

Thirty one children are at present accommodated at two schools which intend to close by 31 March. The cases of those likely to remain at the time of closure will require to be brought before children's hearings for variation to the conditions of residence.

The following schools have indicated that they intend to remain open after 31 March 1986 and a further nine schools are at present discussing terms of agreements with local authorities:

Balnacraig
Balrossie
Kerelaw
Kibble
Oakbank
Rossie
St. Mary's Kenmure

Road Works (A92)

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much is to be spent on the A92 Bridge of Don to the Gordon district/Banff Buchan boundary between 1985 and 1990; and when he expects the major works to be started and completed.

Mr. Ancram: Expenditure on major road improvements for this section of A92-A952 trunk road between 1985 and 1990 is expected to amount to about £10 million. Work on the north Donside road roundabout will commence in the spring of 1986 and will take two to three months to complete. Schemes for Murcar-Balmedie, Tipperty, and Ellon bypass are expected to be ready to start in 1986-87 subject to the satisfactory completion of statutory procedures and the availability of finance. Each of these schemes will require a two-year contract.

Woodlands

Miss Maynard asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he proposes to control the destruction for agricultural purposes of woodlands in areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Mr. John MacKay: Since April 1984 the Forestry Commission, in considering applications for felling licences in areas of outstanding natural beauty and elsewhere, has operated a general presumption against the felling of woodland for the purpose of converting the land to agricultural use. No licence is granted for this purpose without the environmental impact of such felling being considered fully under the commission's consultation procedures.

Health Boards

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what criteria concerning other financial interests he applies when appointing health board chairmen;

(2) what criteria relating to outside financial interests he uses when appointing members to health boards.

Mr. John MacKay: In making appointments to health boards my right hon. Friend assesses the personal contribution and experience which individuals can bring to the work of boards and seeks to provide among the board membership as wide relevant experience, including that of financial matters, as he can.

Tayside Health Board

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will now replace the chairman of Tayside health board.

Mr. John MacKay: No.

Shipping Services (Islands)

Mr. Corrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what financial assistance he proposes for shipping services to the Scottish islands in 1986-87.

Mr. Younger: I propose to give deficit grants of £7.4 million to Caledonian MacBrayne and £1 million to Orkney Islands Shipping Company. I am pleased to note that because of the company's increased efficiency and good trading position, the grant to Caledonian MacBrayne reflects its estimated deficit, which is lower than the funding requirement in the present financial year. I propose to continue the present level of rebates on fares and charges for P and O and the various bulk shippers with whom I have undertakings, and will make provision for grants of £3.8 million to P and O and £1.4 million to bulk shippers.

Total revenue support next year will amount to £13.6 million.

North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board

Mr. Fletcher asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the external financing limit for the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board in the current financial year.

Mr. Younger: I have made the following change to the external financing limit of the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board in 1985-86:

	£ million
Previous limit	−19
Revised limit	−30
Change	−11

The new limit, which is consistent with the board's estimated outturn for the current year reflects a reduced demand for external finance due to the board's successful efforts to increase sales and contain costs.

National Health Service (Revenue and Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each health board the revenue and capital expenditure in each year since 1974, expressing the figures *(a)* in money terms, *(b)* adjusted by the gross domestic product deflator and *(c)* adjusted by the movement of National Health Service pay and prices.

Mr. John MacKay [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. *53-54*]: The tables give separately the current and capital expenditure on hospital and community health services by each health board on a cash basis and at 1985-86 prices as measured by the gross domestic product deflator. No separate record is maintained of pay and price movements within the NHS in Scotland. When measured by a pay and price index appropriate to current expenditure maintained for England by the Department of Health and Social Security, and by a construction price index for capital expenditure, spending on hospital and community health services in Scotland between 1974-75 and 1984-85 has increased by 17·7 per cent. It is not appropriate to revalue expenditure of individual health boards on hospital services by reference to a national index for pay and price movements because the composition of that expenditure may differ substantially from the national average.

Hospital and Community Health Services: Gross Capital Expenditure by Health Boards

Health Board	*1974-75 £'000*		*1975-76 £'000*		*1976-77 £'000*		*1977-78 £'000*		*1978-79 £'000*		*1979-80 £'000*	
	Cash	*Adjusted by GDP Deflator*	*Cash*	*Adjusted by GDP Deflator*	*Cash*	*Adjusted by GDP Deflator*	*Cash*	*Adjusted by GDP Deflator*	*Cash*	*Adjusted by GDP Deflator*	*Cash*	*Adjusted by GDP Deflator*
Argyll and Clyde	4,262	14,326	4,855	12,982	4,419	10,442	4,648	9,645	7,397	13,870	8,775	14,084
Ayrshire and Arran	3,118	10,480	3,406	9,108	3,026	7,150	4,068	8,441	4,643	8,706	4,113	6,601
Borders	391	1,314	719	1,923	950	2,245	1,073	2,226	1,250	2,344	1,085	1,741
Dumfries and Galloway	1,876	6,305	1,113	2,976	620	1,465	529	1,098	676	1,268	748	1,201
Fife	1,480	4,974	1,372	3,669	1,134	2,680	1,204	2,498	2,133	3,999	2,857	4,585
Forth Valley	557	1,872	1,002	2,679	961	2,271	1,069	2,218	1,841	3,452	1,855	2,977
Grampian	2,543	8,547	3,604	9,637	2,572	6,078	2,113	4,384	3,558	6,671	2,588	4,154
Greater Glasgow	5,654	19,003	8,711	23,293	8,969	21,194	8,934	18,538	11,648	21,840	16,263	26,102
Highland	437	1,469	1,423	3,805	1,348	3,185	1,756	3,644	2,336	4,380	3,830	6,147
Lanarkshire	4,122	13,854	5,251	14,041	5,053	11,940	3,060	6,350	2,508	4,703	3,314	5,319
Lothian	2,590	8,705	4,329	11,576	4,525	10,693	7,034	14,596	8,468	15,878	7,763	12,460
Orkney	51	171	88	235	50	118	116	241	278	521	73	117
Shetland	38	128	151	404	158	373	84	174	158	296	328	526
Tayside	3,498	11,757	2,803	7,495	2,763	6,529	2,148	4,457	3,645	6,834	3,730	5,987
Western Isles	102	343	378	1,011	239	565	328	681	645	1,209	309	496
Total	30,719	103,247	39,205	104,834	36,787	86,928	38,164	79,191	51,184	95,971	57,631	92,497

These figures include expenditure on centrally funded schemes and are therefore not readily comparable.

Hospital and Community Health Services: Gross Capital Expenditure by Health Boards

Health Board	1980-81 £'000 Cash	1980-81 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1981-82 £'000 Cash	1981-82 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1982-83 £'000 Cash	1982-83 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1983-84 £'000 Cash	1983-84 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1984-85 £'000 Cash	1984-85 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1985-86 £'000 Estimated Expenditure
Argyll & Clyde	8,138	10,994	12,889	15,815	13,313	15,257	17,814	19,542	14,251	14,964	13,810
Ayrshire & Arran	4,680	6,323	5,896	7,234	4,505	5,163	2,666	2,925	3,511	3,687	4,269
Borders	1,488	2,010	2,703	3,317	2,761	3,164	3,634	3,986	8,210	8,621	8,884
Dumfries & Galloway	807	1,090	1,232	1,512	1,360	1,559	1,288	1,413	2,028	2,129	2,447
Fife	3,012	4,069	5,938	7,286	7,564	8,668	5,968	6,547	6,170	6,479	5,013
Forth Valley	2,153	2,909	3,729	4,575	4,360	4,997	3,804	4,173	8,488	8,912	10,419
Grampian	4,148	5,604	4,474	5,490	4,787	5,486	5,064	5,555	5,370	5,639	7,240
Greater Glasgow	13,690	18,495	18,919	23,214	17,604	20,174	16,703	18,323	19,176	20,135	22,558
Highland	5,758	7,779	6,274	7,698	6,615	7,581	8,786	9,638	7,596	7,976	7,341
Lanarkshire	2,468	3,334	4,072	4,996	4,909	5,626	6,370	6,988	6,680	7,014	7,331
Lothian	6,892	9,311	12,028	14,758	17,441	19,987	17,320	19,000	16,757	17,595	20,390
Orkney	40	54	206	253	94	108	325	357	266	279	301
Shetland	377	509	340	417	1,705	1,954	897	984	535	562	685
Tayside	5,506	7,439	4,980	6,110	4,821	5,525	5,182	5,685	5,079	5,333	6,670
Western Isles	306	413	291	357	521	597	527	578	639	671	877
Total	59,463	80,333	83,971	103,032	92,360	105,846	96,348	105,694	104,756	109,996	*119,911

These figures include expenditure on centrally funded schemes and are therefore not readily comparable.
* Includes £1·676 million not allocated to individual Boards.

Hospital and community health services: gross current expenditure by health boards

Health board	1974-75 £'000 Cash	1974-75 £'000 Adjusted by GDP deflator	1975-76 £'000 Cash	1975-76 £'000 Adjusted by GDP deflator	1976-77 £'000 Cash	1976-77 £'000 Adjusted by GDP deflator	1977-78 £'000 Cash	1977-78 £'000 Adjusted by GDP deflator	1978-79 £'000 Cash	1978-79 £'000 Adjusted by GDP deflator	1979-80 £'000 Cash	1979-80 £'000 Adjusted by GDP deflator
Argyll and Clyde	22,525	75,707	30,756	82,242	34,486	81,490	39,046	81,020	45,201	84,752	55,349	88,835
Ayrshire and Arran	13,639	45,841	17,932	47,950	20,435	48,288	23,294	48,335	26,637	49,944	31,855	51,127
Borders	4,361	14,657	5,803	15,517	6,652	15,719	7,598	15,683	8,577	16,082	10,097	16,200
Dumfries and Galloway	7,482	25,147	10,535	28,171	12,370	29,230	13,444	27,896	15,199	28,498	18,618	29,880
Fife	14,218	47,787	19,212	51,373	21,674	51,216	24,539	50,918	27,862	52,241	33,522	53,803
Forth Valley	14,531	48,839	19,094	51,057	21,662	51,187	24,652	51,153	27,982	52,466	33,222	53,321
Grampian	27,220	91,486	35,805	95,743	40,901	96,649	46,848	97,210	53,239	99,823	64,095	102,872
Greater Glasgow	91,212	306,564	120,053	321,022	135,313	319,745	151,477	314,315	173,541	325,389	205,196	329,340
Highland	12,013	40,376	16,027	42,856	17,966	42,454	20,362	42,251	23,434	43,939	28,059	45,035
Lanarkshire	23,036	77,424	30,890	82,600	36,065	85,222	43,160	89,557	49,536	92,880	59,716	95,844
Lothian	52,812	177,501	70,034	187,271	79,511	187,884	90,733	188,271	102,554	192,289	121,822	195,524
Orkney	720	2,420	1,003	2,682	1,104	2,608	1,217	2,525	1,452	2,722	1,826	2,931
Shetland	840	2,823	1,147	3,067	1,330	3,143	1,519	3,152	1,770	3,319	2,353	3,777
Tayside	32,244	108,372	44,224	118,255	50,281	118,814	56,317	116,858	63,306	118,699	74,896	120,208
Western Isles	1,297	4,359	1,870	5,000	2,016	4,764	2,279	4,729	2,852	5,348	3,443	5,526
Total	318,150	1,069,302	424,385	1,134,808	481,796	1,138,413	546,445	1,133,873	623,142	1,168,391	744,069	1,194,231

Figures included expenditure by boards on associated services which does not form part of their current expenditure allocations.

Hospital and community health services: Gross current expenditure by health boards

Health Board	1980-81 £'000 Cash	1980-81 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1981-82 £'000 Cash	1981-82 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1982-83 £'000 Cash	1982-83 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1983-84 £'000 Cash	1983-84 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1984-85 £'000 Cash	1984-85 £'000 Adjusted by GDP Deflator	1985-86 £'000 Estimated expenditure 1985-86
Argyll & Clyde	68,464	92,495	78,131	95,867	83,257	95,413	86,963	95,398	91,524	96,100	99,428
Ayrshire & Arran	41,470	56,026	48,325	59,295	55,567	63,680	61,243	67,184	65,865	69,158	70,786
Borders	13,412	18,120	14,948	18,341	16,649	19,080	17,754	19,476	18,998	19,948	20,231
Dumfries & Galloway	24,233	32,739	26,702	32,763	29,145	33,400	31,319	34,357	33,743	35,430	35,569
Fife	43,017	58,116	49,036	60,167	53,454	61,258	58,066	63,698	62,960	66,108	66,415
Forth Valley	43,251	58,432	48,123	59,047	52,561	60,235	55,460	60,840	59,101	62,056	64,456
Grampian	84,934	114,746	92,446	113,431	99,472	113,995	107,105	117,494	114,708	120,443	121,540
Greater Glasgow	266,403	359,910	295,094	362,080	311,237	356,678	329,300	361,250	350,107	367,612	364,823
Highland	35,597	48,092	40,243	49,378	42,221	48,385	44,768	49,110	48,073	50,477	51,041
Lanarkshire	77,813	105,125	86,055	105,589	93,738	107,424	97,754	107,236	106,286	111,600	112,538
Lothian	154,960	209,351	179,496	220,242	188,687	216,235	197,748	216,930	209,335	219,802	220,797
Orkney	2,373	3,206	2,715	3,331	2,970	3,404	3,198	3,508	3,468	3,641	3,686
Shetland	3,068	4,145	3,414	4,189	3,703	4,244	4,027	4,418	4,390	4,610	4,619
Tayside	96,509	130,384	105,166	129,039	111,204	127,440	117,509	128,907	123,913	130,109	128,436
Western Isles	4,438	5,996	5,047	6,193	5,559	6,371	6,041	6,627	6,672	7,007	7,048
Total	959,942	1,296,882	1,074,941	1,318,953	1,149,424	1,317,240	1,218,260	1,336,431	1,299,143	1,364,100	*1,378,067

Figures included expenditure by boards on associated services which does not form part of their current expenditure allocations.
*Includes £6·654 million not allocated to individual boards.

WALES

Bone Marrow Transplant Unit

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will now give the date when the building of the bone marrow transplant unit will start; and from what date he estimates that 20 transplants will be carried out each year.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The South Glamorgan health authority, which is responsible for providing the unit, has agreed that work will commence during the current financial year to provide facilities which will enable twenty transplants to be carried out during the financial year 1986-87 and therafter.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been *(a)* the total number of new hospital beds since May 1979 and *(b)* the total number of hospital beds closed, including those in hospitals which have been partially closed since May 1979 by authority.

Mr Mark Robinson: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) on 22 July 1985 at column 321-34, which contains the available information for the period 1979 to 1984.

TRANSPORT

Motorway Safety Barriers

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the safety properties of concrete safety barriers on motorways and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: During 1985 concrete safety barriers have been the subject of two exchanges in the House and a small amount of correspondence. I shall be meeting a number of hon. Members shortly to discuss concrete safety barriers.

Airfields (Public Buildings)

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list, for all airfields in the United Kingdom licensed by his Department, all buildings which are frequently used or occupied by more than 1,000 members of the public for recreational purposes; and which are within two miles of the airfield perimeter.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Neither the Civil Aviation Authority (which is responsible for aerodrome licensing) nor the Department keep records in sufficiently comprehensive form to enable them to compile such a list: to create such records would be inordinately expensive.

Pilot Boat R Regulations

Mr. Bidwell asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to bring into effect the Pilot Boat R Regulations dated October 1983.

Mr. Ridley: I am considering this matter, along with others on which the Transport Select Committee made recommendations in its report on marine pilotage, and will make an announcement in due course.

Public Transport Plan (Manchester)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations his Department has received from the town clerk of Manchester under the heading public transport plan for 1986-87 to 1988-89; what reply he is sending; if he will publish the correspondence in the *Official Report*; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: My officials have received a letter from the town clerk of Manchester city council in support of the application by the Greater Manchester passenger transport authority for a redetermination of the expenditure level and have acknowledged receipt. No doubt the town clerk will be prepared to make a copy of his letter available to the right hon. Gentleman.

I expect to announce very shortly my decision on the application made by Greater Manchester passenger transport authority for the determination of its expenditure level.

Lighthouses

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state projected total staffing levels of lighthouses in *(a)* Northern Lighthouse Board and *(b)* Trinity House Lighthouse Service areas over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I am presently considering the boards' manpower forecasts for the years 1986-87 to 1988-89. I shall make an announcement on these in due course after the House resumes.

Transport Supplementary Grant

Mr. Fallon asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has decided the amount and distribution of the transport supplementary grant for 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I have decided to accept for transport supplementary grant a total of £328 million of capital expenditure which local highway authorities estimate they will spend in 1986-87 on roads of more than local importance. A total of £164 million of grant will be paid at a flat rate of 50 per cent. on all accepted expenditure.

In deciding the distribution of the grant among the 108 authorities which will be eligible next year, I have considered carefully the transport policies and programmes submitted in the summer, particularly as they related to roads which carry heavy through traffic. Many of the more important local authority roads, such as those which form part of the primary route network and major urban roads, carry traffic similar in mix and density to that on national roads. I want to encourage local authorities to improve such roads to the standards which people expect of national roads. Improvements to these through routes are a sound investment with benefits to the economy as well as to local people and industry. TSG represents the Government's share in this investment. I have, therefore, looked for road schemes which benefit longer distance traffic, which take heavy lorries away from places where people live and shop, and which provide good value for money. The amount of grant available to each authority depends upon the stage which their road building plans have reached and what can reasonably be achieved in 1986-87.

This settlement supports 310 major road schemes, of which 151 are bypasses on the primary route network. Sixty-three are bypasses and relief roads on other routes — many of these are in urban areas where authorities still face severe traffic problems, and where the costs and difficulties of road building are daunting, but the benefits considerable. The settlement recognises the value of local road investment in our cities as much as between cities. I welcome the determination of the metropolitan district councils to press on with the programmes they will take over next April and the readiness of London boroughs to bring forward schemes which have not flourished under the GLC.

The amount of accepted expenditure and the amount of grant for each council is shown in annex N to the "Rate Support Grant Report (England) 1986-87" made to the House today. Councils are being informed individually today of their own figures.

The amount of expenditure accepted for TSG is not intended to cover the whole of each council's capital highways programme. Within the resources available to them councils should be able to undertake some £200 million of additional works to improve their roads.

Manchester International Airport Company

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* his Department's letter of 19 November to the town clerk of Manchester concerning the establishment of a Manchester international airport company and the town clerk's reply of 9 December; and what is his reaction to the shadow board's decisions as conveyed by the town clerk's letter.

Mr. Ridley: If the town clerk of Manchester city council is willing to make a copy of his letter of 9 December available to the right hon. Gentleman, I would have no objection to him also making available my Department's letters of 19 November and 16 December, the last of which replies to the town clerk's letter of 9 December.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Manpower

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the effective loss of police manpower at the rank of sergeant as a result of the custody officer requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act *(a)* in England and *(b)* in Thames Valley.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The 1984 Act is intended to be broadly neutral in resource terms, and although extra sergeants may in some instances be required to ensure that the custody officer functions are properly carried out, there will be scope for offsetting savings. For example, some custody officers may be able to combine responsibility for the detention and treatment of arrested persons with other supervisory or administrative duties, and it may be possible to transfer to constables some duties hitherto carried out by sergeants. Police authorities and chief officers are aware that consideration will be given to any applications for adjustments in police establishments to help them meet the custody officer requirements. My right hon. Friend and I are today meeting representatives of the Thames Valley Police Authority and the chief constable to discuss the authority's recent application for an increase in the establishment of the force.

AIDS

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements he is making for medical and counselling care to be provided in the prison acquired immune deficiency syndrome unit.

Mr. Mellor: It is planned to convert part of the hospital complex at Brixton prison to use as an isolation unit for the care of patients suffering from infectious disease, including AIDS. The unit will draw upon the medical nursing and other specialist resources already available to the establishment.

Prison Population

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of the ethnic monitoring of the prison population will be published.

Mr. Mellor: It is expected that information on the ethnic origin of persons received into prison department establishments will be published in the early months of the new year; corresponding information on the prison population will not become available until some time later. Publication has been delayed because priority was given to analytical work associated with the rapid rise in the prison population earlier in 1985.

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were in custody in Her Majesty's prisons at the latest date for which figures are available; and how many of these prisoners were held on remand awaiting trial.

Mr. Mellor: On 31 October 1985 about 46,900 persons were held in prison department establishments in England and Wales, of whom about 8,150 were untried. Information on how many were awaiting commencement of their trial is not available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Prisoner Costs

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average weekly cost of keeping a prisoner in H Wing at Durham prison.

Mr. Mellor: In the financial year 1984-85 the average weekly cost of keeping a person in custody in Durham prison was £226. Cost information for particular locations within a prison is not available.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average cost of keeping *(a)* a male and *(b)* a female in custody in the financial year 1984-85.

Mr. Mellor: The average costs of keeping a male and a female in custody during the financial year 1984-85 were £13,183 and £18,902 respectively.

Life Sentence Prisoners

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to the

average length of time taken to review life sentence prisoners for release on licence in any recent convenient period.

Mr. Mellor: The average time at present taken between consideration of a case by the local review committee at the prison to consideration by the Parole Board is about 10½ months.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to the average length of time between a decision in favour of release on licence and the actual release of a life sentence prisoner in any recent convenient period.

Mr. Mellor: The decision to release a life sentence prisoner is taken by my right hon. Friend on the recommendation of the Parole Board and after consultation with the Lord Chief Justice and, if available, the trial judge. When release is authorised, a provisional release date is fixed some time ahead — usually 12 months, though the period may be longer or shorter in the light of circumstances of the individual case. In all cases, release is dependent upon the prisoner's continued good behaviour, upon suitable arrangements being made for his resettlement and, in most cases, upon the satisfactory completion of periods in open conditions and—or the pre-release employment scheme. Failure to observe these conditions can lead to the deferment or cancellation of the provisional release date.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are currently serving life sentences in England and Wales.

Mr. Mellor: According to the records held centrally, which are approximate, on 31 October 1985 about 2,070 persons in prison department establishments in England and Wales were serving life sentences, including custody for life and detention during Her Majesty's pleasure or for life under section 53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Plastic Bullets

Sir Eldon Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the guns used for discharging baton rounds held by the Metropolitan police have on any occasion operated defectively; if on any occasion the metal casing has remained on the rounds after discharge; and if he is taking steps to replace the converted Very pistols now in use.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This equipment has been used only in training. We understand that there have been occasional minor malfunctions, including one or two where the metal end-cap has not dropped off immediately after discharge. There are no present plans to replace the baton round discharger, but the Commissioner is reviewing the range of public order equipment following the riots at Brixton and Tottenham.

Prison Statistics

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the budget at each penal establishment for medical services for each individual prisoner imprisoned during a year.

Mr. Mellor: Only a small proportion of expenditure on medical services is budgeted at establishment level. Across the prison service as a whole medical services are estimated to have cost £31·8 million in the 1984-85 financial year; as the average inmate population during that period was about 43,400, the average cost of providing medical services per inmate was about £733.

Police, Fire and Civil Defence Authorities

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has redetermined the expenditure levels for the new joint police and fire and civil defence authorities for the financial year 1986-87.

Mr. Hurd: I am today notifying these authorities of my decisions on redetermination of their expenditure levels which are as follows:

	Police *£ million*
Greater Manchester	83·687
Merseyside	59·808
Northumbria	43·431
South Yorkshire	35·412
West Midlands	80·831
West Yorkshire	63·269

	Fire and Civil Defence *£ million*		*Fire* *£ million*	*Civil Defence* *£ million*
Greater Manchester	40·139	These figures comprise	40·056	0·083
Merseyside	26·884		26·804	0·080
South Yorkshire	20·059		19·987	0·072
Tyne and Wear	19·992		19·921	0·071
West Midlands	36·374		36·290	0·084
West Yorkshire	32·388		32·305	0·083
London	147·383		147·067	0·316

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the contract to provide premises for the Metropolitan police at Drummond Gate, Rampayne street, Pimlico.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Metropolitan police occupy two office buildings on the site between Drummond Gate and Rampayne street, Pimlico, on leases from the Crown Estates Commissioners. These buildings have been in use by the force since they were completed in 1983 and 1984. There are no plans for additional police accommodation on this site.

Mr. Norman Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recommendations he has now received from Sir Kenneth Newman in regard to training,

strategy, tactics and equipment as a result of the Metropolitan police review group's fresh examination of the police response to serious spontaneous public disorder in the light of events since the riots in Brixton and Tottenham.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The review is not yet complete.

Police, Fire, and Civil Defence Authorities (Precepts)

Mr. Cash asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what maximum precepts he proposes to prescribe in respect of 1986-87 for the new joint police and fire and civil defence authorities.

Mr. Hurd: My proposals for the maximum precept levels of these authorities for 1986-87 are as follows:

Police

	Pence in the £.
Greater Manchester	16·52
Merseyside	25·62
Northumbria	13·01
South Yorkshire	17·12
West Midlands	12·67
West Yorkshire	20·81

Fire and Civil Defence

	Pence in the £.
Greater Manchester	9·09
Merseyside	6·42
South Yorkshire	10·84
Tyne and Wear	10·98
West Midlands	6·17
West Yorkshire	11·20
London	7·50

Formal notification of the proposed maximum precepts has been served on the authorities today. I have asked the authorities to let me know by 15 January whether they accept the proposed maximum precepts.

Inner City Disturbances

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what study he has made of the effect of public street lighting on the recent inner city disturbances.

Mr. Giles Shaw: We know of no conclusive research evidence to show that improved street and estate lighting can deter crime, but experience from the Department of the Environment's priority estate project suggests improved lighting can deter crime and reduce tenants' fear of crime. The background set out in the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Atkinson) on 14 February, at column 234, is still relevant.

Animal Experimentation

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Government policy on psychological and behavioural experiments on animals in the light of the evidence sent to his Department on 9 May and 14 August by the Mobilisation for Laboratory Animals organisation.

Mr. Mellor: The Advisory Committee on Animal Experiments has been reviewing experimental work in psychology and behavioural science. As my noble Friend said in another place on 12 December 1985, at column 413, we are awaiting with interest the report of the committee's consideration of the subject.

Foreign Visitors

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Stretford on 9 December, *Official Report*, column *462*, if he will give the reasons for not allowing friends, relatives or representatives to remain with travellers during interviews at the port of arrival; if he will indicate the regulation under which this procedure was established; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: A person seeking entry for a purpose for which an entry clearance is not required must himself satisfy the immigration officer that he qualifies for entry under the immigration rules. In practice most passengers are granted leave to enter after a brief initial interview and the presence of friends, relatives or representatives at the intitial stage would be likely to hinder the rapid and efficient clearance of passengers through the control.

The relevant legal provisions include paragraph 2(1) of schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971, which provides that an immigration officer may examine any persons who have arrived in the United Kingdom for the purpose of determining whether leave should be granted or withheld and paragraphs 4(1) and (2) which place an obligation on the person so examined to furnish to the person carrying out the examination all such information as that person may require for the purpose of his functions under paragraph 2. It is an offence under section 26(1) of the Act if the passenger refuses or fails to furnish information without reasonable excuse. Paragraphs 26 and 27 of Schedule 2 give powers to the Secretary of State to specify the conditions and restrictions (if any) to be observed in a control area designated for the embarkation or disembarkation of passengers at any port.

Fire Precautions

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been brought and how many have been successful for non-compliance with the requirements of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and Statutory Instrument 1972 No. 238.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The information available to me which may be incomplete is given in the table. The number of prosecutions may reflect the nature of fire prevention activity rather than the extent of offending.

Defendants proceeded against in magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts of offences under the Fire Precautions Act 1971—England and Wales

	Number of defendants	
Year	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
1975	34	33
1976	53	47
1977	25	25
1978	15	12
1979	22	18
1980	43	38

Year	Number of defendants	
	Proceeded against	Found guilty
1981	44	38
1982	38	35
1983	33	30
1984	89	57

Greater Manchester Police Board

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will be replying to the letter sent to him by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe, on 12 October, concerning the composition of the Greater Manchester police board.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My right hon. Friend will be writing to the right hon. Member shortly.

Premises (Lighting Standards)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he gives to chief fire officers on the standards of external and internal lighting of premises which they inspect for the purpose of licensing.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Chief fire officers are aware of relevant British standards and the regulations for electrical installations issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers with respect to normal and emergency lighting for premises used by the public which are required to have a licence. Specific guidance on lighting in cinemas for licensing authorities and licensees is contained in the Guide to the Cinematograph (Safety) Regulations 1955 currently under review. A guide to fire precautions in other places of entertainment which will include recommendations on the standards of lighting is currently being prepared.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he takes to provide advice on external lighting as a crime prevention measure to those responsible for the design of new housing.

Mr. Giles Shaw: At the request of the Home Office, the British Standards Institution has prepared a guide for architects and planners on the security of new dwellings. This is to be published shortly and which will include advice on lighting as a crime prevention measure. Advice is also available for police force crime prevention officers and architect liaison officers to provide advice on external lighting as a crime prevention measure to architects, tenants' and community associations, and other interested bodies.

Sports Grounds (Safety Certificates)

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he proposes to take to reduce the administrative procedures involved in the granting of safety certificates to sports grounds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The issue of a safety certificate under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 is the responsibility of the appropriate local authority which has a statutory duty to consult the chief officer of police and the building authority about the terms and conditions to be contained within it. The operation of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act has been the subject of a review by the committee of inquiry into crowd safety and control at sports grounds, whose final report is expected to be published soon.

Immigration

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what response has been received from those hon. Members referred to in his statement on Tuesday 29 October about representations made by right hon. and hon. Members in immigration cases; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: My hon. and learned Friend wrote to 23 hon. Members. Only two have replied giving express consent to make the correspondence public. In these circumstances, I do not believe that it would be right to name any of the hon. Members or publish any of the correspondence.

Individual replies have been received from 12 hon. Members out of the 23. Four of these have objected to publication; one has written but has not made his position clear; and one has asked for further information. Four hon. Members have agreed to their names being published—but not the correspondence—in the context of a debate. Three of these hon. Members have drawn attention to a statement issued following a meeting of hon. Members of the Parliamentary Labour party concerned with immigration and entry procedures making the same point. A letter in similar terms has been received from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) in his capacity as chairman of the Parliamentary Labour party's home affairs group.

I think it would now be sensible to proceed to hold discussions referred to in my statement to the House on 29 October. The aim of these discussions should be to agree upon a code of practice which can be applied to the general run of immigration cases and which achieves a sensible balance between the rights and privileges of hon. Members to make representations on behalf of their constituents and the need to maintain an efficient and effective immigration control in accordance with the Immigration Act 1971 and the immigration rules, which have been endorsed by Parliament.

Local Voluntary Sector (Paper)

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what was the response to the paper entitled "Strengthening the Local Voluntary Sector" on which his Department invited comments in June 1985.

Mr. Hurd: I am glad to say that the proposals in this consultation paper were generally welcomed.

In the light of this response, it has been decided to establish a development fund with the objective of strengthening the voluntary sector at a local level. The fund will enable grants to be made to help start or strengthen local "generalist" voluntary organisations whose function is to provide support and services to other voluntary bodies in their areas, to stimulate volunteering, help develop new voluntary projects and promote collaboration with statutory agencies. Typical recipients might be local councils for voluntary service or volunteer bureaux. The fund will have available the sum £1 million for three years from April 1986 which will be provided

jointly by my Department, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of Transport. It will be administered by a committee composed of representatives of national voluntary organisations, with an independent chairman. The committee will also have both central or local government participation. It will be serviced by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Prison Design

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the study of United States prison designs announced by his predecessor has yet been completed.

Mr. Hurd: The study of recent developments in the design of prisons in the United States has been conducted by a working group of officials from the Home Office an Property Services Agency under the chairmanship of the director of regimes and services in the prison department. The group's report is published today by Her Majesty's Stationery Office under the title "New Directions in Prison Design". A copy has been placed in the Library.

The study was commissioned following a review of control problems in the long-term prison system. The report describes and analyses the design features of a number of the "new generation" prisons visited by members of the group. It emphasises that prison designs need to be related to a clear management philosophy, and that therefore designs developed in the context of one penal system cannot simply be transposed to another system in the expectation that they will be equally appropriate. Nevertheless, the study concludes that "new generation" concepts appear to offer significant benefits in the context of our own prison system. The group considers that, given the right management practices and staffing levels, new generation prisons need not be more costly than conventional prisons of equivalent size. The group also considers that "new generation" concepts may be of particular value in application to local prisons, and that while high-rise development does not form part of the Home Office's immediate plans, such development should not be ruled out for local prisons as it may permit the use of smaller urban sites with consequent advantages in terms of staffing and access to courts. The present building programme gives us the opportunity to consider the applicability of new generation concepts to specific projects and the opportunity is being taken to study the feasibility of new generation designs at two of the local prisons in the programme, at Milton Keynes and Doncaster. The final decision on the design of these prisons will, of course be subject to full consideration of the financial and planning implications.

I welcome this report and hope that it will serve to stimulate a wide-ranging and informed discussion on the future design of prisons in England and Wales.

Civil Defence Adviser

Mr. Neil Thorne asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the responsibilities of his civil defence adviser, Mr. Eric Alley.

Mr. Hurd: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 4 December, at columns 246-47. Mr. Alley discharges his main responsibility relating to the civil defence functions of local authorities by advising my right hon. Friend on the implementation of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 as a result of visiting local authorities to monitor their progress, and discuss and offer guidance to them on their difficulties; preparing assessments of the level of local authority preparedness; and identifying measures on how best to help local authorities with, and ensure their implementation of, the regulations.

Police Manpower

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces have a lower ratio of police to population than Thames Valley; and which have a higher ratio.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The police/population ratios which are calculated centrally for police forces in England and Wales show the population per police officer and are published for 31 December each year in the annual reports of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary. On 31 December 1984 the Thames Valley police had a ratio of 562 population per police officer, which was the highest of any police force in England and Wales on that date. The ratio for each police force in England and Wales was as follows:

*Population per police officer on 31 December 1984**

Area	*Number*
Avon and Somerset	454
Bedfordshire	513
Cambridgeshire	527
Cheshire	506
Cleveland	383
Cumbria	428
Derbyshire	516
Devon and Cornwall	514
Dorset	515
Durham	447
Dyfed Powys	478
Essex	534
Gloucestershire	435
Greater Manchester	374
Gwent	450
Hampshire	525
Hertfordshire	527
Humberside	433
Kent	517
Lancashire	436
Leicestershire	499
Lincolnshire	468
Merseyside	326
Norfolk	559
Northamptonshire	526
Northumbria	431
North Wales	476
North Yorkshire	501
Nottinghamshire	439
South Wales	417
South Yorkshire	456
Staffordshire	484
Suffolk	540
Surrey	484
Sussex	478
Thames Valley	562
Warwickshire	517
West Mercia	532
West Midlands	398
West Yorkshire	399

Area	Number
Wiltshire	511
City of London	8
Metropolitan	266

Note
* Based on the authorised police establishment of each force.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

UNESCO

107. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has yet reached a final decision on continued United Kingdom membership of UNESCO.

111. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has yet reached a final decision on whether Britain should leave the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Mr. Raison: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to my statement of 5 December at columns 448-49.

108. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received on British membership of UNESCO.

109. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received on Government policy towards the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Raison: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy) on 12 December at column *707*.

110. **Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with Commonwealth Governments over the future of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Mr. Raison: I discussed UNESCO's problems with Commonwealth high commissioners in London on 26 November.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Plessey-GEC (Merger)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the proposed merger of Plessey and General Electric Company.

Mr. Howard: I understand that no formal offer has yet been made. My right hon. and learned Friend will make a decision on reference at the appropriate time, in the light of advice from the Director General of Fair Trading.

Job Creation

Mr. Williams asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the answer of 9 December, *Official Report*, column *439-42* to the hon. Member for Swansea, West giving the number of grant-related jobs in each constituency, if he will break that table down into jobs created and jobs preserved.

Mr. Brittan: The information requested is as follows:

	Estimated new	Employment safeguarded
Aberavon	881	1,768
Aldridge-Brownhills*	32	70
Alyn & Deeside*	724	0
Angus East	362	80
Ashton under Lyne	33	0
Ayr	839	565
Barnsley East	11	8
Barnsley West & Penistone	20	0
Batley & Spen	95	0
Berwick-upon-Tweed	54	124
Beverley	26	0
Birkenhead	148	45
Birmingham Erdington	77	50
Birmingham Hall Green	15	0
Birmingham Ladywood	164	30
Birmingham Northfield	18	0
Birmingham Selly Oak	30	0
Birmingham Small Heath	70	35
Birmingham Sparkbrook	47	3,800
Birmingham Yardley	34	0
Bishop Auckland	1,137	0
Blackburn	370	0
Blaenau Gwent	601	0
Blaydon	95	0
Blyth Valley	436	0
Bolton North East	4	209
Bolton South East	12	65
Bolton West	113	0
Boothferry	132	0
Bootle	184	286
Bosworth	182	40
Bradford North*	343	53
Bradford South	70	0
Bradford West	190	0
Brecon & Radnor	214	0
Bridgend	445	0
Bridlington	466	1,257
Brigg & Cleethorpes	279	817
Bromsgrove	30	0
Bury North	46	0
Bury South	24	0
Caernarfon	61	0
Caerphilly	182	0
Calder Valley	25	0
Cannock & Burntwood	37	4
Cardiff Central	122	0
Cardiff North	266	0
Cardiff South & Penarth	206	0
Cardiff West	116	0
Carmarthen	46	0
Carrick Cumnock & Doon Valley	177	11
Central Fife	454	331
Ceredigion & Pembroke	61	14
Chorley	29	29
City of Chester	96	0
City of Durham	115	50
Clackmannan	132	10
Clwyd North West	87	0
Clwyd South West*	133	0
Clydebank and Milngavie	370	187
Conwy	7	0
Copeland	45	0
Corby	1,885	0
Coventry North East	32	0
Coventry South East	35	100
Coventry South West	268	2
Crosby	52	0
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	1,088	813
Cunninghame North*	613	0

	Estimated new	Employment safeguarded
Cunninghame South*	766	202
Cynon Valley	421	50
Darlington	252	0
Delyn*	805	6
Don Valley	156	0
Doncaster Central	22	0
Doncaster North	60	0
Dudley East	46	0
Dudley West	183	0
Dumbarton	57	0
Dundee East	369	128
Dundee West*	554	1,965
Dunfermline East	1,616	7
Dunfermline West	723	609
Easington	458	85
East Kilbride	654	9
East Lindsey	24	0
East Lothian	95	0
Eastwood	74	0
Eddisbury	56	0
Ellesmere Port and Neston	48	0
Falkirk East	176	150
Falkirk West	34	36
Falmouth and Cambourne	155	9
Fylde	5	0
Gainsborough and Horncastle	391	0
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale	94	283
Gateshead East	495	0
Glanford and Scunthorpe	1,340	0
Glasgow Cathcart	183	200
Glasgow Central*	605	49
Glasgow Garscadden	182	0
Glasgow Govan*	108	0
Glasgow Hillhead	1,131	92
Glasgow Maryhill*	271	44
Glasgow Pollok	98	41
Glasgow Provan	214	0
Glasgow Rutherglen	165	169
Glasgow Shettleston	218	353
Glasgow Springburn	67	0
Gower	30	0
Great Grimsby	89	0
Greenock and Port Glasgow	785	30
Halesowen and Stourbridge	42	807
Halton	385	0
Hamilton	764	0
Hartlepool	352	0
Hexham	29	0
Heywood & Middleton	152	0
High Peak	200	180
Houghton & Washington	730	45
Hyndburn	93	65
Inverness Nairn & Lochaber	90	0
Islwyn	191	0
Jarrow	82	0
Kilmarnock & Loudoun	443	0
Kingston upon Hull, East	52	0
Kingston upon Hull, North	125	0
Kingston upon Hull, West	80	0
Kirkcaldy	256	0
Knowsley, North	220	0
Knowsley, South	0	585
Lancaster	0	30
Langbaurgh	32	0
Leigh	400	0
Linlithgow*	1,359	175
Littleborough & Saddleworth	120	0
Liverpool, Broadgreen	50	20
Liverpool, Garston	204	123
Liverpool, Mossley Hill	16	0
Liverpool, Riverside	244	50
Liverpool, Walton	78	94
Liverpool, West Derby	11	0
Livingston*	2,968	0
Llanelli	138	7
Ludlow	26	0
Makerfield	130	220
Manchester, Blackley	5	0
Manchester, Central	336	0
Manchester, Gorton	43	0
Meriden	44	13
Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney	733	150
Mid Worcestershire	300	43
Middlesbrough	434	0
Monklands, East	513	0
Monklands, West	211	0
Monmouth	223	0
Motherwell, North*	270	160
Motherwell, South	244	0
Neath	192	45
Newcastle upon Tyne, Central	43	0
Newcastle upon Tyne, East	106	0
Newcastle upon Tyne, North	96	38
Newport*	728	25
Newport, West*	270	60
North Cornwall	395	19
North Devon	134	19
North Durham	104	0
North-East Derbyshire	6	6
North Warwickshire	19	8
North-West Durham	355	122
Northavon	18	0
Nuneaton	116	502
Ogmore	136	110
Oldham Central & Royton	12	0
Oldham West	223	0
Paisley North	595	0
Paisley South	532	315
Pembroke	425	20
Penrith & The Border	35	0
Perth & Kinross	82	0
Plymouth Devonport	91	0
Plymouth Drake	187	0
Plymouth Sutton	284	0
Pontypridd	1,002	430
Pudsey	228	0
Redcar	122	0
Renfrew West & Inverclyde	160	0
Rhondda	202	189
Richmond (Yorks)	15	0
Rochdale	171	0
Rosss Cromarty & Skye	0	1,200
Rosendale & Darwen	187	0
Rother Valley	274	0
Rotherham	759	5
Rutland & Melton	15	0
Salford East	79	0
Scarborough	133	0
Sedgefield*	394	0
Sheffield Attercliffe	7	0
Sheffield Brightside	34	0
Sheffield Central	71	21
Sheffield Hillsborough	7	0
Shipley	231	70
Solihull	19	0
South East Cornwall	13	0
South East Staffordshire	187	0
South Hams	61	0
South Shields	194	0
South Staffordshire	295	0
Southport	101	0
St. Helens North	140	70
St. Helens South	323	300
St. Ives	202	0
Stalybridge & Hyde	21	0
Stirling*	36	118
Stockton North	368	3
Stockton South	304	100
Stratford-on-Avon	28	0
Strathkelvin & Bearsden	163	0
Stretford	15	0
Sunderland North	187	240

	Estimated new	Employment safeguarded
Sunderland South	185	0
Sutton Coldfield	19	0
Swansea East*	69	3
Swansea West*	108	0
Tatton	16	0
Teignbridge	26	0
The Wrekin	522	27
Torfaen	762	2,818
Torridge and West Devon	50	0
Truro	131	0
Tyne Bridge	352	284
Tynemouth	484	0
Vale of Glamorgan	173	409
Wallasey	85	0
Wallsend	356	0
Walsall North	52	47
Walsall South	757	235
Wansbeck	521	0
Warley East*	58	368
Warley West	312	111
Warrington South	10	0
Wentworth	227	0
West Bromwich East	80	0
West Bromwich West	214	1,000
West Gloucestershire	1,061	204
West Lancashire	378	0
Wigan	248	0
Wirral South	104	0
Wirral West	74	0
Wolverhampton North East	23	0
Wolverhampton South East	34	5
Workington	280	0
Worsley	6	0
Wrexham*	1,306	0
Wyre	20	0
Wyre Forest	180	0
Ynys Môn	172	0

* The figures for these constituencies have been updated and do not correspond with those in columns 439-42 of the *Official Report*.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the rights of United Kingdom companies to commercial spin off, in relation to strategic defence initiative research.

Mr. Brittan: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence stated in this House on 9 December that the clearest guidance regarding the legitimate protection of intellectual property will be given to companies, research organisations and universities when they ask the Government for guidance about the sort of contracts into which they can enter.

Insider Trading

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the five cases of alleged insider trading reported to Her Majesty's Government by the Stock Exchange in which prosecutions have ensued; and if he will list the 75 other cases reported in which prosecutions have not ensued, with the reasons in each case.

Mr. Howard: Particulars of the five cases in which prosecutions ensued are as follows:

Defendant	Relevant share	Outcome
John Bryce	Winterbottom Trust Ltd.	Guilty
John and Joyce Titheridge	Joseph Stocks & Sons (Holdings) Ltd.	Guilty
John Allen Crump Dickenson	Harris & Sheldon Group Ltd.	Guilty
Colin Kettle and Neil Thorneywork	Blockley plc.	Acquitted
Ronald John Hancock	Suter Electrical Ltd.	Acquitted
David John Brooks	Suter Electrical Ltd.	Awaiting trial

I am not prepared to disclose details of cases where prosecution did not ensue.

Insolvency Act 1985

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to publicise the provisions of the Insolvency Act 1985.

Mr. Howard: Copies of the Insolvency Act 1985 are now available and I have issued a simplified guide to its main provisions. Further explanatory notes will be issued when details of the secondary legislation are published and when the various sections of the Act come into force. I have arranged for copies of the guide to be placed in the Library.

A copy of the guide can be obtained from Insolvency Service, Branch 2, room 514 Sanctuary Buildings, 16-20 Great Smith street, London SW1P 3DB, until the end of 1985 and thereafter from Insolvency Service 2-14 Bunhill row, London EC1Y 8LL.

Multi-Fibre Arrangement

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will be seeking to make any changes in the draft European Economic Community negotiating mandate for the multi-fibre arrangement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *24*]: I intend to press for the policy I outlined to the House on 9 May 1985 at column 915.

Morocco (Phosphate)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the amount of imported phosphate from Morocco from the year 1975 until the present time.

Mr. Peter Morrison [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1985, c. *138*]: The information is as follows:

United Kingdom imports of phosphate from Morocco
(000s Metric Tonnes)

Year	Weight
1975	1,149
1976	1,262
1977	916
1978	794
1979	839
1980	823
1981	986
1982	803
1983	952
1984	831
1985*	699

* (January-October)

Source:

United Kingdom Overseas Trade Statistics (SITC/R2 sub-group 271.3, 523.22 (part), 523.29 (part), 562.22 and 562.29.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Education Welfare Officers

Mr. Allan Roberts asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that the necessary training is made available for education welfare officers for them to take on the supervision of children, as proposed in the child care law review.

Mr. Chris Patten: As stated in the Government's White paper "Better Schools," my right hon. Friend intends to set in hand national consultations on the training of education welfare officers. These will bear in mind possible new responsibilities for them in administering supervision orders in school attendance cases.

Inner London Education Authority

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has proposed a maximum precept for the Inner London education authority for the financial year 1986-87.

Sir Keith Joseph: I am today informing the Inner London interim education authority that I propose to prescribe a maximum precept for the ILEA for 1986-87 of 76·5p in the pound. This precept would be a reduction of about 1 per cent. on that levied by the existing ILEA for 1985-86. I have asked that the interim authority should inform me by 15 January 1986 of whether it accepts the proposed maximum precept.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Prisoners (Strip Searches)

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons and in what circumstances male and female prisoners are strip-searched in Her Majesty's prisons in Northern Ireland: and what contribution such searches make to prison security.

Mr. Scott: Strip searching aids both the maintenance of security of the prison and the safety of prisoners and staff. It is carried out on both male and female prisoners on reception into prisons, discharge from prison and on other occasions determined by the governor to be operationally necessary.

It makes a significant contribution to prison security both in its deterrent effect and by the detection of items such as drugs and weapons which can be concealed easily about the person and may not be detected by other methods of searching.

Construction Industry (Subcontractors)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many self-employed labour-only subcontractors were employed in the construction industry in the Province in each of the past six years.

Dr. Boyson [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *42*]: The 1981 census of population (the latest data available) showed 8,350 self-employed persons in the Northern Ireland construction industry. However, it is not known how many of these were labour-only subcontractors.

EMPLOYMENT

Wolverhampton

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Paymaster General what plans he has to extend to the Wolverhampton area the pilot schemes which have been initiated by his Department to assist the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Alan Clark: We have no plans at present to extend the pilot schemes to the Wolverhampton area.

Mrs. Renée Short asked Paymaster General what specific courses will be provided within the framework of the pilot schemes which have been initiated by his Department for assisting the long-term unemployed in improving their technical skills; where these will take place; and which people will be employed within jobcentres to advise participants in these schemes on interview techniques.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Manpower Services Commission already operates a number of training programmes open to the long-term unemployed, including the wider opportunities training programme, the job training scheme and the enterprise training. In addition to these programmes, the long-term unemployed in the pilot areas will be able to take up places on an entirely new short training course designed specifically with their needs in mind. These courses will be provided within reasonable distance of the trainee's home. Full travelling expenses will be paid. Some courses will use MSC facilities. Others may take place in colleges or be provided by chambers of commerce or other organisations. The courses will last one to two weeks and will aim to help participants reassess their strengths and skills and improve their techniques for looking for and applying for jobs. Experienced jobcentre staff have been assigned to each pilot area to carry out the counselling interviews at which the training needs of the long-term unemployed will be identified. Job clubs will also operate in each pilot area to help the long-term unemployed maintain the momentum of their job search.

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General which youth training schemes Ministers in his Department have visited for each year since the inception of the youth training scheme; and which they so far have plans to visit for the coming year.

Mr. Trippier: Ministers in this Department have visited a large number of youth training schemes since it commenced in April 1983 and I and my ministerial colleagues intend to continue to pay regular visits to schemes throughout Great Britain. Last week, for example, I visited two schemes in the Merseyside area, and early next year my right hon. and learned Friend will be officially opening the Longbridge ITeC.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General what level of monetary contribution he expects employers to make towards the funding of the new two-year youth training scheme, in total and per employer; how he intends to encourage them to contribute; and whether any of these funds will be directed towards non-employer-based schemes.

Mr. Trippier: The difference between Government funding for places under the two-year youth training scheme and the actual costs involved will be made up by training providers, as happens at present with mode A places. As these costs will vary from case to case, it is not certain how much employers will have to contribute, but generally they will have to put more into the two-year scheme than they do into the present one. It will be open to non-employer based schemes to seek contributions from their work experience providers and we expect many will do so.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General what account he has taken of the quality of individual youth training schemes already existing in deciding overall funding levels and target numbers of employer-based and premium places for the new two-year youth training scheme.

Mr. Trippier: The two-year youth training scheme has been designed to provide quality training for young people with differing needs and in different parts of the country. In doing this we have taken the experience of the present scheme, including the quality of provision both at the individual scheme level and overall, fully into account.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General what are the latest figures for the percentage of trainees leaving the youth training scheme to enter employment; and how many of those trainees are still employed one month after starting work.

Mr. Trippier: The results from the Manpower Services Commission's regular survey of young people leaving the youth training scheme are placed in the Library. The survey does not provide information in the precise form requested. However, the latest set of results, covering young people who left the scheme between 1 April and 30 June 1985, shows that 60 per cent. went straight into work on leaving and 89 per cent. of these were still in work some three months later. Overall, 61 per cent. of leavers were in work some three months after leaving the scheme.

Victims Support Scheme (Kirkby)

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the application for a co-ordinator, to be paid for by the Manpower Services Commission, of the Kirkby victims support scheme.

Mr. Alan Clark: No such application has been received by the Manpower Services Commission.

Factory Inspectors

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Paymaster General what were the number of *(a)* factory inspectors *(b)* those who are actively engaged in factory inspections and *(c)* workplaces in the three Health and Safety Executive areas in the north-west in 1979 and 1985.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: On 1 December 1979 there were 107 factory inspectors in the Health and Safety Executive's Manchester, north-west and Merseyside areas. On 1 December 1985 there were 93. These figures include specialist factory inspectors in a field consultant group based in Manchester.

Inspectors based in the field are actively involved in inspection, except the director of each area.

On 1 December 1979 there were 43,622 establishments registered with the Factory Inspectorate in the three areas. There is known to have been under-recording at that date. On 1 December 1985 there were 49,959.

Copeland

Dr. Cunningham asked the Paymaster General if he will give a detailed breakdown of unemployed claimants in the Copeland parliamentary constituency using the most recent figures of 14 November, analysed by sex and by the age of the unemployed and duration of unemployment.

Mr. Alan Clark: Analyses of unemployment by age and duration are made quarterly. I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 19 November at columns *113-14* for the most recent figures.

Labour and Social Affairs Council

Mr. Evennett asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the European Community Labour and Social Affairs Council held in Brussels on 5 December.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science represented the United Kingdom. The Council agreed the noise directive and two European social fund matters, and agreement in principle was reached on the COMETT programme.

I welcome the agreement on a directive which will oblige member states to implement common basic requirements to protect workers from noise liable to damage their hearing. The provisions of the directive will improve the level of protection of workers against hearing loss without imposing unnecessary burdens on business. They are therefore fully acceptable to the Government, and the Health and Safety Commission will now be working to conclude the work of producing regulations in line with the directive.

The COMETT programme has been settled in principle on terms wholly acceptable to the United Kingdom. We welcome the intention of establishing this programme of co-operation between higher education and industry in the field of advanced training.

The Council agreed, subject to the opinion of the European Parliament, on amendments to the social fund rules relating to super-priority regions to take account of the accession of Spain and Portugal. Agreement was also reached that schemes encouraging self-employment should be eligible for fund support from 1986 onwards. The Government measure which should benefit in

particular from this agreement on encouraging self-employment is the enterprise allowance scheme, which is proving extremely effective in immediate job creation. I am satisfied that the agreements we reached on the social fund will provide a worthwhile level of support for measures to improve employment prospects.

The Council also discussed the Commission's memorandum on youth policies and the draft parental leave directive. On the parental leave directive, a number of member states expressed reservations and the President concluded that it was not possible for the Council to reach agreement. I maintained the Government's objection in principle which was endorsed by the House on 26 November. I proposed that this directive might in due course be considered by the new unit of the Commission which will appraise the impact of new regulations on small and modern size businesses. This proposal will no doubt be considered when the new unit is established and if a forthcoming Presidency wishes to resume discussion of the proposal in the Council of Ministers.

THE ARTS

Greater Manchester

Mr. Thurnham asked the Minister for the Arts how much of the additional funds for the arts, after the abolition of the metropolitan county councils, applies to the Greater Manchester council area.

Mr. Luce: For the performing arts, it will be for the Arts Council to determine a figure, in negotiation with the successor authorities and the Regional Arts Association.

For museums, I announced a grant of £1·075 million in 1986-87 for the Greater Manchester museum of science and industry in my reply to the hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) on Monday 16 December, at columns 35-38, and the University Grants Committee will be making additional sums available to the Manchester University museum and Whitworth gallery, amounting to over £300,000 next year.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Public Expenditure

Mr. Knox asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the level of public expenditure, adjusted for asset sales, in each year since 1978-79, as a proportion of gross domestic product.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer my hon. Friend to table 2.4 in the autumn statement.

PSBR, Assets Sales and Oil Revenue

Mr. Knox asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the level of *(a)* the public sector borrowing requirement, *(b)* asset sales including sales of housing and land and *(c)* revenue from taxes on oil production, in each year since 1978-79, as a proportion of gross domestic product.

Mr. MacGregor: The information is as follows:

*Percentage of gross domestic product**

	PSBR	*Asset sales†*	*Taxes on Oil production‡*
1978-79	5·3	0·3	0·3
1979-80	4·8	0·6	1·1
1980-81	5·4	0·7	1·6
1981-82	3·3	1·0	2·5
1982-83	3·1	1·2	2·8
1983-84	3·2	1·2	2·9
1984-85	3·1	1·4	3·7

* Average estimate at current market prices.
† Including sales of housing and land.
‡ Royalties, petroleum revenue tax (including advance payments), and corporation tax from North sea oil and gas production (before advance corporation tax set off).

Fraud

Mr. Soley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the total estimated amounts defrauded from Her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes for each year from 1979.

Mr. Moore: It is not possible to estimate the tax lost through undetected evasion.

Income Tax

Mr. Chapman asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the increase in the net pay of a person earning £140 per week, if the standard rate of income tax was reduced to 28 per cent.

Mr. Moore: £1·90 per week for a single person or working wife and £1·39 for a married man in 1986-87, based on the illustrative allowances shown in the autumn statement.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Baldry asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make a statement on the trend in unemployment over the last six months.

Mr. MacGregor: Over the last six months adult unemployment has fallen, on average, by 2,000 a month. The trend is now broadly stable and should continue to be more favourable than over the last two years.

Customs Officers (North-East)

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer why one of the two customs mobile rummage crews in the north-east region has been disbanded; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: It is proposed to disband one of the customs mobile rummage crews in north-east England because the staff can be more usefully employed on other Customs work. The situation will be kept under review.

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy for allocating customs staff in the north-east region to combat drugs smuggling; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The policy for the allocation of customs staff to combat drugs smuggling in north-east England is the same as it is throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. The available resources are allocated in accordance with the perceived risk.

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the reduction in the number of customs officers employed in the north-east region's ports and airports since 1979.

Mr. Brooke: The number of customs officers employed in the north-east region's ports and airports has reduced from 197 in 1979 to 154 in 1985.

Non-Residents (Taxation)

Mr. William Powell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a consultative document on the taxation of non-residents operating in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moore: After careful consideration of the law and practice in this area, I have concluded that general changes to the regime would not be appropriate at the present time. We will, however, continue to keep matters under review.

We are taking this opportunity to tidy up one minor matter relating to United Kingdom interest arising to non-residents. The purpose of this is to preserve a long-standing exemption from assessment of interest paid to a non-resident through an agent who does not have control of the interest. Recently legal doubts have arisen as to whether this exemption is due under the law. We are extending an existing extra-statutory concession to make it clear that the exemption will continue to be given. I am instructing the Inland Revenue to issue a press release tomorrow containing full details.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Turkey

12. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he intends to meet Turkey's Foreign Secretary to discuss political prisoners.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no immediate plans to meet the Turkish Foreign Minister although they meet frequently in the course of international conferences. On such occasions the question of human rights is frequently addressed, most recently in New York on 25 September. The Turkish Government is in no doubt of our position on this score.

Foreign Ministers Meeting (Luxembourg)

17. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent meeting of Foreign Ministers from the European Economic Community, Central America and the Contadora countries in Luxembourg.

Mr. Eggar: As I told the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) on 20 November, the Luxembourg meeting was a practical demonstration by the members of the European Community of support for the Contadora peace process. Political and economic agreements with the central American states were successfully concluded. The European Community agreed to increase substantially aid to promote economic co-operation in the region.

Falkland Islands

19. **Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy in the light of the recent United Nations vote on negotiations between the United Kingdom and Argentina over the Falkland Islands.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have made all the running in seeking to normalise relations between Britain and Argentina. We have taken a series of initiatives since 1982. We shall continue to seek every opportunity to encourage the Argentine Government to take a more realistic approach and to match our readiness to rebuild confidence. The United Nations vote has not caused us to change this approach. Nor is our commitment to the Falkland Islanders affected.

46. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if European Economic Community political co-operation covers the issue of the future of the Falkland Islands.

92. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has held with other European Economic Community countries concerning the future of the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Eggar: Our EC partners are briefed, as appropriate, on the international aspects of our Falklands policy both bilaterally and within the framework of European Political Co-operation.

Questions concerning the internal affairs of dependent territories of member states are not discussed in European political co-operation.

British Council

20. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received advocating an extension of the work of the British Council.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) earlier today.

British Subjects (Arab Gaols)

21. **Dr. M. S. Miller** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those British subjects who are presently in Arab gaols and what information he has about which of them have suffered inhuman punishments such as lashing or torture.

Mr. Renton: There are currently 33 British citizens imprisoned in Arab countries. It is not our practice to reveal names of persons detained abroad without their consent. Three have been sentenced to strokes of the cane. One claimed that he had been tortured and we raised his allegations with the authorities concerned but they have denied them.

Middle East

22. **Mr. Walters** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on progress towards peace in the middle east.

25. **Mr. Soames** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in the middle east.

42. **Mr. Bendall** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will now give details of his policy reassessment towards the Arab-Israeli dispute.

18. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether there have been any further developments in Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the conflict in the middle east following the cancellation of the joint Jordanian/PLO delegation visit to Britain in the autumn.

Sir John Farr asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest situation in the middle east.

Mr. Renton: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave earlier to my hon. Friends the Members for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham), and Leominster (Mr. Temple-Morris).

28. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he intends to seek to visit the middle east.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend is planning to visit a number of states in the Arabian peninsula early in the new year. Details are now being settled.

56. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Israeli Government about the welfare of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza under the continued occupation.

Mr. Renton: We maintain a regular and frank dialogue with the Israeli Government about conditions in the occupied territories.

67. **Mr. Robert C. Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, in the light of the abortive visit of the joint Jordanian/Palestinian delegation to London and the explicit rejection by the Palestine Liberation Organisation in Baghdad of United Nations resolutions 242 and 338, he will make a statement on his policy towards the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Mr. Renton: The final statement of the PLO central council meeting in Baghdad does not mention United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Our policy remains to support realistic moves towards peace negotiations.

83. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the visit of the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton) to the middle east.

Mr. Renton: I visited Syria, Lebanon and Israel from 9 to 16 December. I had useful talks with the governments in each country on bilateral relations and regional and international issues. I also met Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza.

Council of Ministers

23. **Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the proposals for increased majority voting within the European Community Council of Ministers.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The agreement reached at the European Council will contribute to early completion of the common market and will benefit United Kingdom firms selling goods and services in Europe.

USSR

24. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he expects to meet the Soviet Foreign Minister; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Mr. Shevardnadze has accepted my invitation to pay a visit to the United Kingdom. Dates have not yet been agreed.

Strategic Defence Initiative

26. **Mr. Douglas** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are his Department's conditions for United Kingdom participation in the United States of America strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Renton: United Kingdom participation in the United States strategic defence initiative research programme, details of which were announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 6 December, will be in conformity with the four points agreed between my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the President of the United States in December 1984 at Camp David.

47. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received since his speech to the Royal United Services Institute regarding the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a number of representations. Most have been in support of the speech which was made in conformity with the four points agreed between my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and President Reagan in December 1984.

65. **Mr. McKelvey** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to have talks with United States Defence Secretary Weinberger on foreign policy implications of the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans to do so. He most recently saw the United States Secretary of State on 10 December when they discussed a whole range of issues including strategic questions.

South Africa

27. **Mr. Michie** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the European Economic Community will next consider its policy towards South Africa.

57. **Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the European Economic Community Council will next consider its policy towards South Africa.

105. **Mr. Torney** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the European Economic Community Council of Ministers will next consider relations with South Africa.

Mr. Rifkind: The Council of Ministers has no plans to consider policy towards South Africa in the near future.

30. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's recent relations with South Africa.

86. **Mr. Viggers** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on current relations between the United Kingdom and South Africa.

Mr. Canavan asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement about the implications for relations between the United Kingdom and South Africa of the latest situation in South Africa.

Mr. Rifkind: The South African Government are fully aware of our deep concern at the internal situation in South Africa. We shall continue to use our contacts with the South African Government to press for fundamental reforms and to urge on them the need for the widest possible dialogue about the political future of South Africa.

34. **Mr. Caborn** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the European Economic Community Council will next consider sanctions on South Africa.

Mr. Rifkind: There is no current proposal that the Council should consider sanctions against South Africa.

58. **Mr. Ian Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out the criteria employed by his Department to distinguish between scientific agreements between the United Kingdom and South Africa which do, and those which do not, support apartheid; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: Scientific agreements with South Africa will be considered on a case-by-case basis in the light of all available information.

61. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will reconsider Her Majesty's Government's policy of refusing to meet representatives from dissident groups from South Africa including exiled organisations except under certain pre-conditions.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We are ready to meet representatives from any South African group working for peaceful change. We believe that the support of dissident groups for a suspension of violence as called for in the Commonwealth Accord would help to promote dialogue within South Africa and with others, like ourselves, who seek a peaceful solution to that country's problems.

76. **Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement concerning the conclusions of, and results obtained from, the measures taken by Ministers of the European Economic Community, acting in political co-operation, concerning sanctions against South Africa.

Mr. Rifkind: In September Ministers of the Twelve agreed to implement a number of positive and restrictive measures in relation to South Africa. We believe that these measures have sent a clear political signal to the South African Government of the need for urgent and fundamental reform.

77. **Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his policy with regard to the attendance by members of the staff of Her Majesty's embassy in South Africa of the funerals of victims of the current unrest; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: Members of the staff of Her Majesty's embassy in South Africa will attend funerals and other occasions in their official capacity where representation is felt to be appropriate. Each case is considered on its merits.

91. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make a statement on progress of sanctions agreed at the Nassau Commonwealth conference.

Mr. Rifkind: The majority of the measures agreed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in October have been in effect in Britain for some time. We have implemented, or are considering ways of implementing, the further measures agreed at Nassau.

99. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the specific impact on black employment in South Africa and the surrounding countries of the imposition of full economic sanctions on South Africa.

Mr. Rifkind: We have not carried out a detailed assessment but the work which we and others have done on the subject leaves us in no doubt that full economic sanctions would have a very serious effect on black employment both in South Africa and the surrounding countries.

Chemical Weapons

29. **Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likelihood of progress in the Geneva negotiations on chemical weapons.

Mr. Renton: We warmly welcome the recent agreement by President Reagan and Secretary-General Gorbachev to accelerate efforts to conclude an effective and verifiable ban on chemical weapons. We hope this will provide an impetus to the negotiations at the conference on disarmament. The extent to which substantive progress will be possible will depend critically on whether the Soviet Union is now willing to negotiate seriously on the key verification issues. The United Kingdom will chair the chemical weapons committee in 1986 and will actively look for progress.

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

31. **Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps have been taken by Her Majesty's Government to resume trilateral negotiations with the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty under article VI of the non proliferation treaty.

Mr. Renton: We shall continue to seek progress towards a comprehensive test ban treaty. We hope that the conference on disarmament in Geneva, when it resumes in February, will be able to address the problems of verification which still stand in the way of a treaty.

45. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the latest prospects for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

78. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in promoting a comprehensive nuclear test ban agreement, with particular reference to an effective verification procedure.

Mr. Renton: In my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) on 25 November at column *418* I outlined the steps the United Kingdom had taken to resolve the outstanding difficulties in the way of a comprehensive test ban treaty. While we remain committed to progress towards a comprehensive test ban treaty, we see little hope of progress until these difficulties are resolved.

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what studies have been undertaken by his Department into the effects of a comprehensive test ban treaty upon the development of the United States strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Renton: None.

European Community (Political Union)

32. **Mr. David Young** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if European Economic Community political union will be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Rifkind: No.

54. **Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards European Economic Community political union since the Milan summit.

Mr. Rifkind: The subject of political union has not been under discussion. The Luxembourg European Council agreed on a treaty on co-operation in the sphere of foreign policy, on the basis of a United Kingdom draft, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister reported to the House on 5 December at column 429-30. On 17 December Ministers agreed the text of a European Act covering both the agreed amendments to the EC treaty and the new, separate treaty on co-operation in the sphere of foreign policy.

72. **Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the objectives of European Economic Community political co-operation will be better served by incorporating them into the European Economic Community treaty.

Mr. Rifkind: The treaty on European Co-operation in the sphere of foreign policy agreed at the Luxembourg European Council will remain legally separate from the Treaty of Rome and the other Community treaties. There is no question of incorporating it into those treaties.

85. **Miss Maynard** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what benefits he expects to gain from the European Economic Community commitment to increased political co-operation.

Mr. Rifkind: The draft treaty on European co-operation in the sphere of foreign policy will formalise current practices of European Political Co-operation. Regular consultation on matters of foreign policy, reaching common positions and taking joint action wherever possible, strengthens the Community's voice in the world, and, through it, Britains influence on international issues.

95. **Mr. George Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on increased political co-operation by European Economic Community Governments.

Mr. Rifkind: A draft treaty on European co-operation in the sphere of foreign policy was agreed in principle at the European Council in Luxembourg. This treaty formalises the current practices of European political co-operation and makes binding the commitment to consult among the twelve on matters of foreign policy of interest to all member states. The treaty is based on the United Kingdom draft tabled in June.

Philippines

33. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on current relations between the United Kingdom and the Philippines.

Mr. Renton: We enjoy good relations with the Philippines. We hope that their present economic and political difficulties will soon be resolved and that the Presidential elections due in January will be free and fair. The United Kingdom is the third largest investor in the Philippines; our visible exports are increasing and will be worth about £100 million in 1985.

37. **Mr. Chope** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to seek to make an official visit to the Philippines.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend has at present no plans to do so. But the United Kingdom as president of the European Community will be appropriately represented at the annual dialogue meeting between the European Community and the Association of South East Asian Nations to be held in Manila in mid 1986.

Argentina

35. **Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will now propose to Argentina the immediate resumption of diplomatic relations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We want to secure more normal relations with Argentina. Since 1982 we have taken a series of initiatives to achieve this, but the Argentine Government have failed to respond constructively. The best way forward is through co-operation on practical matters of interest to both countries.

55. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times since

1982 Her Majesty's Government have entered into negotiations with the Argentine Government; on each occasion who initiated such talks; and, on each occasion, who was responsible for breaking off such talks.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have taken a series of initiatives since 1982 designed to lead to discussions with Argentina on practical issues of interest to both countries. We took steps at the International Monetary Fund meeting in Toronto in September 1982 to reach agreement with the Argentine Government on reciprocal lifting of financial restrictions. Argentina has still not fully implemented that agreement. We also repeatedly proposed the mutual lifting of trade restrictions and took the initiative in arranging the Berne talks in July 1984. At those talks the Argentine representatives departed from the arrangements specifically agreed in advance for dealing with the sovereignty issue. The talks therefore came to an end.

98. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about relations with the Argentina.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have since 1982 taken a series of initiatives designed to open the way to more normal relations with Argentina. The Argentine Government have yet to respond constructively. But have maintained their insistence that we agree to discuss sovereignty over the Falklands before they will discuss any aspect of our bilateral relations.

103. **Mr. Wainwright** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards resuming full diplomatic and trade links with Argentina.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have taken a series of initiatives since 1982 intended to secure more normal relations with Argentina. These included repeated proposals for the mutual lifting of trade embargoes. Following Argentina's persistent refusal to respond constructively we lifted unilaterally our restrictions on Argentine imports to the United Kingdom in July 1985. Argentina has not yet reciprocated.

Disarmament

36. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to discuss disarmament questions with the United States' Secretary of State.

Mr. Renton: There is a regular dialogue between the United Kingdom and the United States, at all levels, on this subject. My right hon. and learned Friend last discussed disarmament questions with Mr. Shultz on 10 December. They also saw each other at a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels on 12 and 13 December. They have no firm plans for further discussions in the near future.

Chile

Mr. Stott asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will now impose a total embargo on all military co-operation with Chile.

Mr. Eggar: A total embargo on sales of arms to Chile would be ineffective. But we shall continue not to approve the supply of items, which in our view, are likely to be used for internal repression.

Mr. Litherland asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent steps he has taken to seek to ensure an end to human rights violations in Chile.

Mr. Eggar: On 6 December we voted in favour of a United Nations General Assembly resolution calling upon the Chilean authorities to end human rights violations and supporting the special rapporteur's mandate to visit Chile. We shall continue to encourage the Chilean Government towards restraint, and dialogue with the democratic opposition.

Zimbabwe

39. **Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of Her Majesty's Government's relations with Zimbabwe.

Mr. Rifkind: Relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Zimbabwe continue to develop in a friendly and constructive way in a number of fields.

Mr. Anderson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to meet President Mugabe to discuss Anglo-Zimbabwean relations.

Mr. Rifkind: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to meet Prime Minister Mugabe.

Latin American Governments

Mr. Park asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with Latin American Governments over their foreign debt; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: We remain concerned by the heavy debt burden borne by many Latin American countries. This is a subject frequently discussed in the course of our contacts with their Governments.

Iraq

43. **Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, when meeting the Foreign Minister of Iraq earlier this month, he expressed Her Majesty's Government's abhorrence of terrorism.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Yes. I emphasised our determination to promote international cooperation against terrorism during my discussion with the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Tariq Aziz.

European Parliament

44. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new powers are to be given to the European Parliament as a result of the European Economic Community Luxembourg summit meeting; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It was agreed that the European Parliament should be consulted on the Council's initial view of Commission proposals for legislation in a limited number of areas. The last word on all such legislation would remain with the Council. The European

Parliament's assent would be required for new accessions to the Community and for new association agreements with third countries of groups of countries.

Nicaragua

48. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps European Economic Community member countries and institutions are taking to help Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: On 12 November in Luxembourg the European Community concluded a co-operation agreement with the Central American States and Panama designed to promote economic relations and agreed to increase substantially aid to the region. The agreement was multilateral and designed to benefit all the central American states.

European Community (Majority Voting)

49. **Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what amendments have been agreed to the treaty of Rome to extend the scope of majority voting.

60. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement explaining the nature of the changes in the scope for majority voting in the Community which have been referred to the intergovernmental conference by the Council in Luxembourg on 2 and 3 December; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Majority voting is already possible under some 40 articles of the treaty. The changes agreed, subject to reserves by Italy and Denmark, would extend majority voting to:

(a) Some of the internal market issues for which Article 100 currently requires unanimity (subject to specific exceptions for taxation, free movement of persons and measures affecting the rights and interests of employees, as well as a number of additional safeguards, set out in the text, which cover human, animal and plant health);
(b) Other Articles related to the internal market (28, 57(2), 59(2), 70(1) and 84);
(c) Specific programmes in the field of technology;
(d) Fields of environment policy which the Council unanimously decides are to be covered by qualified majority.

69. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on developments on the proposals agreed to at the intergovernmental conference in Luxembourg.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement I made earlier today.

81. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy on the abolition of the right of a member state to veto proposals put to the European Community's Council of Ministers.

Mr. Rifkind: Our policy towards the right of veto continues to be based, as it always has been, on the Luxembourg compromise, under which, where majority voting rules apply, a member state which considers that a very important interest is at stake may ask that discussion continue until unanimous agreement is reached.

104. **Mr. Maxton** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what way he proposes to bring before Parliament the amendments to the treaty of Rome agreed at the European Economic Community Luxembourg summit.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Government will introduce a Bill as soon as reserves are lifted and the texts are available in treaty form.

64. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what effect he anticipates the role recommended for the European Parliament by the Luxembourg European Council will have on the speed and quality of European Economic Community policy-making.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The time limits for consulting the European Parliament laid down under the new co-operation procedure should enable the European Parliament to play a serious and constructive role in Community decision-taking without slowing it down.

El Salvador

50. **Mr. Bidwell** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects officers from El Salvador to begin military training in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Eggar: The arrangements have not yet been finalised.

European Community Budget (Foreign Ministers Council)

51. **Mr. Kilroy-Silk** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions have been held by European Economic Community Foreign Ministers on the 1986 budget.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There has been no formal discussion of the 1986 Budget in the Foreign Affairs Council. This is primarily a matter for the Budget Council, on which my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Treasury made a statement on 29 November at column 665-66 in reply to the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham).

Sri Lanka

52. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters were discussed when he last met the high commissioner of Sri Lanka; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has met his excellency the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka on a number of occasions during his residence in this country, most recently at the luncheon my right hon. and learned Friend hosted on 2 October for Commonwealth High Commissioners in London. Their discussions were of course confidential.

Palestine Organisations

53. **Mr. Faulds** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he intends to meet members of the Palestine organisations.

Mr. Renton: I met Palestinian representatives in the occupied territories during my recent visit to the Middle East. My right hon. and learned Friend has at present no plans for further meetings.

Yugoslavia

59. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's relations with Yugoslavia.

Mr. Rifkind: We enjoy close and substantial relations with Yugoslavia in all fields.

Arab Countries (Visitors)

62. **Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what warnings are given to British subjects travelling to Arab countries about restrictions on celebrating Christmas and the new year; and what efforts he has made to seek to have these restrictions lifted.

Mr. Renton: The problem is not a widespread one. However, the Department of Trade and Industry advises on living conditions in its booklet "Hints to Exporters". The Consular Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office issues a brief guide and British Consulates in Arab countries also respond to enquiries.

We are concerned that British subjects in all countries should be able to worship privately in accordance with their conscience. Where problems may occur, the embassy monitors the situation closely and endeavours to ensure that suitable arrangements are made.

Syria

63. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's current relations with Syria.

Mr. Renton: We seek to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Syrian Government on bilateral and international issues. I had useful talks with Syrian Ministers during my visit to Damascus from 9 to 11 December.

Arms Control

66. **Mr. Freeman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the prospects for arms control in the light of the meeting between President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev.

Mr. Renton: I have nothing to add to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) on 12 December at columns *708-9*.

Exports

68. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has plans to encourage commercial officers to visit the regions to explain to potential exporters the services which they have on offer.

Mr. Rifkind: About 200 diplomatic service and senior locally-recruited commercial officers undertake programmes of visits and speaking engagements in Britain every year. This number represents 35 per cent. of all officers engaged wholly or mainly on commercial work overseas and their visits are as many as resources will allow.

We are currently considering further steps to let existing and potential exporters know of the support available to them from the diplomatic service.

European Parliament (Elections)

70. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with European Economic Community Foreign Ministers about the implementation of the common electoral system for elections to the European Parliament.

Mr. Rifkind: There has been no discussion of a uniform procedure for European Parliament elections at Ministerial level this year.

Intermediate Nuclear Forces (Europe)

71. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his policy towards an interim agreement on intermediate nuclear forces in Europe.

Mr. Renton: We regard the recent agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union at the Geneva Summit that they should work towards an interim intermediate nuclear forces agreement as a positive step. We continue to support the United States proposals which are based on agreed alliance criteria, offering a detailed framework for progress on the basis of equal and global limits.

Afghanistan

73. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations with Afghanistan.

Mr. Eggar: As I told my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) on 19 November. We have no substantive relations with Afghanistan. Following the Soviet invasion in December 1979, we withdrew Her Majesty's ambassador in Kabul and suspended our aid programme to Afghanistan.

Third World (Debt)

74. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent steps he has taken to seek to alleviate the problem of debt in the Third world.

Mr. Rifkind: We are continuing to work with other Governments, international institutions and banks to help individual debtor countries to tackle their debt problems flexibly and effectively.

Saudi Arabia

75. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations between the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Renton: Relations with Saudi Arabia are excellent. There have been a number of Ministerial visits in both directions in the last year, and we expect to exchange further Ministerial visits in 1986.

Contadora Process

79. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with the United States of America over the future of the Contadora process.

90. **Mr. Weetch** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the United States of America over their military involvement in Central America.

Mr. Eggar: We regularly discuss all important issues, including the situation in Central America, with the United States Government at a number of levels. They are fully aware of our views.

Japan

80. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when next he expects to meet the Foreign Minister of Japan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend expects to hold talks with Mr. Abe, the Japanese Foreign Minister in the New Year. These will form part of the regular pattern of Anglo-Japanese exchanges between Foreign Ministers.

Namibia

82. **Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the future of Namibia.

Mr. Rifkind: We shall continue to press South Africa to fulfil her formal commitment to bring Namibia to independence in accordance with the UN Plan. We believe that a prospect for achieving early implementation of that Plan currently lies with the US-led negotiations. We welcome the recent resumption of talks between the United States and Angola.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the changes which have taken place inside Namibia since 17 June designed to eliminate racial discrimination; and if they enable him to reassess the United Kingdom's attitude towards the basis of Namibian independence.

Mr. Rifkind: Although minor changes have taken place inside Namibia, key features of racial discrimination, including the second tier authority system of separate health, education and personal taxation on ethnic grounds, remain. We continue firmly to believe that Namibia should be brought to early independence on the basis of the United Nations plan.

USSR (Emigré Groups)

87. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, following the Geneva summit, he will make a statement on his policy towards Russian emigré groups.

Mr. Rifkind: The activities of such groups within this country are primarily a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, but, so far as they make their views known on matters concerning foreign policy, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office listens to their views and, as appropriate, takes note.

BBC External Services

88. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make extra provision for transmitters for the British Broadcasting Corporation external service to combat jamming in eastern Europe, Iraq and elsewhere.

Mr. Eggar: We are spending over £100 million this decade to improve the audibility of the BBC external services overseas and to combat both intentional and unintentional interference. Provision has been made for new transmitters within this programme to strengthen the signals to both eastern Europe and the Middle East. New satellite links have already improved signals from the overseas relay stations.

93. **Sir Brandon Rhys Williams** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to make the external services of the British Broadcasting Corporation available by means of satellites to provide a worldwide television news and educational service.

Mr. Eggar: We shall be discussing with the BBC External Services in January 1986 the feasibility of their mounting an external television service concentrating initially on news and current affairs. There are formidable technical and funding problems which will need to be overcome before such a service can be introduced.

EC (Policy Development)

89. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further proposals he intends to place before his European Community partners for the development of Community policies.

Mr. Rifkind: We will continue to work for early completion of the common market, improvements in world trade rules, reform of the common agricultural policy and strengthened co-operation in foreign policy.

Israel

94. **Mr. Sumberg** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, during his recent trip to Israel, any discussions took place with the Israeli Government concerning the possibility of lifting the embargo on the sale of military equipment to Israel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: This issue was not raised with me by the Israeli Government during my recent visit to Israel.

Iran-Iraq War

96. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives he is considering to assist the United Nations in its attempts to bring an end to the Gulf war.

112. **Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps Her

Majesty's Government are taking to seek an end to the Iran-Iraq conflict; and what measures he has suggested for finding an urgent solution to that conflict.

Mr. Renton: During the recent visit to the United Kingdom by the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. and learned Friend and I were glad to be able to reiterate our support for efforts by the United Nations, and particularly those of the Secretary General, to bring an end to this tragic conflict. We will continue to support any peace initiatives which have a realistic chance of success.

Terrorism

97. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about Her Majesty's Government's role in international co-operation against terrorism, including hijacking.

Mr. Eggar: As my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, Lord Glenarthur, said in another place on 9 December, our strategy is to promote an acceptance among like-minded countries that we have a common interest in fighting terrorism; to create an international climate in which state-supported terrorism and the abuse of diplomatic immunity are unacceptable; to ensure that it is difficult for terrorists to operate, that no substantive concessions are made to their demands, and that they are apprehended and brought to justice; to ensure that effective measures are taken to prevent hijacking; and to promote full co-operation and exchange of information and intelligence among friendly countries.

GCHQ, Cheltenham

100. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has submitted to the European Court of Human Rights on trade union membership of employees at the Government Communications Headquarters.

Mr. Renton: The European Commission of Human Rights has asked for our observations on the admissibility of the application by the Council of Civil Service Unions and others, concerning the revised terms and conditions of service at Government communications headquarters. These will be submitted in due course.

EC Budget (Portugal)

101. **Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he expects Portugal to become a net contributor to the European Community budget.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It remains the Community's intention that Portugal should be a modest net beneficiary from the Community budget.

Honduras

102. **Mr. Corbyn** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Government of Honduras about violations of refugee status there.

Mr. Eggar: The Honduran authorities are well aware of our concern about the need to respect the status of the refugees.

Budapest Cultural Forum

106. **Mr. Lawrence** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals emerged from last month's Budapest cultural forum; and what provision has been made for their implementation.

Mr. Eggar: During the proceedings of the Budapest Cultural Forum, a total of 115 official (that is, Government sponsored) proposals were made. There were also 132 unofficial proposals circulated by cultural personalities attending the forum. Participants at the Budapest cultural forum did not agree a concluding document. That does not mean, however, that the many proposals made at the forum cannot be taken up as appropriate at the CSCE Vienna follow-up meeting. It will also be open to Governments to take whatever action they judge fit on individual proposals.

Africa (Democratic Institutions)

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he takes, within programmes for which he is responsible, to promote democratic institutions in African countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: We naturally welcome and seek to promote the growth of democratic institutions throughout the international community.

Women's Rights

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, following the United Nations meeting in Nairobi and the adoption of a forward-looking strategy for the advancement of women, he will raise with the Foreign Ministers of Arab countries the effect on the situation of women in those countries of the recent rise in Islamic fundamentalism.

Mr. Renton: We shall continue to monitor the performance of particular countries in the field of human rights, including safeguarding of the rights of women in Islamic countries, and to press for an improvement where those rights enshrined in the universal declaration, the international covenants on Human Rights and other relevant instruments are not enjoyed.

Space Weapons (Treaties)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those treaties to which the United Kingdom has agreed which prohibit the development of directed energy weapons in space.

Mr. Renton: The United Kingdom is party to the 1963 treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, and the 1967 treaty on principles governing the activities of states in the exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies. Neither of these treaties prohibits the development of directed energy weapons in space.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Milk Quotas

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make a statement on the current operation of milk quotas in the European Community.

Mr. Gummer: In the first year of the system, 1984-85, deliveries of milk in the European Community were reduced by about 4 per cent. to the level of the quota. Only the Republic of Ireland and the Netherlands exceeded their quotas, and both member states paid the required levy. If present trends continue, deliveries in the Community this year may slightly exceed quota, and the Commission has urged those member states where the quota may be exceeded to warn their producers that levy will be payable unless production is cut back.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Foulkes asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much of the assistance to farmers to compensate for the bad summer weather has actually been paid to the farmers concerned in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Northern Ireland and *(d)* Scotland; what percentage of the total allocated this represents in each case; what arrangements he has for further payments to be made by the end of the year; and when he expects the process to be completed.

Mr. Jopling: So far as England is concerned, farmers have until 13 January to submit their claims but a considerable number have already been received. The processing of these is well advanced and we hope to be in a position to pay about 70 per cent. of the total due by the end of the year.

So far as the position in the other countries is concerned, this is a matter for the appropriate Secretaries of State.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Prescott asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the radioactive inventory and volume of waste disposed of at sea for each year from 1955 to 1982.

Mr. Gummer: Information on the total weight and activity of the radioactive wastes disposed of at sea by the United Kingdom in each year from 1955 to 1982 is as follows. Packaging normally accounts for about 90 per cent. of the weight of each consignment.

Sea disposal of low-level radioactive waste by the United Kingdom, 1955-82

Year	Weight (tonnes)	Activity (a) alpha	curies (b) beta/ gamma*
1955	2,617	47	77
1956	1,038	44	33
1957	5,941	1,064	969
1958	3,705	753	1,142
1959	1,198	4	74
†1960	2,551	74	218
1961	6,327	583	1,938
‡1962	1,697	22	239
1963	7,352	371	7,115
1964	4,392	444	15,090
1965	1,759	114	13,754
1966	1,044	78	2,742
1967	722	91	1,682
1968	3,164	731	74,837
1969	1,878	390	17,590
1970	1,674	233	20,224
1971	1,434	323	8,615
1972	1,885	674	19,049
1973	1,453	739	11,641
1974	1,256	399	94,126
1975	1,350	704	52,481
1976	2,269	789	49,777
1977	2,140	930	74,830
1978	2,080	814	69,307
1979	2,014	1,381	81,080
1980	2,693	1,791	106,079
1981	2,517	2,032	104,709
1982	2,697	1,264	101,512

* including tritium.
† includes 289 tonnes from Belgian sources.
‡ includes 438 tonnes from Belgian sources.

Butter

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, for each calendar year since 1977, he will give *(a)* the tonnage of New Zealand butter imported into the United Kingdom, *(b)* the tonnage imported into bonded stores in the United Kingdom, and *(c)* the tonnage released from bonded stores in the United Kingdom; and whether in his enforcement of the tonnage of New Zealand butter permitted to be imported into the United Kingdom each year under protocol 18 of the treaty of accession to the European Economic Community, he has regard to the quantity imported into bonded stores in the United Kingdom, or to the total released from bonded stores within the United Kingdom plus any tonnage imported into the United Kingdom from New Zealand without passing through bonded stores.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Priorities Board

Mr. Maclean asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has received the report of the Priorities Board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling The Priorities Board for Research and Development in Agriculture and Food has now delivered its first report to Agriculture Ministers and the Chairman of the Agricultural and Food Research Council. We are most grateful to Sir Kenneth Durham and the board for the work which they have undertaken.

The report considers the whole of the publicly funded research and development programme for agriculture and food in the United Kingdom and makes recommendations to the sponsors about future resources allocations and priorities. We are agreed that the broad thrust of the board's advice should guide us in the formulation of the future research programme and the allocation of resources. Detailed discussions will now be held between the sponsors to establish how the recommendations are to be implemented.

On this occasion I am making arrangements for the report to be published and copies are being placed in the

Library of the House. Copies will be made available for information to all those organisations and individuals who submitted material to the board in the course of its deliberations and those who have been involved in the consultations with the Agriculture Departments on industry funding of research and development. Additional copies will be available from the Ministry's publications unit at Alnwick shortly.

DEFENCE

British Army of the Rhine

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the gross annual cost of maintaining the British Army of the Rhine; and how much is reimbursed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Stanley: As stated in table 2.3 in volume II of the "Statement on Defence Estimates 1985" the cost of the British Army of the Rhine is estimated to be some £1,899 million in 1985-86 at 1985-86 Estimates prices. The final bilateral offset agreement with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany expired in March 1980. The Government of the Federal Republic do, however, make available rent-free a large proportion of the accommodation occupied by both the British Army of the Rhine and RAF Germany.

L9A1 Gas Spray Gun

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Defence what stocks are held by the armed forces of the L9A1 gas spray gun and associated supplies; when these were first obtained; for what purposes; what tests have been carried out; in what circumstances they are intended to be used and with what safeguards; and who will have authority to authorise their use.

Mr. Lee: The L9A1 is a hand-held aerosol dispenser, which releases a small quantity of irritant solution designed to deter dogs from harassing military patrols. It was introduced in 1979. Only a limited number are held for use against dogs at close range in circumstances where no innocent bystander is likely to be affected. The irritation wears off after 10 minutes and tests have shown that there are no lasting ill-effects.

Seismological Research Group

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the current work of the seismological research group.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to the defence seismological centre at Blacknest, Berkshire, an outstation of the atomic weapons research establishment.

The centre is currently undertaking work on methods of detecting and identifying seismic disturbances including the operation of seismometer array stations in the United Kingdom. The centre also provides advice to the Government on seismological monitoring, and the results of much of its work are published from time to time in scientific journals.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to pay an official visit to the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Heseltine: No.

HTLV III Virus

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to test members of the armed forces for the HTLV III virus.

Mr. Lee: Blood donated by members of the armed forces for transfusion purposes is screened for the presence of antibody to the HTLV III virus in accordance with the guidelines issued by DHSS. At present there are no plans to extend the screening procedures.

Trident

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Defence at what time, how many and what yield of nuclear tests will be necessary by the United Kingdom to test the Trident D5 missile.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It is not in the national interest to identify the specific purpose of any joint United Kingdom/United States underground nuclear test or the weapon programme it supports.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimated cost of the Trident programme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced an estimate of cost of Trident of £9,285 million at 1984-85 prices and at an exchange rate of £1=$1·38 on 29 January at columns 134-37.

South Africa

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the units of Her Majesty's forces that have passed through South Africa on their way to neighbouring countries, naming the countries concerned, the purpose of the visit, and the date and length of stay in each case;

(2) further to the answer on 9 December, *Official Report*, columns 545-46, which neighbouring countries British service men have been en route for when they passed through South Africa.

Mr. Stanley: It is not our practice to give specific details of the military training we provide for foreign Governments or the units of the British service men involved. The length of training may vary from a few days to several years. Because of airline routeing considerations, British service men engaged in overseas training in countries such as Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland may pass through South Africa.

Foreign Forces (Training)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Defence what number of training places have been offered to Moroccan military personnel in Britain.

Mr. Lee: None in the recent past.

Royal Air Force Police (Public Displays)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards individuals acting as criminals at public displays by the Royal Air Force police being dressed for the purpose of the display in clothing carrying CND symbols; on how many occasions this has happened; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It is not the Ministry of Defence's policy to permit such individuals to wear CND insignia. I am aware of one case of an individual airman sporting a CND emblem without official knowledge and corrective action has been taken.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the detailed rules under which British companies working on strategic defence initiative related contracts will have to operate in importing technology from the United States of America.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The detailed arrangements for United Kingdom participation are contained in a secret memorandum of understanding. British companies are being suitably informed of provisions that affect their interests.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his assessment of the value of a strategic defence such as that envisaged in strategic defence initiative research against tactical low trajectory missiles, such as those deployed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against European targets.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It would be premature at this stage to form judgments about the feasibility of defences against low trajectory ballistic missiles.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the ownership of the rights to the technology that emerges from any United Kingdom-United States of America collaboration on strategic defence initiative-related research.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The matter of protection of intellectual property generated in the United Kingdom is fully covered in the arrangements that have been agreed.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what agreement he has reached with the United States Secretary for Defence on the protection of British interests in relation to strategic defence initiative research.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I am satisfied that the arrangements that have been agreed fully protect British interests.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many representations he had from scientists opposed to Her Majesty's Government's policy of promoting strategic defence initiative-related research.

Mr. Norman Lamont: None since the announcement of the Government's instruction to conclude a memorandum of understanding with the United States on this subject.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what are the terms of his advice to British industry concerning the scope offered by the strategic defence initiative agreement to British companies for dollar contracts and the conditions which would have to be fulfilled if such contracts are to be obtained;

(2) what examination he has made of the implications for patent law of sales by British universities of the product of strategic defence initiative-related research; and what steps he has taken to ensure that the agreement with the United States on strategic defence initiative safeguards the patent law interests of United Kingdom companies in relation to United States companies;

(3) what detailed steps he is taking to protect intellectual property in relation to strategic defence initiative initiatives;

(4) what detailed undertakings he has reached with the United States Administration about eliminating delay in the granting of permits for importing and exporting strategic defence initiative-related technology.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have nothing to add to the answer I have already given earlier today.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will name the areas he has identified in which British scientists have special expertise of interest to the strategic defence initiative, including lasers, advanced materials and electro-magnetic guns.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A list of 18 potential work areas has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence in what areas the strategic defence initiative office will carry out its own research to find opportunities for British participation in strategic defence initiative programmes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The SDI participation office will seek actively with its United States counterpart and British interests to identify opportunities for British participation in SDI research programmes.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to which British companies have already negotiated contracts related to the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I am aware of several opportunities which have reached an advanced stage, but not of any that have yet been concluded.

Defence Contracts (Excess Profits)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what financial payment his Department is making to Mr. Jim Smith following disclosures by him to the Department which led to £400,000 excess profits being recovered by the Department in respect of defence contracts placed with his then employer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The recovery by the Ministry of Defence of a sum of £421,000 followed from post costing of contracts initiated by the Ministry as part of its normal procedures and as the result also of information provided by the company concerned. No question of any payment to Mr. Smith arises. On the general question of rewards to informants, I have nothing to add to the Treasury minute (Cmnd. 9638) in reply to the 25th report from the Committee of Public Accounts, Session 1984-85, or to the evidence given to the Committee of Public

Accounts by Ministry of Defence officials in open session on 18 November 1985. The minutes of evidence are to be published shortly.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of communications exchanged between Mr. Jim Smith and his Department in relation to excess profits charged by Aish Ltd. on defence contracts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I am prepared to place in the Library copies of communications exchanged with Mr. J. Smith about additional profits secured by Aish and Company on defence contracts, provided that the hon. Member is satisfied that Mr. Smith would have no objection to publication of this correspondence.

Royal Navy

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he next plans to deploy a Royal Navy task group beyond the NATO area.

Mr. Stanley: I am glad to say that we plan to deploy a Royal Navy task group to the north Pacific, far east, Australasian and Indian ocean areas next April. The group, which will be led by HMS Illustrious, will spend some eight months on deployment before returning home to the United Kingdom next December.

Spare Munitions

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has received any representations from Royal Ordnance factories concerning spare munitions capacity.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 November 1985, c. *357*]: Representations have been received by my Department from Royal Ordnance plc concerning reserve capacity. Discussions are taking place between senior officials in the Ministry of Defence and the company's management.

Service Personnel (Signals Regiments)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 50 service men of 14 Signals Regiment, who have been discharged prematurely since 3 February 1984, have had to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for not completing their engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 December 1985, c. *594*]: Nineteen.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 83 service men of 9 Signals Regiment, who have been prematurely discharged since 3 February 1984, have had to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for not completing their engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 December 1985, c. *594*]: Sixteen.

Retirements and Redundancies

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing, for (i) the Ministry of Defence and (ii) the royal dockyards, for calendar years 1978 to 1984, the number of non-industrial civil servants by grade and age who have *(a)* taken early retirement and *(b)* been made redundant.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 November 1985, c. *360*]: The information is not held in the form requested and could be made available only at disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out the dates, yield and weapon tested for each nuclear weapon test carried out by the United Kingdom since 1970.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The United Kingdom, jointly with the United States of America, has conducted 14 nuclear weapons tests since 1970. They have all been conducted underground at the Nevada test site and were announced at the time. The following list detail dates, yield range and event name. The tests were required in order to maintain the effectiveness of our nuclear capabilities. It is not in the national interest to identify the specific purpose of each test.

Joint United Kingdom/United States Underground Nuclear Tests Conducted Since 1970

Date	*Yield (Kilotons)*	*Event Name*
23 May 1974	20-200	Fallon
26 August 1976	20-150	Banon
11 April 1978	20-150	Fondutta
18 November 1978	20-150	Quargel
29 August 1979	20-150	Nessel
26 April 1980	20-150	Colwick
24 October 1980	Low (less than 20)	Dutchess
17 December 1980	20-150	Serpa
12 November 1981	20-150	Rousanne
25 April 1982	20-150	Gibne
22 April 1983	Low (less than 20)	Armada
1 May 1984	20-150	Mundo
9 December 1984	20-150	Egmont
5 December 1985	20-150	Kinibito

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether Her Majesty's Government have now started discussions with the Australian Government on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on nuclear tests;

(2) what action Her Majesty's Government are taking on recommendation 6 of the report of the Australian Royal Commission into British nuclear tests, relating to the clearing up of Maralinga, Emu and the Monte Bello islands;

(3) if he will now make a statement on the report of the Australian Royal Commission on nuclear tests.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the answer given earlier today by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang).

ENVIRONMENT

Housing Expenditure, London

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the expenditure on housing in the area covered by the Greater London council in each of the years 1979 to 1985 in total net expenditure, total gross expenditure and gross capital expenditure.

Sir George Young: Most expenditure on housing is in the private sector, but statistical information for Greater

London is available only for the public sector. There is no appropriate definition of 'net' current expenditure, as there is a statutory requirement on local authorities that their housing revenue accounts must balance. Total current expenditure and gross capital expenditure in the public sector are given in the following table:

	1979/80	*1980/81*	*1981/82*	*1982/83*	*1983/84*	**1984/85*
Total current expenditure by local authorities	1,148	1,466	1,537	1,671	1,723	1,843
Gross expenditure by the Housing Corporation	112	142	143	202	190	195
Gross capital expenditure by local authorities	863	777	598	708	831	895

* Estimated

Sources:

1. For current expenditure by local authorities, Housing Revenue Account statistics compiled by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.
2. For Housing Corporation expenditure, estimates provided by the Corporation.
3. For gross capital expenditure by local authorities, Housing Investment Programme submissions (from HIP 2).

Housing Investment Programme

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what account he takes of the capacity of the private sector to provide rented accommodation when determining a local authority's housing investment programme allocation.

Sir George Young: The methodology for distributing housing investment programme allocations to regions and to individual local authorities is decided each year after consultation with the local authority associations. The practice has been to distribute 50 per cent. of the regional totals (40 per cent. in Greater London) on the basis of the generalised needs index and the remainder on the basis of the housing investment programme submissions made each year by local authorities, and the Government's general housing policies. A description of the method ology for 1986-87 will be placed in the Library when the individual allocations are announced.

Council Accommodation (Costs of Provision)

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the average cost of providing a new council dwelling to let, in terms of the first year debt charges on the loan and the general management costs for a year for a one, two and three-bedroomed non-sheltered dwelling in *(a)* Cheltenham, *(b)* Greater London, *(c)* England and *(d)* Great Britain.

Sir George Young: The information requested about costs of provision is not readily available from project control forms, except as averages for all sizes of dwellings. The average cost to a local authority in 1984 of providing a non-sheltered dwelling for rent was £30,500 in England and £42,000 in Greater London. The first-year debt charges on these costs, assuming an average interest rate of 11 per cent., would be £3,355 and £4,620 respectively. Separate figures for Cheltenham are not available. The average management and maintenance cost for all local authority dwellings in 1984-85 was £475 in England, £756 in Greater London and £479 in Cheltenham. Comparable information is not available for Great Britain as a whole.

Dogs

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will implement section A of appendix A to the report of the working party on dogs published in 1976; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Our consultation paper, issued last year, covered a number of proposals on dog licensing including those contained in section A of appendix A of the report of the working party on dogs. We will announce our conclusions on the subject as soon as possible. I understand that some 190 local authorities in Great Britain now have a dog warden service as recommended by the working party.

Nature Conservancy Council

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the applications for grant aid received by the Nature Conservancy Council for the current financial year, under section 38 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which have either been turned down, or where the grant sought was not met in full by the Nature Conservancy Council.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am advised by the Nature Conservancy Council that it is not their policy to publish details of grants refused. The other information is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

To date 47 land purchase grants have been offered of which only one was at a lower rate than sought. Nine applications have been refused. 332 project grants have been offered, 82 have been rejected. A further 339 are currently the subject of consultation and determination.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the numbers of dwellings in local authority ownership that were vacant for *(a)* over three months, *(b)* over six months, *(c)* over nine months and *(d)* over 12 months for the most recent date available in respect of (i) England, (ii) York, (iii) Leeds, (iv) Darlington, (v) Middlesbrough, (vi) Durham, (vii) Sheffield and (viii) Hull.

Sir George Young: Information about vacant dwellings owned by local authorities and about those vacant for more than a year and for more than two years (but not for other lengths of time) was collected in the authorities' 1985 housing investment programme returns. The figures for 1 April are listed in columns A19, A29 and A39, respectively, of the "HIP4(1985) all items print" which is available in the Library. Based on the returns and including estimates for local authorities which were unable to provide figures, there were 116,500 local authority dwellings vacant (including dwellings that had been

closed) in England at 1 April 1985, of which 26,100 had been vacant for more than a year and 13,500 for more than two years.

GLC (Stress Boroughs Programme)

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will issue his decision on applications made by the Greater London council for his consent under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1985 in respect of payments under the council's stress boroughs programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My Department has today written to the GLC to indicate that my consent has been given under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1985 to some payments which the council proposes to make to certain London boroughs. I have also considered the information that the council has provided about assistance that it has given during the 1985-86 financial year without my consent under section 91. The Department's letter indicates those individual payments where I have decided that I would not wish to exercise my discretion to direct the London residuary body to recover the value of the assistance from the authority concerned, together with those cases to which I will give further consideration in the light of any additional information provided by the GLC and the London boroughs. I am awaiting further information from the GLC in respect of payments made in 1984-85.

In issuing these decisions, I have made it clear that I am concerned about the continuing financial assistance proposed to be given by the GLC to individual boroughs on a selective basis, particularly where this involves funding activities continuing beyond abolition. I take the view that, with the approach of abolition, there is in general little justification for the GLC/MCC seeking at this stage to fund post-abolition activities from ratepayers' money. Decisions as to such funding are primarily the province of successor authorities. I shall therefore wish to look very closely at any further applications for my consent to such assistance under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1985. I wish to make it clear beyond doubt that if payments are made henceforth to selected borough or district councils without my consent, or if my consent is refused I will not hesitate to direct the appropriate Residuary Body to seek recovery of the money in every case where this appears to be justified.

Rate Limitation

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which authorities selected for rate limitation in 1986-87 have applied for a redetermination of their expenditure level under section 3 of the Rates Act 1984; and what decisions he has reached on those applications.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I received applications for a redetermination of the expenditure level from seven authorities. I have considered all the applications carefully, together with any other information I thought relevant, and in each case I have revised the expenditure level upwards as follows:

	Original EL £ million	*Redetermined EL £ million*
Camden	133,669	136,919
Greenwich	88,629	95,228
Hackney	119,422	128,572
Lambeth	144,068	152,309
Lewisham	112,062	115,594
Liverpool	265,070	274,550
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	151,252	154,652

Water Supplies (Leeds)

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the circumstances of the recent dislocation of water supplies experienced in the central areas of Leeds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: On 10 December 1985 a 42in water main, laid in 1871 from sources north of Leeds to Headingley, burst. The Yorkshire water authority had to close down two other parallel mains to allow repair, which proved to be unusually difficult. It was completed early on 13 December. Temporary loss of 40 per cent. of supplies to Leeds meant that up to 200,000 pople were without normal supplies which could not be restored fully until 15 and 16 December because it was necessary to recharge the system very slowly. Emergency supplies from water tankers and standpipes were provided with military assistance from 11 to 16 December. Co-operation between the Yorkshire water authority, the armed forces, Leeds city council, the emergency services, the area health authority and neighbouring water authorities was very good and all the agencies concerned deserve credit for their efforts to overcome this unusual emergency. An internal inquiry by board members and the chairman of the central division consumer consultative committee is being mounted immediately into the cause of the burst and the measures taken to deal with it. The findings will be made public.

London Docklands

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his statement on 11 December that 4,700 jobs have been created in the London docklands, *Official Report*, column 944, he will tabulate in the *Official Report* for each of the three London boroughs concerned, together with respective totals, the permanent jobs in the area of the London Docklands Development Corporation that have been *(a)* transferred from outside and *(b)* created within the area since the establishment of the corporation.

Sir George Young: As I said in my answer to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 29 January 1985 at column 128, this information is not collected.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Prescott asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the respective safety criteria in terms of man/sieverts used for the management of low and intermediate levels of solid radioactive waste according to *(a)* his Department's report, "Assessment of Best Practicable Environmental Options" and *(b)* the International Commission on Radiological Protection; and what is the basis for the difference between those criteria.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Department's assessment of best praticable environmental options is based on levels of radiation protection in line with the safety principles for nuclear chemical plant issued by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and with the principles for the protection of the human environment issued by Government Departments responsible for authorising waste disposal. These include a maximum of 5 mSv a year as the average radiation dose for the work force on storage and disposal sites. After disposal, no member of the public should be subjected to a persistent exposure of more than 0·1 mSv per year. In both cases, the level is one tenth of the annual limit recommended by ICRP. The difference reflects our concern that all doses should be as low as reasonably achievable and leaves a safety margin for possible exposure pathways and health effects not at present recognised.

Mr. Prescott asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the internationally recommended limits of radiation exposure in man sieverts; and what assessment he has made of the risks to seamen and dockers involved in the disposal at sea of radioactive waste.

Mr. Waldegrave: The International Commission on Radiation Protection has recommended a limit of 50 mSv for the annual occupational radiation dose. An assessment has been made of doses to dockers and seamen involved in the disposal of radioactive waste at sea. This assessment was undertaken by the National Radiological Protection Board and published by them in June 1985 (ref DOE/RW/85-078). The highest actual dose recorded as being received by any individual was 12 mSv; most were under 2 mSv.

Mr. Prescott asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what monitorings of the radioactive effect upon dockers and seamen were conducted during the disposal at sea of radioactive waste and how many dockers and seamen were involved, during each year since 1955.

Mr. Waldegrave: From 1977 to 1982, all the dockers and seamen involved in handling radioactive waste for disposal at sea were issued with film badges to facilitate the monitoring of dose levels. No information is available on the numbers of workers involved or for the period prior to 1977.

Mr. Prescott asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list and describe the individual maximum permitted radiation exposure levels in milli sieverts for dockers and seamen, respectively, involved in disposal at sea of radioactive waste, for each year between 1955 and 1976.

Mr. Waldegrave: The maximum permitted dose to workers occupationally exposed to radiation is 50 milli sieverts per year. This limit applies to both dockers and seamen, and it remained unchanged throughout the period from 1955 to 1976.

Mr. Prescott asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the levels of radiation dockers and seamen were exposed to in the disposal at sea of radioactive waste in each year since 1955; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Levels of radiation dose to dockers and seamen associated with the disposal at sea of radioactive waste between 1977 and 1982 are set out in a report published by the National Radiological Protection Board in June 1985 and entitled; "A Review of the Radiation Exposure of Transport Personnel" during the radioactive waste disposal operations from 1977 to 1982 (ref. DOE/RW/85-078). No information is available on levels of radiation exposure to United Kingdom dockers and seamen before 1977, and no sea disposals have taken place since 1982.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table, showing for the most recent available year, an analysis by local planning committee area, of the number of planning appeals under section 36 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 made to him, from each such area, together with the number of appeals upheld and rejected, respectively, for each such area.

Mr. Tracey: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Liverpool Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) on 25 November at column *366*.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning decisions by local planning authorities in England were reversed on appeal to his Department during the last 12 months period for which figures are available; and how this compares with similar figures for each of the preceding five years.

Mr. Tracey: There were 14,150 planning appeals decided in the 12 months between October 1984 and September 1985. Of these, 5,041 were successful. Published figures for the last five calendar years are as follows:

Year	*Number decided*	*Number allowed*
1980	13,130	4,044
1981	14,451	4,721
1982	12,915	4,003
1983	11,221	3,633
1984	11,643	3,773

Local Government Reform

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the balances of the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils after abolition.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have today published a consultation paper. Copies are available in the Library.

I understand that some of the outgoing authorities, and the GLC in particular, have significant resources available to them which will not be required for the discharge of their functions during their remaining period of existence. Now that abolition is less than four months away I consider that it would not be appropriate for the outgoing authorities to incur significant expenditure on major new initiatives without the express support of all successor authorities in the area.

The benefit of the cash book balances of the outgoing authorities should be returned to local people. I am proposing that this should be achieved by distributing the balances through the residuary bodies to the boroughs and districts in the proportion in which their ratepayers contributed, that is to say pro rata to rateable value. There

will be special arrangements for certain of the new authorities to receive a share, notably the Inner London education authority. I hope that in most areas the residuary body will be able to make a first distribution very shortly after abolition day. A final distribution will be made once the accounts of the outgoing authorities have been closed, taking account of the best available estimate of the outstanding amounts owed to creditors and due from debtors.

My intention continues to be that the residuary bodies should in general distribute in full the cash associated with capital receipts, mainly to the boroughs and districts, and that the receipts should also serve to increase those authorities' permitted levels of capital expenditure. But I am proposing one change. I believe there is a good case for allowing the residuary bodies to retain the proceeds of repayments of principal on mortgages, so that they can follow the normal local authority practice of using such repayments to redeem debt. The associated spending permission would still be passed to the boroughs and districts.

These are my proposals. I shall consider carefully the responses to the consultation paper before taking final decisions.

Pollution

Dr. Hampson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made with the monitoring of bathing waters which was proposed in paragraph 33 of the Government's response to the 10th report of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution.

Mr. Waldegrave: A list of over 350 bathing waters in the United Kingdom has been agreed with the authorities concerned. It includes all the more important resorts and other bathing places. The waters will be monitored over two years according to the regime given in the bathing water directive (76/160/EEC). I expect to publish the results. The list of bathing waters, which includes those identified for the purposes of this Directive, follows.

LISTS OF BATHING WATERS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY

North West Water Authority (30 waters)

Cleveleys
Fleetwood
Blackpool, Squires Gate to South Shore
Blackpool, South Shore to Central Pier
Blackpool, Central Pier to North Shore
Blackpool, North Shore to Cleveleys
Morecambe, West End Pool to Sandylands Pool
Morecambe, West End Pool to Leisure Park
Morecambe, Bare Pool to Town Hall Slipway
Morecambe, Town Hall to Leisure Park
Heysham
Pasture Road, Moreton
Dove Point, Meols
New Brighton
St. Annes
Walney Island, West Shore
Askam-in-Furness
Walney Island, Sandy Gap
Walney Island, Biggar Bank
Roan Head
St. Bees
Seascale
Haverigg
Silecroft
Silloth
Allonby
Bardsea
Ainsdale
Southport
Formby

Northumbrian Water Authority (15 waters)

Whitley Bay
Tynemouth
Redcar
Saltburn
Whitburn, Roker
South Shields
South Beach, Seaton Sluice
Seaton Carew
Newbiggin
Druridge Bay
Crimdon
Warkworth
Bamburgh, Seahouses
Alnmouth
Beadnell

Yorkshire Water Authority (21 waters)

Filey
Whitby
Skipsea
Withernsea
Cayton Bay
Sandsend
Robins Hood's Bay
Hornsea
North Landing, Flamborough
Reighton Sands
Runswick Bay
Wilsthorpe
Fraisthorpe
Earle's Dyke
Turstall
Barmston
South Landing, Flamborough
Scarborough, North Bay
Scarborough, South Bay
Bridlington, North Beach
Bridlington, South Beach

Anglian Water Authority (29 waters)*

Skegness
Ingoldmells
Chapel St. Leonards
Anderby Creek
Moggs Eye
Mablethorpe, Sutton-on-Sea
Cleethorpes
Hunstanton
Heacham
Yarmouth (three waters)
Lowestoft (two waters)
Cromer
Sheringham
Felixstowe (two waters)
Wells
Mundesley
Southend, Thorpe Bay
Southend, Westcliff
Clacton
Walton
Dovercourt
Frinton
Jaywick
Brightlingsea
Holland

* Consultations have not been completed and there may be a few changes to this list.

Southern Water Authority (65 waters)

Ventnor
Bembridge
St. Helens
Cowes
Compton Bay
Whitecliffe Bay
Totland Bay
Seagrove
Colwell Bay
Gurnard
Margate
Ramsgate
Broadstairs
Folkestone
Camber Sands
St. Mildreds Bay
Herne Bay
Hythe
Joss Bay
St. Margarets Bay
Sandgate
West Beach
Minnis Bay
Deal Castle
Sandwich Bay
Littlestone
St. Marys Bay
Dymchurch
Leysdown
Margate
Ryde
Sandown, Esplanade
Sandown, Shanklin Chine
Southsea, South Parade Pier
West Hayling
West of Eastoke
Stokes Bay
Lee-on-Solent
Eastney
Highcliffe
Milford-on-Sea
Calshot
Lepe
Christchurch Bay, Barton-on-Sea
Brighton
Eastbourne
Hastings
Hove
Bognor Regis
Pevensey bay
Littlehampton
Worthing
Bexhill
Rottingdean and Saltdean
Middleton on Sea
Bracklesham
Norman's Bay
Selsey
West Wittering
Southwick
Seaford
Winchelsea
Newhaven
Shoreham
Pagham

Wessex Water Authority (37 waters)

Clevedon (beach near the swimming pool)
Weston-super-Mare extension (between River Axe and existing classified bathing water)
Sand Bay
Berrow
Burnham on Sea
Brean } continuous beach Brean Down to river Brue
Blue Anchor
Dunster
Minehead
Porlock Weir
Charmouth
Seatown
Eypemouth
West Bay (west)
Portland Harbour
Weymouth Extension
Church Ope Cove
Bowleaze Cove
Ringstead
Durdle Door (east and west)
Lulworth Cove
Kimmeridge
Studland
Shell Bay
Poole Harbour, Lake
Poole Harbour, Rockley Sands
Poole Harbour, Shore Road
Hengistbury Head (east)
Mudeford Sandbank (west)
Friarscliffe
Highcliffe
Christchurch
Bournemouth
Poole
Swanage
Weymouth
Weston-super-Mare

South West Water Authority (101 waters)

Lyme Regis
Seaton
Beer
Sidmouth
Budleigh Salterton
Sandy Bay
Exmouth
Dawlish Warren
Dawlish
Teignmouth
Shaldon
Ness Cove
Maidencombe
Watcombe
Babbacombe
Redgate
Hollicombe
Shoalstone
St. Mary's
Dartmouth Castle and Sugary Cove
Stoke Fleming, Blackpool Sands
Slapton Sands
Millbay
Salcombe, North Sands
Salcombe, South Sands
Hope Cove
Thurlestone
Bantham
Bigbury
Challaborough
Mothecombe
Wembury
Bovisand
Plymouth Hoe
Seaton
East Looe
Readymoney
Polkerris
Par and Spit
Crinnis, Carlyon Bay
Charlestown and Duporth
Porthpean
Pentewan
Polstreath
Port Mellon
Gorran Haven
Portluney
Pendower

Gyllyngvase
Swanpool
Maen Porth
Portholiow
Porthoustock
Coverack
Kennack Sands
Mullion Cove
Polurrian Cove
Poldhu Cove
Gunwalloe Cove
Porthleven
Praa Sands
Marazion and Mounts Bay
Porthcurno
Carbis Bay and Port Kidney
The Towans, Hayloe to Gwithian
Portreath
Porthowan
Trevaunance Cove
Perranporth
Holywell Bay
Crantock
Watergate
Mawgan Porth
Treyarnon Bay
Trevone Bay
Harlyn Bay
Rock
Daymar Bay
Polzeath
Widemouth Sand
Bude
Hartland Quay
Westward Ho!
Instow
Saunton Sands
Croyde Bay
Woolacombe Sand
Ilfracombe
Combe Martin
Lynmouth
Torquay, Oddicombe
Torquay, Meadfoot
Torquay, Torre Abbey
Paignton, Paignton Beach
Paignton, Goodrington
Paignton, Broadsands
Penzance, Sennen
St. Ives, Porthmeor
St. Ives, Porthminster
Newquay, Fistral
Newquay, Towan

Welsh Water Authority (40 waters)

Barry
Southerndown
Trecco Bay
Sandy Bay
Rest Bay
Aberavon
Swansea Bay
Bracelet Bay
Caswell Bay
Limeslade Bay
Langland Bay
Oxwich Bay
Port Eynon Bay
Rhossili Bay
Pembrey
Pendine
Amroth
Saundersfoot
Tenby
Broadhaven
Newgale
Whitesands Bay
Newquay
Aberystwyth
Borth
Tywyn
Fairbourne
Barmouth
Llandanwg
Harlech
Morfa Bychan
Criccieth
Pwellheli
Abersoch
Trearddur Bay
Llandudno
Colwyn Bay
Kinmel Bay
Rhyl
Prestatyn

Northern Ireland (11 waters)

Benone, County Londonderry
Castlerock, County Londonderry
Portstewart, County Londonderry
Portrush, County Antrim
Helen's Bay, County Down
Crawfordsburn, County Down
Bangor (Ballyholme), County Down
Groomsport, County Down
Millisle, County Down
Newcastle, County Down
Cranfield, County Down

Scotland (20 waters)

Nairn
Aberdeen
Cullen
Fraserburgh
Arbroath
Carnoustie
St. Andrews
Aberdour
Gullane
Kinghorn
North Berwick
Yellowcraigs
Pease Bay
Sandyhills
Ayr
Girvan
Irvine-Gailes
Prestwick
Saltcoats, Ardrossan
Troon (south)

SOCIAL SERVICES

Post Office (Lost Business)

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what business he plans to offer to the Post Office to replace that lost by the transfer of benefit payments to automated credit transfer; and what account he has taken of representations on this matter, received subsequent to the 1979 Rayner report from bodies representing rural interests.

Mr. Major: We have already transferred the issue of milk tokens to the Post Office and will continue to offer it business provided it is an efficient way of meeting the requirements of the Department and the needs of beneficiaries. Our aim is to provide a cost-effective payment service whilst keeping under review the effect on the Post Office of the growth in payments by automated credit transfer and the needs of beneficiaries in rural areas.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of consultative documents concerning proposals to close wards or hospitals or to make changes in the use of hospital services which have been published since 1979 by district health authorities within the four Thames regional authorities; how many decisions have been made; and, of these, how many decisions differed from the proposals originally made.

Mr. Hayhoe: Departmental records show that from May 1979 up to the end of June 1985 there were 208 proposals for closure or change of use of entire hospitals or parts of hospitals. A final decision had been reached on 167 of them and many proposals where the decision was to proceed have been modified, sometimes very extensively: detailed information is not, however, collected centrally. Eighteen proposals were not proceeded with.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of *(a)* single claimants and *(b)* couples were interviewed in connection with their claims for Department of Health and Social Security payments at home nationally and in the Sheffield district in the last three years.

Mr. Major: The information requested is not available. Statistics kept on home visits do not differentiate between single claimants and couples. However, the total numbers of effective visits made in the last three years were as follows:

Year ending	*Nationally*	*The four Sheffield Offices*
April 1983	3,370,575	40,880
April 1984	3,515,234	38,413
April 1985	2,999,693	34,398

Students

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to lay revised regulations to safeguard the social security position of students receiving income from their parents through covenants; and if he intends to make any other changes affecting students.

Mr. Newton: Regulations will be brought before the House in the early part of next year to restore, in time for the 1986 summer vacation, the Government's policy on the treatment of students' covenanted income for supplementary benefit purposes. The intention is that the parental or spouses' contribution to the student grant will be attributed to the grant-aided period only; if the student has no grant the amount attributed will be equal to the maximum ordinary maintenance grant appropriate to his case. Any excess will be taken into account over the full year. Provision will also be made for the treatment of covenanted income for housing benefit purposes.

There will be consultation on these draft regulations with the Social Security Advisory Committee and the local authority associations. This will form part of the consultation on wider proposals for modifying the social security system as it affects students, and for making some adjustments in student grant arrangements, which were foreshadowed in paragraph 3.34 of the social security White Paper published on Monday.

As the earlier social security Green Paper made clear, the Government's long-term aim is to return to the former position where students were helped by grants, by their families and by their own vacation earnings. Meanwhile, however, we consider it would now be right to make some limited changes — which will apply to all students whether grant aided or not — to tackle the least appropriate and most wasteful aspects of the present arrangements. These include the payment of supplementary benefit and UB in the short vacations, which result in benefit payments of only about £4 million of benefit at an administrative cost of some £2 million; and the payment of housing benefit to those in halls of residence, which results in benefit payments of only about £5 million at an administrative cost of some £3 million. Other housing benefit provisions will be changed to bring the treatment of students into line with that of other claimants; to prevent payment for accommodation which they are not using during the long vacation; and to simplify administration for local authorities which at present have to reassess student claim six times a year.

Accordingly, the Government propose to exclude full-time students from supplementary benefit and unemployment benefit in the short vacations; to exclude students in halls of residence from housing benefit; and to make a number of other changes in the housing benefit arrangements, including a limitation on payment for accommodation from which students are absent in the long vacation. We do not, however, propose at present to make any changes in students' entitlement to supplementary benefit or unemployment benefit in the long vacations.

Apart from the provisions relating to covenants and to housing benefit in the long vacation, which we aim to bring into effect earlier, the intention is to implement these proposals from the start of the 1986-87 academic year. At the same time, we shall make improvements in the housing benefit disregards for books and travel costs to bring them into line with present supplementary benefit disregards; and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science will be making increases in the grants paid to students living away from home and improvements in the students' dependants hardship scheme.

Details of the proposals will be set out in a consultation paper early in the new year, when draft regulations will also be sent to the Social Security Advisory Committee and the local authority associations.

North-East Thames RHA

Mr. Norman Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all the members of the North-East Thames regional health authority, together with their occupational background and the expiration dates of their appointments.

Mr. Hayhoe: The occupational background of potential members is only one of the factors taken into account when considering appointments. We have not therefore considered it necessary to update this particular information in our records and these details could now be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The other information requested is as follows:

Member	Appointed until
Cllr. Mrs. Sonia Anderson	30 September 1986
Cllr. Mrs. Nora Dain	30 September 1986
Cllr. Mrs. Jean Frost	30 September 1986
Dr. John Hamblin	30 September 1986
Dr. Silvain Josse, OBE	30 September 1986
David Hague Esq.	30 September 1986
Mrs. Frances Heidensohn	30 September 1986
John Marks Esq.	30 September 1986
Frank Hencher Esq.	30 September 1986
Richard Brew Esq., CBE	30 September 1988
Donald Hoodless Esq.	30 September 1988
Dr. Ian Kelsey Fry	30 September 1988
Martin Easteal Esq.	30 September 1988
Rodney Bass Esq.	30 September 1988
John Quinton Esq.	30 September 1988

Lipoflavanoid

Mr. Parris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the review committee on National Health Service drugs has yet considered whether to recommend that Lipoflavanoid be added to the list of drugs which can be prescribed within the National Health Service.

Mr. Hayhoe: The Advisory Committee on National Health Service Drugs as not yet considered Lipoflavanoid. A submission from the manufacturers is awaited.

Clinical Complaints

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) on how many occasions in the last five years for which figures are available health authorities have been sued by patients complaining about clinical judgment; in what proportion of these cases an out of court payment was made; and in what proportion a payment followed a court case;

(2) in how many cases, after a clinical complaints procedure had been carried out, an ex gratia payment was made to a complainant in the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Whitney: I regret that this information is not available centrally.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will categorise the reasons why some cases referred to the clinical complaints procedure were found unsuitable for review.

Mr. Whitney: Cases have been found unsuitable for review because the complaint was not of a substantial nature or was likely to be the subject of action by the health authority or through the courts; or because the length of time which had elapsed since the actions giving rise to the complaint made a review impracticable.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to changes in the number and proportion of cases of complaint made to the Health Service Commissioner which he had to reject because they involved clinical judgment since the introduction of the clinical complaints procedures in 1981.

Mr. Whitney: Information is not available in the form requested. The following is taken from the annual reports of the Health Service Commissioner:

Period (1 April to 31 March)	Total cases		Clinical judgment rejections	
	Concluded	Rejected	Total	Percentage of all rejections
1979-80	570	418	115	27·5
1980-81	676	517	128	24·8
1981-82*	699	561	145	25·9
1982-83	786	671	220	39
1983-84	889	584	222	38
1984-85	798	445	150	34

* The clinical complaints procedure was introduced on 1 September 1981.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many written complaints have been made to hospital authorities in the last three years for which figures are available; how the complaints were investigated; and what proportion involved clinical judgment.

Mr. Whitney: The information requested is given in the table.

Written complaints relating to NHS hospital services, England

Type of complaint	Number of Complaints 1982	1983	1984 (provisional)
Total number of written complaints	16,218	19,255	22,354
Proportion of written complaints wholly or partly clinical	43·2	42·5	42·1
Method of investigation:			
By health authority officers	16,014	19,033	22,137
Referred to health authority members:			
*Further action unnecessary	103	80	78
†Investigation by members	33	58	27
‡Independent inquiry	4	11	13
‖Investigation by two independent consultants	¶32	59	69
Method yet to be decided	32	14	30

* "Further action unnecessary" refers to complaints reported to the Authority (or an appropriate Sub-Committee) for decision as to further action, where the decision was that further investigation was unnecessary.
† "Investigation by members" means the procedure in para 7(111) (a) of HM(66) 15, modified by the co-option of one or more persons independent of the Authority concerned. (Recommended in Department's letter "Arrangements for ad hoc Committees of Enquiry" of 9.12.66).
‡ "Independent inquiry"—the procedure in para 7(111) (b) of HM(66)15.
‖ Investigation of complaints concerning clinical judgement (as set out in Part III of HC(81)5).
¶ Cases investigated 1.9.81 to 31.12.82.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the representations he has received, and their sources,, which have recommended that the Health Service Commissioner should be allowed to consider complaints involving clinical judgment.

Mr. Whitney: I am aware of only one such representation since the introduction of the clinical complaints procedure in September 1981. This was made by the hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Wardell) in May 1985.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year for which figures are available since the clinical complaints procedure was started, the figures for *(a)* the number of complaints referred to regional medical officers, *(b)* the number and proportion which were given independent reviews, *(c)* the number and proportion thought to be unsuitable for independent reviews, *(d)* the number and proportion withdrawn voluntarily, *(e)* the number and proportion completed and *(f)* the number and proportion in which it was found that there was some failure of clinical judgment.

Mr. Whitney: The available information is as follows:

Clinical Complaints, England
Referrals to RMOs 1 September 1981 to 31 December 1984

	Total	Cases completed: Rejected/ Withdrawn	Resolved locally*	Independent review	Cases pending at end of period
1981-82†	108	50	26	32	76
1983	146	60	27	59	38
1984	190	77	45	69	89

* Resolved at stage 2 of the procedure laid down in part III of the annex to HC(81)5.
† Procedure came into operation 1 September 1981.

Leeds General Infirmary

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if the Yorkshire regional health authority has sent him a copy of the report it has received from the Leeds western district health authority on the conditions at Leeds general infirmary; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the state of the fabric at Leeds general infirmary; and if he will make extra resources available to the Yorkshire regional health authority for the improvement of conditions at Leeds general infirmary.

Mr. Whitney: We do not hold any detailed information on conditions at Leeds general infirmary. It is for the regional health authority to allocate resources to its districts in the light of its judgment of competing priorities. The regional health authority is aware of the Leeds western district health authority's aspirations and has proposed a new joint initiative to review the perceived problems and possible means of addressing the issues. I am sure that the district health authority will wish to welcome such an initiative.

Nurses (Uniforms)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) why his Department has decided not to make the nurses national uniform out of fire resistant material;

(2) what is the cost of a national nurses uniform in the current material;

(3) what would be the cost of a national nurses uniform made out of the fire resistant material considered by his Department.

Mr. Hayhoe: Following the circulation of the report on a "Trial of Nurses Dresses in Various Fabrics", the Health Service supply council consulted within the National Health Service and confirmed the Department's view that there was no reason for nurses to have a uniform dress with special flammability characteristics except in special circumstances where nurses are exposed to particular fire hazards.

The Department cannot disclose individual contract prices, but the annual value of national contracts for nurses dresses is currently £615,000. This figure does not take account of purchases negotiated separately by health authorities. A change of material to flame retardant polyester would increase costs by over 30 per cent.

Hospital Fires

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many fires have occurred in National Health Service hospitals in each year since 1979.

Mr. Whitney: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Health Services (London)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to decide whether or not to authorise the National Health Service information package on a London's health services.

Mr. Hayhoe No such information package exists or is under preparation.

NHS (Capital Schemes)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the cost of building and when building works were completed on the Queens medical centre, Nottingham, phase 3, Queen Mary's, Roehampton, phase 1, Southampton general hospital, phase 5, Derriford district general hospital, phase 1, New Cross Wolverhampton wards and theatres, Stafford district general hospital, phase 4, and Royal Liverpool hospital, respectively, referred to in the answer of 10 December, *Official Report*, column *614*.

Mr. Whitney: The information requested is as follows:

	Cost £ million	Completion date
Queens medical centre, Nottingham, phase 2	18·5	August 1980
Queen Mary's, Roehampton, phase 1	3·1	April 1984
Southampton general hospital, phase 5, west ward block	6·4	December 1981

	Cost £ million	Completion date
Derriford district general hospital, phase 1	9·2	February 1980
New Cross Wolverhampton, wards and theatres	2·0	June 1983
Stafford district general hospital, phase 4	11·4	November 1982
Royal Liverpool hospital, phases 2 and 3	11·8	December 1979

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which English regions were not included in the returns on earnings referred to in his answer of 10 December, *Official Report*, column *613*.

Mr. Whitney: Yorkshire, South Western, North-West Thames and South-East Thames regions. The system of data collection from payroll information is being progressively improved by the inclusion of additional regions. Yorkshire has been included in respect of data after April 1985.

NHS (Patient Care)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any National Health Service ancillary staff are involved directly in patient care.

Mr. Whitney: The duties allocated to individual National Health Service ancillary staff are a matter for the health authority and local management to determine subject to the terms and conditions of service agreed by the Ancillary Staffs Whitley council. While the duties of some ancillary staff are associated with patient care, they should be undertaken only under the supervision, direction and control of the professional staff responsible for treatment.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any National Health Service administrative staff are involved directly in patient care.

Mr. Whitney: The category of administrative and clerical staff used in National Health Service staffing statistics includes staff working in departments which provide direct patient care. Examples are medical secretaries, receptionists in clinics and outpatient departments and ward clerks.

Inpatients

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what evidence his Department has on the consequences to the health of patients of the reduction in inpatient average stays for hospital maternity services, acute surgical and geriatric services, respectively.

Mr. Whitney: The length of stay is a matter for the clinical judgment of the consultant responsible for the individual patient, taking all the circumstances into account. We have no evidence that the reduction in average length of stay has had a detrimental effect on patients. Indeed, patients may benefit from an early return home if the necessary services can be provided in the community.

NHS Staff (Disciplinary Proceedings)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many disciplinary proceedings against hospital medical and dental staff under HM (61) 112 have been commenced in each year since 1975 by each National Health Service region, respectively; and what was the outcome in each case;

(2) what has been the total cost for each National Health Service region, respectively, of disciplinary proceedings under HM (61) 112 in each year since 1975.

Mr. Hayhoe: I regret that the information requested is not collected centrally.

Private Contractors (Standards)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what procedures are followed by district health authorities, regional health authorities and his Department in the event of a contractor failing to achieve the standards laid down in a privatised cleaning, laundry or catering contract; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on how many occasions in the last year Ministers have been involved in dealings with contractors or holding companies of contractors failing to achieve standards laid down in privatised contracts; and which were the companies concerned.

Mr. Hayhoe: There have been only one or two occasions and the discussions were confidential.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any company has lost a cleaning, catering or laundry contract with a health authority in the last year for failing to achieve standards laid down in the contract.

Mr. Hayhoe: I am aware of only one case.

NHS (Private Contractors)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received by letter, telephone and conversation, respectively, from hon. Members about the privatisation of particular contracts in the National Health Service.

Mr. Hayhoe: A record of all such representations is not kept.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last had contact with directors, staff or consultants of Hospital Hygiene Services, Crothall's, Office Cleaning Services, Pritchards, Brengreen or any of their subsidiaries, respectively, concerning the contracting out of hospital services.

Mr. Hayhoe: Officials of my Department have frequent contact with contractors concerning competitive tendering.

Patients (Special Beds)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will issue a circular to all health

authorities asking them not to discharge any patients from hospital if special beds necessary for their care at home are not available at the time of their discharge.

Mr. Whitney: I have no plans to do so. A patient's readiness for discharge is a matter for the clinical judgment of the responsible consultant. I would, of course, expect him to satisfy himself that any necessary provision would be made to care for the patient on his return home.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 10 December, *Official Report*, column *612*, on what evidence he bases his conclusion that boroughs and districts will be able to support worthwhile voluntary sector activity following the abolition of the metropolitan county councils and the Greater London council; and what representations he has received.

Mr. Whitney: We believe that it will be possible for worthwhile voluntary activity to continue to be supported when account is taken of the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985, the arrangements for transitional funding announced during the passage of that legislation, and the assurance then given about the adjustment of rate support grant. These measures, together with the scope available to most local authorities for cost improvement in the exercise of their main functions, will provide adequate resources. General representations on this subject are a matter for the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total sum paid each year since 1979 by the metropolitan county councils and the Greater London council to voluntary organisations in health and social services.

Mr. Whitney: This information is not held centrally.

Child Health

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make a statement on the condition of child health in each year since 1979 as revealed by the child health surveillance programme;

(2) what was the total number of children seen by school nurses during the child health surveillance programme in 1978 and each year since.

Mr. Whitney: The available information about the number of pupils seen by nurses is shown in column I of the table. We do not collect centrally information about the overall condition of children's health, but the proportion of pupils referred on for medical examination or treatment is shown in column II of the table, and although there are fluctuations, is broadly constant.

School Health Service in England. Health surveillance by nurses

Year†	*I Pupils seen by nurses* (Thousands)*	*II Pupils referred for medical examination or treatment as percentage of pupils seen by nurses*
1979	4,027	4·9
1980	4,533	5·4
1981	4,579	5·5
1982	4,621	5·6
1983	4,492	5·2
1984	4,450	5·6

* Not including hygiene inspections.
† Information not collected before 1979.

Cost Improvement Programmes

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any district health authorities have made representations to him about the scope for savings in cost improvement programmes in 1985-86 compared with 1984-85.

Mr. Hayhoe: No such representations have been received.

Budget Spectacles

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the general information collected by his Department on the market price of budget spectacles.

Mr. Hayhoe: The collection of general information is keeping pace with the developing position in the competitive market for budget spectacles.

NHS (Resources)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the process by which his Department decides on the adequacy of resources for the National Health Service in absence of figures such as the number of patients awaiting cardiac bypass treatment or the number waiting for hip joint replacements.

Mr. Whitney: The Government reach their view about the level of resources required for the National Health Service taking into account on the one hand what is affordable within their overall public expenditure objectives and the ability of the service to improve the efficiency with which it uses resources, and on the other hand the broad pressures which the service faces from demographic change and medical advance and to make improvements in priority areas. Within the total resources available, the expectation is that health authorities will meet all pay and price increases and demographic change and that they will improve services, including areas such as heart surgery and hip joint replacements. What is actually achieved will depend on the actual levels of pay and price increases, and on decisions of health authorities locally on specific service developments.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department's questionnaire about cervical cancer provision was sent to each health authority; by what date they were asked to reply; and whether he intends to publish the outcome.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the progress of discussions with health authorities on improving the effectiveness of laboratory facilities for processing cervical smears.

Mr. Hayhoe: In the course of the normal annual notification to health authorities of service priorities for planning purposes they will be asked to give priority within their available resources to improving their cervical screening programmes including ensuring that laboratories can meet demand. It will be for each health authority to decide what action is needed to achieve the latter objective in the light of local circumstances. No specific discussions on this issue are now proposed.

Share Fishermen

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why periods of less than seven consecutive days of unemployment are now being disregarded when calculating the duration of the off-season in the application of the seasonal workers' regulations to share fishermen.

Mr. Newton: The seasonal workers regulations reflect recommendations made in a National Insurance Advisory Committee report published in 1952. This suggested that, in the interests of common sense and administrative economy, short periods of less than one week when a person was not working, should be ignored as inconsiderable in reckoning his off-season. The report also recommended that share fishermen should be classed as seasonal workers where their employment is of a seasonal nature and that their title to unemployment benefit during their off-season should be decided upon the same lines as adopted for other seasonal workers. There have been no recent changes to these regulations.

Board and Lodging

Mrs. Currie asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the Minister of State the hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) has anything to add to his statement to the House of 17 December regarding the number of board and lodging claimants who have been paid arrears of benefit in respect of the suspension of time limits following the High Court judgment in the Cotton case in July and regarding the costs of those payments.

Mr. Newton: I would like to correct one point I made in reply to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 17 December 1985, at column 170. While I correctly indicated that, following the original Cotton judgment by the High Court on 31 July 1985, arrears of benefit have been paid to some 8,500 claimants, the total amount of money involved was about £750,000, not £250,000 as I inadvertently said.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 19 December 1985

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

UNESCO

Mr. Budgen asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of programmes which will benefit from the money saved by withdrawal from UNESCO.

Mr. Raison: We intend to allocate through the aid programme in the next financial year the amount saved from the UNESCO contribution of about £6·4 million to the following activities: the ODA technical co-operation training programmes; a joint scheme to provide scholarships in the United Kingdom for Chinese students; the ODA shared scholarship scheme; the Key English language teaching programme, particularly in Francophone Africa; a distance learning programme among academic institutions in the Commonwealth; a Commonwealth training scheme for black South Africans at post-graduate level; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office scholarships and awards scheme; participation in the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the international geological correlation programme, in international hydrology and environmental sciences through the Natural Environment Research Council and research in arid Commonwealth Africa; dissemination of results of research at universities and other bodies and an increased grant to the Commonwealth Africa; dissemination of results of research at universities and other bodies and an increased grant to the Commonwealth media development fund.

I shall be responsible for the above programmes with the exception of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office scholarships and awards scheme. The diplomatic wing of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be responsible for our bilateral relations with UNESCO as from 1 January 1986.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Letter Post Service

Mr. Lightbown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made by the Post Office on the implementation of the recommendations made in the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the letter post service of the Post Office in the head post office areas of Glasgow, Belfast and Cardiff and in the numbered London postal districts, published on 12 September 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: I stated in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Terlezki) on 28 February, at column *241*, that I had received the initial response of the Post Office to the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, published in September last year, and that my Department had begun discussions with the Post Office on the commission's recommendations. Subsequently a detailed implementation plan, with provision for progress checks and a timetable for full and rapid implementation of those recommendations accepted by the Post Office, was agreed.

I have now received from the Post Office a report on progress in the year to September 1985. I am placing copies of the report in the Library of the House.

I am glad to say that the report indicates that the Post Office is working to the implementation plan and that good progress is therefore being made in implementing the commission's recommendations. A number of these had major industrial relations implications and it is therefore significant that the Post Office has successfully negotiated a far-reaching business efficiency package with the Union of Communication Workers (UCW). A prime aim of the agreement (when fully implemented) is to reduce the dependence of the mails business on voluntary overtime, which will be achieved mainly by using part-time and casual labour to cover work peaks. In addition, there are further improvements in productivity schemes and incentives. The agreement also provides for the speedy introduction of new technology, and the UCW has lifted its embargo on the extension of mechanised sorting of inward mail. The Post Office's report points out that the local implementation of this agreement has led to a number of unofficial industrial disputes, but the board remains committed to securing the improvements agreed with the UCW, even at the cost of temporary setbacks in quality of service.

The Post Office report indicates that progress is continuing to be made on the commission's recommendations for improving budgetary control and forecasting methods, and developments in financial control are being supported by the increased recruitment of qualified accountants at head post offices. The team of mails network inspectors is being trained for full introduction by March 1986, and the innovation of dedicated "matrix" transport systems has begun to make an impact on mails performance, with the national first-class delivery performance in August coming to within 0·5 per cent of its target of 90 per cent. of first-class letters delivered the working day following collection.

Although the Post Office has made good progress towards implementing almost all of the commission's recommendations, there is still more to be done, and my Department will be continuing to monitor the Post Office's adherence to the implementation plan.

I should like to take this opportunity to convey the Government's thanks to the commission for its wide-ranging and stimulating investigation.

Grain Exports

45. **Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the current level and scope of export credits for sales of British grain.

Mr. Channon: ECGD support for sales of British grain is available. Normally such support would be restricted to sales on credit terms of up to 180 days but consideration can be given to support of extended credit to public buyers in certain markets to match foreign competition.

Associated British Foods

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether he will prosecute Associated British Foods under section 243 of the Companies Act for failing to deliver full accounts for the year 1984-85;

(2) whether he will require Associated British Foods under section 447 of the Companies Act 1985 to produce to him all documents relating to its contributions to the Irish Republican Army in 1984;

(3) whether he will prosecute Associated British Foods under section 393 of the Companies Act in relation to information supplied to the company's auditors covering the contributions to Irish Republican Army funds in 1984;

(4) whether he will appoint inspectors under section 432 of the Companies Act 1985 to investigate the affairs of Associated British Foods in respect of illegal contributions to the Irish Republican Army.

Mr. Howard: I have no evidence that full accounts have not been delivered or that false information has been provided to the auditors. I know of no reason to appoint inspectors or to require the production of documents but shall consider any information that the hon. Member may have about the company.

Distribution and Media Sales (UK) Ltd.

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will appoint an inspector under section 432(2) of Companies Act 1985 to inquire into the affairs of Distribution and Media Sales (UK) Ltd. on the grounds that the affairs of the company may have been conducted with intent to defraud its creditors.

Mr. Howard: I know of no reason for doing so but shall consider any information which the hon. Member may have about the company.

Small Businesses

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many responses he has received to his Department's consultation document on the accounting and audit requirements for small companies; what proportion favoured change and what proportion favoured the retention of the status quo; and when he expects to make a statement of Government policy on this matter.

Mr. Howard: We have received a total of 204 resonses. Overall, views on the audit requirement are more or less evenly divided, though most of those arguing for its abolition would either limit it to "shareholder managed" companies or introduce in its place new rules relating to the preparation or certification of accounts. On accounting requirements, there is a clear majority for simplification, though a significant minority believe present requirements should be maintained and, in some cases, strengthened. Our analysis of the responses is now virtually complete and I would expect to announce the outcome in the course of the next few weeks.

Westland plc

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the implications of the proposed Westland deal with United Technologies for Her Majesty's Government's policy on the retention by avionics companies supplying technologically advanced products to Her Majesty's Government of a full research and development capability.

Mr. Pattie: I believe the continuation of helicopter design, development and production at Westland will be good for the business of United Kingdom avionics companies and will thus help them to maintain a full research and development capability.

Office of Fair Trading

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to increase the cash limit for the Office of Fair Trading; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the cash limit for Class IV, Vote II (Office of Fair Trading) will be increased by £800,000 from £7,479,000 to £8,279,000 to meet the increased costs of computerising the consumer credit licensing operation. The additional amount will be charged to the reserve, and so will not add to the planning total of public expenditure.

Council of Ministers (Research)

Mr. Grylls asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress was made at the meeting of the Research Council of European Community Ministers on 10 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: The Community's Council of Ministers (Research) met on 10 December 1985 in Brussels: I represented Her Majesty's Government.

The Council reached agreement in principle on the financial resources for and technical content of two research programmes proposed by the Commission in the fields of the environment and materials. The formal adoption of these programmes by Council is subject to the opinion of the European Parliament.

The environment programme will cover research into environmental protection, climatology, including a small element on earthquakes, and major techonological hazards and has been allocated a total of 75 million ecu (£45,525,000 sterling) over a five-year period 1986 to 1990.

The materials programme will cover research into primary and secondary raw materials, advanced materials, which will form nearly one half of the programme, and wood and has been allocated a total of 70 million ecu (£42,490,000 sterling) over a four-year period 1986 to 1989.

The Council also held a discussion on the 1984-87 budget of the Community's joint research centre and noted the Commission's intention to find savings of 20 million ecu (£12,140,000 sterling) during 1986 and 1987.

The Council also agreed the 1986 work programme for the European strategic programme of research on information technology (ESPRIT), subject to a United Kingdom parliamentary reserve (which has been subsequently lifted); invited the Commission to consider integrating into the existing science and technology for development programme a proposal for the development of endogenous scientific and technical research capacity in developing countries; and discussed an Italian proposal on an initiative for research in informatics applied to society (IRIS).

Trade Descriptions (Origin Marking)

Mr. Yeo asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government have come to a decision as to the future of the Trade Descriptions (Origin Marking) (Miscellaneous Goods) Order 1981 following the judgment of the European Court of Justice delivered on 25 April in the current year.

Mr. Howard: After consulting organisations representing those interests most likely to be affected, and having taken into account all the views expressed, it has been decided that the only sensible course is to revoke the 1981 order in its entirety. I propose to make an order to that effect early in the new year.

Gas Appliances (Exhibition)

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will arrange for an exibition relating to gas appliances and safety to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall from 3 to 7 February 1986.

Mr. Howard: Arrangements have been made for such an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall to take place from 3 to 7 February 1986.

Securities and Investments

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice he has received from the Securities and Investment Board and the Marketing of Investments Board Organising Committee concerning their future operations.

Mr. Brittan: The chairmen of these two bodies have written to me proposing that the effectiveness of the regulatory system put forward in the Financial Services Bill will best be served if responsibility were to be placed in the hands of a single authority. I accept their view, which I know to reflect opinion both of practitioners and consumers and to command much sympathy in the House. I look forward to receiving detailed proposals at the appropriate time in 1986. When the new body is formed, it is intended that its chairman should be Sir Kenneth Berrill and its deputy chairmen should be Mr. Mark Weinberg and Sir Martin Jacomb.

DEFENCE

Ulster Defence Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* the new training procedures for the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Mr. Stanley [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *102*]: I regret that the original answer given was incomplete. The full answer should read:

"Training in all branches of the armed forces is kept under review in an effort to identify possible improvements and a number of such improvements in the training of the UDR have either recently been set in hand or are about to be introduced, as follows:

a. The basic training of part-time members of the regiment is to be increased from nine to 14 days. The extra five days will be completed within the recruits' first three months of service.

b. Until now UDR officers, full or part-time, have attended a two week course at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, but from next year selected permanent cadre officers will be eligible to attend the six-month standard military course taken by potential officers in the Regular Army.

c. UDR officers and NCOs already attend some courses in Great Britain in company with affiliated regular battalions and it is planned to extend this with a scheme of voluntary attachments of up to six weeks to infantry battalions in Great Britain.

d. A number of additional training posts are also being created within the UDR itself. There will be a new post at HQ UDR with specific responsibility for training throughout the regiment which will be filled by a lt.-col. reporting direct to Commander UDR. A senior NCO from the Regular Army will be attached to each UDR battalion to assist with training and also to the regiment's training centre at Ballykinler. These NCOs will assist both with the additional recruit training mentioned above and with training generally.

Trident Missile

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest expected deployment date of the Trident missile system.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The United Kingdom Trident force is planned to enter service in the mid-1990s.

Widows (Pensions)

Mr. Viggers asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many widows of service men have been granted pensions or special payments in the following circumstances: *(a)* where a widow has lost her service pension on remarriage and has then been widowed a second time and *(b)* where a woman marries her serviceman husband after his retirement and is then widowed; and what are the criteria upon which the decision is made and the amount assessed.

Mr. Lee: The number of widows pensions awarded in categories *(a)* and *(b)* could be provided only at quite disproportionate cost.

The conditions governing awards of pension and determination of amount in these categories are:

Category (a). A service pension may be restored to a widow on second widowhood if she is worse off after her second husband's death; that is if her income from all sources excluding DHSS benefits is lower than the income, including the service widow's pension, she was receiving after her first husband's death. The restored pension is enhanced by all the appropriate pension increases awarded since her first husband's death.

Category (b). The armed forces pension scheme provides a pension for a widow who married her husband after his retirement from the armed forces if service was given on or after 6 April 1978. The pension is calculated on the length of service given only since that date.

Exceptionally, an ex-gratia award of one half of the normal rate of widow's pension may be made in the case of a widow who did not marry her husband until after his retirement from the service but lived with him before his retirement provided there is evidence to show that the relationship was indistinguishable from a legal marriage, the couple were prevented from becoming legally married by reasons outside their control and they were legally married as soon as they were free to do so.

Mr. Seamus Mallon

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for Defence why Mr. Seamus Mallon was questioned last week by the Ulster Defence Regiment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: On 12 December Mr. Seamus Mallon was by a patrol of the Ulster Defence Regiment carrying out vehicle check point duties. The patrol carried out routine

checks as empowered by the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. Nothing untoward was found and Mr. Mallon was allowed to continue his journey.

VC10 Tankers

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when the Super VC10s and VC10s were purchased for the Royal Air Force for conversion to tanker aircraft;

(2) what is the total cost of the conversion programme for the Royal Air Force VC10s and Super VC10s;

(3) what is the length of the conversion programme for the Royal Air Force VC10 tankers;

(4) when the programme for conversion of the VC10s and Super VC10s purchased by the Royal Air Force began.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *98*]: Standard and Super VC10s were purchased for the Royal Air Force in 1978 for conversion to tanker aircraft, and conversion began the same year. The total cost of the programme has been some £160 million at outturn prices. The last aircraft is due to be delivered to the service next year.

Procurement Contracts and Projects

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which current procurement contracts and projects have not been completed within the due period;

(2) with which contractors his Department is negotiating in respect of overdue procurement contracts and projects;

(3) if he will list the current procurement projects and contracts whose terms and conditions he is reviewing.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 December 1985, c. *546*]: At any one time the Ministry of Defence has approximately 100,000 headquarters contracts in operation. To review them all in order to answer the issues raised would require disproportionate time and administrative effort. If the hon. Member has any particular instance in mind, I shall be happy to write to him.

ENERGY

Coalminers (Redundancy)

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will make a statement on redundancy terms for mineworkers following the expiry of the present redundant mineworkers' payment scheme on 29 March 1986.

Mr. Peter Walker: The generous benefits available under the redundant mineworkers payments scheme have enabled the National Coal Board to maintain its policy of not making redundant men who wish to continue to work in the coal industry, while carrying through the extensive restructuring that is needed to secure the industry's future viability. The coalminers' dispute, in addition to the other damage which it inflicted on the industry, delayed that necessary restructuring. Against that backgroud, I have concluded that it would be right for the present to maintain broadly the present level of scheme benefits. I have also concluded that it would be right to make available additional weekly benefits to men aged 50 or over on redundancy whose total weekly benefits would otherwise be seriously reduced by their failure, through deficient national insurance contribution records in 1984-85, to qualify for unemployment benefit or sickness benefit at the standard rate. Men who receive this additional weekly benefit will, however, have their lump sum benefits under the scheme reduced in recognition of their having failed to pay full national insurance contribution.

In summary, my proposals are as follows.

Weekly basic benefit and pension supplement paid to men aged 50 or over on redundancy will continue as under the present scheme; there will be a new basic benefit table, calculated as in previous years. It will continue to be a condition for receipt of these benefits that the beneficiary is unemployed or sick; but it will no longer be a requirement that he qualifies for unemployment benefit or sickness benefit.

Redundant mineworkers who qualify for less than the standard rate of unemployment benefit or sickness benefit as a result of a deficient national insurance contribution record for 1984-85 will, subject to certain conditions, be eligible for a sum equal to the difference between benefit at the standard rate and the benefit, if any, to which they are actually entitled. The equivalent of unemployment benefit will continue to be paid under existing rules to men aged 50 or over on redundancy after they have exhausted their entitlement to unemployment benefit.

Lump sums payable to men aged 50 or over will be calculated as under the present scheme, but they will be reduced by £600 for those who qualify under the new provisions outlined above for additional weekly scheme benefits at the standard rate of unemployment benefit or sickness benefit, and by £550 for those who qualify for additional weekly scheme benefits at a lower rate.

Lump sums payable to men aged under 50 on redundancy will continue to be calculated as under the present scheme.

Intitlement to contributory benefits under social security legislation or to statutory redundancy payments under employment legislation will not be affected by these proposals.

I shall in due course lay before the House for approval a draft order incorporating these proposals. They do not affect the operation of the present scheme, which expires on 29 March 1986.

Fuels (Capital Investment)

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on the level of capital investment in the United Kingdom in the production and supply of *(a)* oil, *(b)* gas, *(c)* coal, *(d)* nuclear fuels for energy purposes.

Mr. Peter Walker: In 1984 gross domestic fixed capital formation (capital expenditure on fixed assets) in United Kingdom energy industries was:

	£ million
Extraction of mineral oil and natural gas*	3,223
Mineral Oil processing	201
Gas supply	651
Coal and coke	394
Electricity	1,700
Nuclear fuel Production† (all aspects)	380

* Separate figures are not available due to the joint production of oil and gas from several fields.
† 1984-85.
Source: Mainly Table 10.8 United Kingdom National Accounts 1985 Edition.

North Sea Rigs

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to the number of personnel working on rigs in the North sea and as to the numbers of British nationals, EEC nationals and others involved.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The numbers requested are as follows:

Personnel at 30 September 1984

Nationality	*On fixed Platforms*	*On Floating Platforms and Supply Boats*
British	14,683	11,921
Other EC	207	986
Non-EC	443	3,039
Total	15,333	15,946

The above figures are derived from the Inland Revenue's annual "Survey of Offshore Personnel" taken on 30 September 1984 and are the most recent available.

Nuclear Installations (Incidents)

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will name, list and describe the various categories and classifications used by his Department in recording accidents, incidents and untoward occurrences of varying severity, including events without any radiological consequences, at *(a)* licensed nuclear sites and *(b)* Atomic Energy Authority sites; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will name, list and describe what information is held by his Department in regard to an event in the nature of an accident, incident or untoward occurrence of any type at *(a)* a licensed nuclear site and *(b)* an Atomic Energy Authority site, identifying by name the different categories or classifications of events for which certain information is held; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will name, list and describe what information is held by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate in regard to an event in the nature of an accident, incident or untoward occurrence of any type at *(a)* a licensed nuclear site and *(b)* an Atomic Energy Authority site, identifying by name and different categories or classifications of events for which certain information is held; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Member the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, Central (Mr. Moore), to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 26 July 1982, at column 374. The reporting procedures set out therein apply to both licensed nuclear sites and those operated by the Atomic Energy Authority.

Iranian Oil (Imports)

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will state the amount in millions of barrels of oil per day imported from Iran for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The published annual volumes of *Overseas Trade Statistics* of the United Kingdom give imports from Iran in tonnes. These figures converted to millions of barrels per day, are as follows:

Oil imports from Iran

	Million barrels per day
1975	0·34
1976	0·39
1977	0·25
1978	0·18
1979	0·06
1980	0·02
1981	0·02
1982	0·03
1983	0·01
1984	0·04

North Sea Oil Development

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Energy what technology agreements have been concluded with overseas companies engaged in oil development in the Scottish sector of the North sea; and what is their worth.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I have not made any technology agreements with overseas companies engaged in oil development on the United Kingdom continental shelf, nor do I have any plans to do so. I am encouraging the anchoring in the United Kingdom of new technology developed for the UKCS, but the means which may be used are for the commercial parties involved.

NCB (Enterprise) Ltd.

Mr. Corrie asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will arrange for an exhibition relating to the activities of NCB (Enterprise) Ltd. to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Peter Walker: I understand that arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from Monday 20 January 1986 to Friday 24 January 1986.

Health and Safety

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many persons have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in the nuclear industry in each year since 1960.

Mr. Goodlad: The information requested is not readily available, but I hope to provide it shortly.

Mr Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many persons have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in coal mining in each year since 1960.

Mr. David Hunt: The figures requested for the National Coal Board are as follows:

Year	*Fatal*	*Serious reportable or major injuries*
1960	316	1,553
1961	234	1,464
1962	255	1,541
1963-64	236	1,325
1964-65	181	1,276
1965-66	217	1,156
1966-67	145	1,000
1967-68	130	975
1968-69	115	788
1969-70	82	672
1970-71	92	599
1971-72	58	578
1972-73	78	569
1973-74	60	461

Year	Fatal	Serious reportable or major injuries
1974-75	56	576
1975-76	59	538
1976-77	28	515
1977-78	48	520
1978-79	72	480
1979-80	31	456
1980-81	39	*601
1981-82	34	826
1982-83	44	807
1983-84	22	746
1984-85	12	213

Note: * The definition of major injuries became wider during this year.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Shops Bill

Mr. Best asked the Attorney-General what means exist for enforcing the current legislation on Sunday trading hours; if any changes are proposed to the system in the light of the proposals contained in the Shops Bill *[Lords]*; and if he will make a statement.

The Solicitor-General: The Shops Act 1950 provides that, save for certain authorised transactions, every shop in England and Wales is to be closed for the serving of customers on a Sunday. Breach of those provisions is a criminal offence, and the Act makes it the duty of every local authority to enforce within their districts the provisions of the Act, and for that purpose to institute and carry out such proceedings in respect of contraventions of the provisions as may be necessary to secure observance of them: see section 71.

That duty and the way in which its discharge should be approached were considered by the House of Lords in the case Stoke-on-Trent City Council *v.* B & Q (Retail) Limited [1984] AC 754. In that case Lord Roskill adopted a passage from the judgment of Mr. Justice Webster in an earlier case as to the manner in which a local authority was to approach its duty, and Lords Diplock, Fraser of Tullybelton and Templeman all agreed. That passage is as follows:

"The duty of that authority under Section 71(1) is first of all to consider—and these matters may have to be done at the same time, but not necessarily—whether that conduct prima facie constitutes a contravention of the provisions of the Act. If so, then they have to consider whether it is necessary to institute and carry on proceedings in respect of that prima facie contravention in order to secure the observance of provisions of the Act. If they decide that it is necessary to do so, then they have a duty to institute and carry on these proceedings."

Lord Roskill further stated that when considering whether it was necessary to institute and carry on proceedings he saw no reason why the local authority was not entitled to have regard, in relation to the particular case or cases in question, to the financial consequences to it of any suggested action.

I consider it accordingly clear that Parliament has placed upon each local authority in England and Wales a duty to consider fully any alleged contravention of the law relating to Sunday trading which is brought to its attention.

Local authorities have further powers under section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972.

In Stoke-on-Trent *v.* B & Q (Retail) Limited [1984] AC 754 the House of Lords held that the council was entitled to use those powers to institute proceedings for injunctive relief where it was satisfied and that such relief was the only way to stop deliberate and flagrant flouting of the provisions relating to Sunday trading in its area.

This statutory power may be exercised only where the authority considers it expedient for the promotion of protection of the interests of the inhabitants of its area: see section 222(1). I understand from my rt. hon. Friend the Home Secretary that a substantial number of local authorities have used this power, and have obtained injunctions against such offenders.

Section 222 does not deprive the Attorney-General of his general power to enforce obedience to public law by proceedings ex officio or by relator action. Nevertheless, the court in the Stoke-on-Trent council case was advised on behalf of the Attorney-General that in his view section 222

"was clearly designed to confer a substantial measure of autonomy on local authorities in respect of law enforcement within their areas. The Attorney-General welcomes that autonomy in regard to the control of those activities generally associated with local authority jurisdiction."

My right hon. and learned Friend adheres to that view, considering that a local authority will generally be in a better position than the Attorney-General to judge whether it is expedient for the promotion or protection of the interests of the inhabitants of its area that proceedings for an injunction should issue to restrain the breach of the Sunday trading provisions of the Shops Act 1950.

The proposals in the Shops Bill [Lords] will, if enacted, remove the current restrictions on Sunday trading hours. consequently, the need for the enforcement of those restrictions will be removed.

Ms. Adebola Makenjuola

Mr. Cohen asked the Attorney-General if, pursuant to the answer of 14 November, *Official Report*, column 266, regarding the investigations of an alleged serious sexual assault on Ms. Adebola Makenjuola, the Director of Public Prosecutions has now completed his consideration of the police report; and if he will make a statement.

The Solicitor-General: The matter is still under consideration.

Associated British Foods

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he will prosecute Associated British Foods under section 10(2) of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1984 for making a £2 million payment to the Irish Republican Army.

The Attorney-General: I at present have no evidence which would justify the action suggested by the hon. Member, but if he would let me have the information on which his question is based I should be happy to examine it and, if appropriate, ask the Director of Public Prosecutions to invite the police to investigate it and to report the result to him.

Fraud (Member's Correspondence)

Mr. Dobson asked the Attorney-General when he expects to reply to the question about fraud tabled by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras and to which the Solicitor-General gave a holding reply of 9 December, *Official Report*, column 426.

The Solicitor-General: I wrote to the hon. Member on 18 December 1985.

Legal Aid

Mr. Sheerman asked the Attorney-General what guidance is issued by his Department or the Law Society on the application of regulation 33 of the legal aid regulations; and how many cases are determined by area committees each year in which regulation 33 is applied, broken down according to area and to different types of case.

The Solicitor-General: Regulation 33 of the Legal Aid (General) Regulations 1980 concerns the grant of legal aid for proceedings in which others beside the applicant himself have the same interest. Guidance on the interpretation of the legal aid regulations is issued by the council of the Law Society and is published in the "Legal Aid Handbook". A copy of the most recent (1984) edition is in the Library. Guidance on regulation 33 appears on pages 214 and 216. No statistics are kept of the numbers of legal aid applications determined under individual regulations, and the information requested, could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Law Centres

Mr. Sheerman asked the Attorney-General what response Her Majesty's Government have made to the report of the Lord Chancellor's advisory committee on legal aid calling for financial support to those law centres whose funding is threatened.

The Solicitor-General: The Government's general position on law centres has been made clear; there are no plans to withdraw or reduce the funding currently provided by the Lord Chancellor's Department to seven law centres, nor to extend that commitment to other centres.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement about the future funding of law centres.

The Solicitor-General: The Government have acknowledged that law centres may have a part to play in the provision of legal services, as a supplement to the legal aid and advice schemes, where this suits local circumstances. Such centres are seen as essentially matters for local decision and initiative. Central Government support continues to be provided through the urban programme, in accordance with its general principles and procedures, and the Lord Chancellor's Department continues to provide funding to seven law centres.

Fraud Investigation

Mr. Budgen asked the Attorney-General whether he is yet in a position to make any announcement about the resources available to the Director of Public Prosecutions for fraud investigation work.

The Solicitor-General: I told the House on 2 December at column 12, that the resources available to the fraud investigation group of the Director of Public Prosecution's department were being reviewed. My right hon. and learned Friend has arranged to recruit nine professional officers to the fraud divisions to add to the 15 now employed there. There will also be corresponding increases in non-professional support staff. My right hon. and learned Friend will not hesitate to provide further staff for the Director if that is necessary.

ENVIRONMENT

Smith Houses

Sir Reginald Eyre asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he proposes to take to help owners of Smith houses in the Birmingham area whose houses also suffer from use of shale fill in their foundation.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has now reached a decision on the designation of Smith houses under the Housing Defects Act; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The Government have decided that Smith houses should be designated under the Housing Defects Act. As my hon. Friends are aware, the Building Research Establishment has recently carried out a study of Smith houses in Sandwell. The BRE found vertical splitting and cracking, caused by deterioration of the steel handling reinforcement bars. BRE's advice is that this defect can be expected to manifest itself in all Smith houses at some stage. We are therefore satisfied that it is a defect of design or construction with effects on value sufficiently serious to warrant designation of all Smith houses. The BRE's report is being published today and I am placing copies in the Library. Copies are being sent to those authorities which have reported that they own Smith houses.

The Government are also aware of the particular problems faced by owners in the Birmingham area, where colliery shale fill has been used in the foundations of some Smith houses. My Department will be seeking urgent discussions with Birmingham city council, to explore whether any further measures are needed to assist such owners, including whether the council might wish to make a local designation under the Act in respect of those properties.

Under the Act a local designation in respect of a building has to precede any national designation applying to that building.

In order to provide time for the discussions with Birmingham city council (and any other council that believes there may be Smith owners in that position) the formal national designation will not be made straight away. But I can assure Smith home owners that their position will be protected: the designation, when made, will specify today as the "cut-off-date" for assistance under the Act. This means that owners who bought before today's announcement will be within the scope of the Act. They will of course need to satisfy the other requirements of the Act, notably that the house concerned must have been sold, at some stage, by a public sector authority.

I very much recognise the anxieties and concerns Smith home owners have experienced over the last year. I hope that this announcement will help to put their minds at rest, and that they can now look forward to the assistance to which they will be entitled under the Act. I recognise that most owners will wish to have their house repaired. To that end, we will be discussing with the National House Building Council an extension of its approval and warranty scheme for repair methods (operated by its subsidiary,

PRC Homes Ltd.) to Smith houses. I hope that repair methods for Smith houses will therefore emerge quickly and that local authorities will be able to offer reinstatement grant wherever repair is the appropriate solution.

The Secretary of State for Wales is taking similar action, in relation to Smith houses in Wales.

Housing Investment Programme

Mr. Powley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide details of the allocation to local authorities for housing investment programme for 1985-86.

Mr. John Patten: The allocations for 1985-86 were announced on 20 December 1984. My right hon. Friend announced on 20 November 1985 that gross provision for capital expenditure by local authorities on housing in 1986-87 is £2,532 million, and the total available for allocations to local authorities is £1,465 million. In setting the allocation total, account was taken of the need to bring actual expenditure into line with provision, of spending power from capital receipts and of the increasing use local authorities are making of other opportunities for capital expenditure. The gross provision figure includes £26 million, and the allocation total includes £23½ million, for the homes insulation scheme. This is expected fully to meet total demand, though my right hon. Friend will bear in mind Energy Efficiency Year in considering any applications from individual authorities for additional allocations.

From the allocation total, a sum of £50 million has been reserved for the first time for projects identified by local authorities in conjunction with the urban housing renewal unit of my Department. The unit has been set up to help local authorities to develop imaginative options for tackling the problems of their rundown, difficult-to-let estates. A reserve of £2½ million is also being established from which further allocations for the homes insulation scheme can be made in accordance with demand. The total available for initial allocations is therefore £1,412·5 million, of which, as in the current year, £21 million is for the homes insulation scheme. Each local authority is today being informed of its own allocation for 1986-87. Copies of the letter to authorities and the schedule of initial allocations have been placed in the Library and the Vote Office.

The methodology for distributing the allocations has been modified this year in order to place greater emphasis on the needs for expenditure in renovating the local authority housing stock, the incidence of homelessness, the housing needs of the inner cities, and the obligations of local authorities under the Housing Defects Act 1984. and £30 million will be chanelled direct to those regions, such as the south-west and the south-east, in which certain authorities are expected to have particularly large obligations under the Housing Defects Act. A detailed description of the methodology has been placed in the Library.

Nitrate Levels

46. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the most recent figures for the nitrate levels found in public drinking water supplies in East Anglia, compared with the acceptable standard.

Mr. John Patten: Nitrate levels in public water supplies are within acceptable limits. In East Anglia (that is Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) water containing less than 50 mg nitrate per litre, which is the standard in the EC drinking water directive, was supplied to 1½ million people between July and September this year. Water supply containing between 50 and 67 mg nitrate per litre was supplied to 200,000 people. Water from one small source serving 430 people contained greater concentrations of nitrate and the source has now been abandoned.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the London borough of Newham concerning the future ownership of land at the northern end of the Thames barrier, currently in the ownership of the Greater London council.

Mr. Tracey: The London borough of Newham has requested that surplus GLC-owned land at the northern end of the Thames barrier should be transferred to the borough council at abolition. That request is being considered against the background that the general principles of the proposed property transfer order would result in the land passing initially to the London Residuary body.

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list separately for *(a)* the six metropolitan county councils and *(b)* the Greater London council, the number of civil servants working in his Department on duties associated with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1985, listing in each case the numbers and ranks of officers and the estimated cost per year of each group.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. 15]: The information the hon. Member requested is as follows.

It has not been possible in all cases to divide staff effort on implementation of the Act between effort in relation to the GLC and MCCs. Staff whose duties fall into this category are listed under "general implementation".

The cost, including accommodation, of employing these staff for a full year would be approximately £2·95 million (1985 prices), including £340,000 for the staff whose work relates wholly to the GLC and £320,000 for the staff whose work relates wholly to the MCCs.

Grade	*Estimated Full Time Equivalents*		
	GLC	*MCC's*	*General Implementation*
Grade 2	—	—	0·2
Grade 3	0·1	0·8	1·4
Grade 5	1·0	0·7	7·8
Grade 6		—0·4	0·3
Senior Legal assistant	—	—	4·0
Principal	2·9	4·1	11·8
Principal information officer			0·1
Principal Planning officer	—	—	0·4
Principal research officer	—	0·5	—
Principal professional and technical officer	—	0·1	—
Senior executive officer	0·9	0·9	6·6
Senior research offecer	—	0·6	—
Higher executive officer/HEO(D)	3·0	3·0	11·2
Executive officer/administration trainee	2·6	1·8	8·3
Clerical officer	1·1	1·2	4·0
Clerical assistant	0·2	1·3	0·9
Senior personal secretary	0·1	0·2	0·1
Personal secretary	1·0	0·1	5·1
Typist	—	—	2·6
Total	12·9	15·7	64·8

Rent Arrears

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the level of rent arrears in respect of council house accommodation for each year since 1979 for *(a)* England, *(b)* York, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Darlington, *(e)* Middlesbrough, *(f)* Durham, *(g)* Sheffield and *(h)* Hull.

Sir George Young: Provisional figure for gross rent arrears on 31 March in each of the years since 1979 were as follows:

£ million

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
England (all authorities)	54·39	97·6	97·1	126·61	161·81	183·0	203·7
York District Council	0·01	0·006	0·04	0·06	0·07	0·14	0·09
Leeds Metropolitan District Council	0·97	0·66	1·82	1·18	2·56	3·24	3·10
Darlington District Council	0·06	0·09	0·16	0·16	0·17	0·12	0·10
Middlesbrough District Council	0·12	0·25	0·37	0·73	0·90	0·84	0·91
Durham District Council	N/A	0·006	0·007	0·02	0·03	0·03	0·04
Sheffield Metropolitan District Council	0·75	0·65	0·86	1·53	1·94	3·63	9·65
Kingston-upon-Hull District Council	0·30	0·32	0·62	0·63	0·79	0·72	0·82

Pollution

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will be in a position to publish the proposed Green Paper on the control of atmospheric pollution.

Mrs. Rumbold: I expect to publish a consultation paper on this subject in the new year.

Thamesmead Community Trust

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends that the Thamesmead community trust should take over responsibility for the assets of Thamesmead from the London Residuary Body.

Sir George Young: On 2 April 1986, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the first elections for the Thamesmead community trust to take place; who will be responsible for supervising the election; what qualifications will be required of prospective candidates; and who will determine the electoral areas.

Sir George Young: I expect the elections to be held in late February 1986, supervised by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. An offer from the London borough of Bexley to conduct the ballot is being considered. Candidate qualifications and electoral areas are being discussed with a steering group drawn from existing local community organisations.

Willowbrook Estate, Peckham

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why he has refused permission for the improvements on the Willowbrook estate in Peckham; if he will reconsider the matter; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young: This scheme is being allowed to proceed, subject to the normal reappraisal at tender stage.

Council House Sales

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of council homes sold since the introduction of the right-to-buy legislation for each local authority district; what percentage this is of the local authority housing stock; if he will also provide the relevant figures for *(a)* houses on which options to buy have been granted to tenants and not yet taken up and *(b)* houses on which options have been taken up but where the sale has not yet been completed; and if he will express all these figures as a percentage of the national total.

Sir George Young: I am placing in the Library the latest version of the regular table showing sales completed by local authorities in England up to September 1985.

The term "options to buy" is not used in the right-to-buy legislation. The table shows the available figures of numbers of claims made by tenants and, of these, the numbers where the right to buy has been admitted by the authority.

Between October 1980 and September 1985 an estimated total of 885,300 claims under the right to buy had been made to local authorities in England and 496,450 sales had been completed. No authority has received more than 3 per cent. of the national total, and most of the 367 local housing authorities accounted for less than 1 per cent. of the total.

Urban Programme

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why the nine authorities listed in his answer of 16 December, *Official Report*, column *18*, which do not appear in the comparison of key indicators of deprivation, have been invited to bid for traditional urban programme new approvals for 1986-87.

Sir George Young: The table given in my reply of 16 December compared authorities in terms of the intensity of need on key indicators. In deciding which authorities should be invited to bid for new approvals under the traditional urban programme in 1986-87 account was also taken of the scale of need, and of changes in unemployment since the census.

Superstore Development, Cippenham

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce his decision on the planning application in respect of the proposed superstore development at Cippenham in Slough.

Mr. Tracey: Consideration of the inspector's report of the inquiry into this appeal is well advanced and I expect the decision to be issued early in the new year.

Water and Sewerage Charges

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received about the implications of the Government's financial targets for the prospective water supply and sewerage charges by North West water from 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I have received representations from the chairman of the authority and comments by the Confederation of British Industry have been sent to me. The rise in charges will be about 10 per cent., which is less than the confederation had feared.

Richmond Terrace

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make the offices in Richmond terrace available to hon. Members when the rehabilitation work is completed.

Sir George Young: No. It is intended to use the accommodation in the Richmond terrace redevelopment as Government offices. More offices for Members will become available, though, when phase I of the new parliamentary accommodation in Parliament street is completed in 1990.

Law Centres

Mr. Sheerman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to support those law centres whose funding may be affected by the abolition of the Greater London council and metropolitan counties.

Sir George Young: After abolition, the responsibility for making local authority grants to voluntary organisations, including law centres, will pass entirely to borough and district councils. The Government have made provision to enable local authorities collectively to fund countywide projects, and are making grant-aid available for a transitional period to help individual boroughs and districts take on grants for local groups.

Housing Corporation

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has decided the breakdown of the Housing Corporation's approved development programme for 1986-87.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend announced on 20 November that the gross provision for the Housing Corporation in 1986-87 was £685 million. This figure comprises an allocation of £585 million, plus an estimated £100 million of capital receipts. Of the gross provision of £685 million, £521 million will be needed to meet existing commitments on fair rent and hostel projects, and £82 million to meet commitments on low cost home ownership projects.

The balance of the provision will be used largely to finance new projects for rent, and low cost home ownership, including provision of £26 million for the scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations. At my right hon. Friend's request, resources for new fair rent and shared housing projects are being concentrated particularly on meeting special housing needs in inner city areas. The detailed breakdown of the programme is as follows:

Housing corporation—Approved development programme 1986-87

		£ million*	£ million*
Net allocation (cash limit)			585
Receipts			100
Gross allocation			685
Memorandum of Authorisation:			
Programme heads			
Existing fair rent and hostel projects			
1. Contracted expenditure (Block 1)			420
2. New tenders approved (Block 2)			101
3. New fair rent and shared housing projects (Block 3)			46
Other tenures			
4. *(a)* Improvement for sale *(b)* Leasehold schemes for the elderly *(c)* Shared ownership	Committed expenditure	82	104
(d) Home-ownership for tenants of charitable housing associations	New projects	22	
5. Major repairs			10
6. Mini HAG (for short-life properties)			2
			683
7. Right to buy mortgages			2
			685

* All figures expressed in estimated 1986-87 outurn prices.

Notes:

1. Included in blocks 2 and 3 (fair rent) and other tenures is an addional amount of £8·6 million provided by the Secretary of State to cover the cost of certain projects to be undertaken on Merseyside.

2. In addition to provision for low cost home ownership within the ADP a proportion of expenditure on committed and new projects is to be met by the use of index-linked private finance.

3. New fair rent and shared housing projects. The allocation of funds under this head will initiate projects to a total cost of some £430 million to be completed over the next three to four years.

Efficiency Scrutinies

Mr. Knowles asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what conclusions he has come to on recent efficiency scrutinies carried out in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young: I have today placed copies of the scrutinies of the identification and development of internal talent, and of the management of office accommodation, incorporating our response, in the Libraries of both Houses. These two scrutinies were carried out jointly with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport's Department. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him today by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport.

London Marathon

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions his Department has had with the organising committee of the London marathon regarding assistance from his Department for the 1986 marathon; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: None, except that I have been in correspondence with the London marathon organisation about the effects of the GLC's abolition on their use of County Hall buildings. I understand that, as a result, the organisers have had discussions with the London Residuary Body, to which County Hall will pass on 1 April 1986.

Homes Insulation Programme

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total amount paid to each local authority in each of the last five years under the homes insulation programme; and what is the amount allocated for 1985-86.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Empty Dwellings

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the percentage of empty dwellings in *(a)* the public sector, *(b)* the voluntary sector, *(c)* the private sector and *(d)* those owned and controlled by Her Majesty's Government, giving the numbers represented by the percentage.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. *60*]: The available estimates for April 1985, derived from English local authorities' housing investment programme returns, are as follows:

	Vacant dwellings	
	Number	*Percentage of stock*
Local authorities	109,500	2·4
Housing associations	15,400	3·5
Other public sector	19,200	6·6
Total public sector	144,100	2·7
Private sector	545,000	4·1
All sectors	689,000	3·7

In addition, local authorities owned 7,000 further dwellings which were closed making a total of 116,500 in all.

The "other public sector" figures in this case include local authorities' overspill estates (but not GLC housing, which has been included in the local authorities' figures), in addition to housing owned by new towns, county councils (for example, police houses), Government Departments and nationalised industries and other public agencies. Many of these dwellings are vacant because of operational requirements, notably those owned by the Ministry of Defence, and others have been acquired for demolition, for example by the Department of Transport. The Government are encouraging the sale of housing which is not required and many of those that are vacant are in the process of disposal.

Housing associations' acquisitions of dwellings for rehabilitation inflate the numbers which are vacant.

Vacant dwellings in the private sector include those which are in severe disrepair, those undergoing renovation or awaiting demolition, those which are empty while being sold or between lettings, and those whose owners do not wish to occupy or sell them but are deterred from letting by the Rent Act.

PRIME MINISTER

North Yorkshire

Q11. **Mr. Gregory** asked the Prime Minister when she intends to make an official visit to north Yorkshire.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Private Office

Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister what has been the cost of maintaining her Private Office since May 1979.

The Prime Minister: The cost to date of running No. 10 Downing street and all other costs associated with the Office of the Prime Minister (including the full costs for the financial year 1979-80) is £16,008,120.

Foreign Tours

Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister what has been the cost of her foreign tours since May 1979.

The Prime Minister: The latest estimate of the cost to the Prime Minister's Office of foreign visits during the period May 1979 to December 1985 is £2,165,852. This figure corrects an over-estimate of 1984-85 costs which was included in the answer given on 9 May 1985.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister what has been the cost of official entertaining at *(a)* Chequers and *(b)* Downing street (i) since May 1979 and (ii) since June 1983.

The Prime Minister: The latest figure for the cost of official entertainment during the period since May 1979 is £110,329. The latest figure for the period since June 1983 is £48,366. These figures cover entertainment at both Chequers and No. 10 Downing street; the information is not available by location.

Engagements

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

Mr. Pike asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

Mr. Sean Hughes asked the Prime Minister if she list her official engagements for Thursday 19 December.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister what representations she has had from the scientific community on strategic defence initiatives.

The Prime Minister: I have received a number of letters on this subject over the last year, but none from persons writing on behalf of scientific institutions.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will make a statement on the response to date in the Province to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: As at 17 December 1985 the Prime Minister and I had together received letters and messages from 475 individuals and organisations in northern Ireland in response to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The majority of these expressed reservations about or opposition to the agreement. There have also been responses by other organisations and individuals, some in favour of the agreement, some opposed, which cannot be accurately counted.

Security

Mr. Gow asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to what extent the principle that the armed forces in Northern Ireland operate only in support of the civil power has been breached during the past 12 months; and to what extent, during the same period, there has been no police presence in operations which involve direct contact with the community.

Mr. Tom King: The armed forces have at all times in the past 12 months acted in support of the civil power and will continue to do so. That is the foundation of our security policy. Records are not kept in a form which would allow an assessment of the extent to which over the last 12 months there has been no police presence in operations by the armed forces involving direct contact with the community.

Hospitals

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been *(a)* the total number of new hospital beds since May 1979 and *(b)* the total number of hospital beds closed, including those in hospitals which have been partially closed, since May 1979 by health board.

Mr. Needham: The information is not held centrally in the precise form requested. For the period in question the net change in hospital bed numbers was:

Health and Social Service boards
Hospital beds

Northern	+24
Southern	−55
Eastern	−145
Western	−231
All Boards	−407

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all new hospitals which have opened since May 1979 or are due to open over the next 18 months, indicating the first date on which approval for each scheme was given.

Mr. Needham: The information requested is as follows:

*Major Hospital Developments**	*Year of Approval*
New Belfast City Hospital	1960
Daisy Hill Hospital Phase 2	1970
Altnagelvin Area Hospital Cluster 1	1977
Altnagelvin Area Hospital Cluster 2	1983

* Developments costing over £2 million.

Rally (Belfast)

Mr. Proctor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what photographic surveillance was used by Her Majesty's security forces for the purpose of estimating the size of the rally which took place in Belfast city centre on Saturday 23 November; and what was the resulting estimate.

Mr. Scott: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Farm Aid

Mr. Parris asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the funding of the farm aid package for Northern Ireland.

Dr. Boyson: My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced on 28 November at columns 1033-41, details of a package giving increased rates of hill livestock compensatory allowances and emergency aid to livestock farmers affected by the exceptionally severe weather earlier this year.

The total aid package amounts to £25.3 million of additional expenditure in the United Kingdom: £20 million will be a charge on the reserve, with the balance of £5.3 million being found from offsetting savings in the agriculture and territorial programmes. The package will not therefore lead to an increase in public expenditure. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced on 28 November that Northern Ireland farmers would benefit by £5.5 million.

The contribution from Northern Ireland to the offsetting savings of £5.3 million referred to above is some £0.5 million. This amount has been found from savings from various sources in the agriculture cash limit programme. The cash limit for Northern Ireland departmental services NID 1 will be reduced by £0.5 million from £2,189.2 million to £2,188.7 million.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Jackson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the implications for Northern Ireland public expenditure programmes of the autumn statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 12 November.

Mr. Tom King: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 12 November, at columns *431-43*, announced total public expenditure planning figures for the Northern Ireland programme as follows:

Year	*£ million*
1986-87	4,520
1987-88	4,690
1988-89	4,820

The figure for 1986-87 represents an increase of some £250 million on the forecast outturn for 1985-86 and £60 million on the previously planned total for 1986-87 in the 1985 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 9428), adjusted for Budget measures. The figures for 1987-88 and 1988-89 have now been adjusted for technical reasons to £4,680 million and £4,810 million respectively. The former represents an increase of some £80 million on previously published plans.

I have decided on the following cash allocations to individual programmes (rounded to the nearest £5 million for 1986-87 and to the nearest £10 million for 1987-88 and 1988-89 — figures may not sum to totals because of roundings).

Programme	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*£ million 1988-89*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	80	90	90
Industry, energy, trade and employment	465	460	460
Transport	120	120	130
Housing	355	360	360
Other environmental services	170	170	170
Protective services	20	20	20
Education and science, arts and libraries	665	680	700
Health and personal social services	740	770	800
Social security	1,360	1,450	1,510
Other public and common services	75	80	80
Total Northern Ireland Departments	4,055	4,210	4,320
Northern Ireland Office			
Law, order, protective and miscellaneous services	465	470	490
Total Northern Ireland	4,520	4,680	4,810

The planning figure for 1986-87 will form the basis for preparation by Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office of Main Estimates for the coming year, which will be presented to Parliament in due course.

The allocations reflect my assessment of how best to distribute the Northern Ireland public expenditure total in response to local needs and circumstances. Copies of a more detailed statement on these allocations have been placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

National Health Service (Revenue and Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give for each health and social services board the revenue and capital expenditure on National Health Service services in each year since 1974, expressing the figures *(a)* in money terms, *(b)* adjusted by the gross domestic product deflator and *(c)* adjusted by the movement of National Health Service pay and prices.

Mr. Needham [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. *46*]: The following tables show revenue and capital expenditure on health services by health and social services boards in each year from 1974-75 to 1984-85.

The national movement in Health Service pay and prices has been applied to the combined total of board expenditure, as if might be misleading to apply it to the differing composition of the expenditure of individual boards.

Revenue and Captial Expenditure on Health Services by Health and Social Services Boards in Northern Ireland (see notes (1) to (3))
(a) Expressed in cash terms (£m)

Board	*Northern*		*Southern*		*Eastern*		*Western*	
Year	*Revenue*	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*	*Revenue*	*Capital*
1974-75	19·2	0·5	18·4	1·6	65·4	4·7	17·7	1·2
1975-76	25·4	0·6	24·5	2·2	86·2	7·0	23·6	2·3
1976-77	30·0	1·1	28·6	2·2	101·9	8·6	28·9	2·2
1977-78	33·7	2·0	32·5	2·3	113·4	9·9	32·0	1·6
1978-79	39·0	2·4	36·8	2·4	129·2	11·9	36·5	1·7
1979-80	47·8	2·8	45·7	2·0	158·9	12·8	44·1	2·9
1980-81	62·2	3·6	58·2	2·1	201·7	13·8	55·9	2·4
1981-82	70·3	4·2	66·0	1·9	223·6	13·8	63·8	2·7

Board	Northern		Southern		Eastern		Western	
Year	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital
1982-83	76·3	3·5	72·7	1·8	245·1	12·9	69·3	2·5
1983-84	83·2	3·1	78·2	1·5	261·9	14·7	74·8	3·6
1984-85	88·7	2·6	83·4	1·6	277·6	15·7	79·2	3·7

(b) *Expressed in cash terms adjusted by the gross domestic product deflator to a 1983-84 base*

Board	Northern		Southern		Eastern		Wstern	
Year	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital
1974-75	58·8	1·5	56·4	4·9	200·3	14·4	54·2	3·7
1975-76	61·9	1·5	59·7	5·4	210·0	17·1	57·5	5·6
1976-77	64·6	2·4	61·6	4·7	219·4	18·5	62·2	4·7
1977-78	63·8	3·8	61·4	4·3	214·4	18·7	60·5	3·0
1978-79	66·7	4·1	62·9	4·1	220·8	20·3	62·4	2·9
1979-80	69·9	4·1	66·8	2·9	232·4	18·7	64·5	4·2
1980-81	76·6	4·4	71·7	2·6	248·3	17·0	68·8	3·0
1981-82	78·6	4·7	73·8	2·1	250·0	15·4	71·3	3·0
1982-83	79·7	3·7	75·9	1·9	256·1	13·5	72·4	2·6
1983-84	83·2	3·1	78·2	1·5	261·9	14·7	74·8	3·6
1984-85	84·9	2·5	79·8	1·5	265·6	15·0	75·8	3·5

(c) *Expressed in cash terms adjusted by the movement of National Health Service Pay and Prices to 1983-84 base (see Note 3)*

Year	All boards
1974-75	417·4
1975-76	432·1
1976-77	450·2
1977-78	461·7
1978-79	480·9
1979-80	487·1
1980-81	481·1
1981-82	497·4
1982-83	508·1
1983-84	521·0
1984-85	522·6

Note:

(1) In Northern Ireland health and social services boards provide health services and personal social services. Accordingly, the figures shown above include an apportionment of common administration expenditure and both revenue and capital.

(2) The expenditure on capital includes major schemes undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Services on behalf of boards.

(3) Table *(c)* shows the combined expenditure (capital and revenue) of all boards adjusted by nationally derived factors (DHSS-London) to reflect the movement in NHS pay and prices.

RUC (Code of Conduct)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the new code of conduct of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Tom King [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *42*]: I understand that the Chief Constable hopes to introduce a code of conduct as soon as possible in 1986. Its publication will be a matter for his decision.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Peremptory Jury Challenge

Mr. Jessel asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment Her Majesty's Government make of the effect on the operation of the courts of the existence of the right of peremptory jury challenge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to what I said in the debate on jury challenges following the Consolidated Fund Bill yesterday.

Plastic Bullets (Police)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the discussions which took place recently between officials of his Department, the chief constable of the west midlands and the chairman of the West Midlands county council police committee about the use of plastic bullets; and what is his policy towards the borrowing of plastic bullets from the Metropolitan police by constabularies outside the London area.

Mr. Giles Shaw: In reply to a question by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mr. Lyell) on 26 November at cols. *515-16*, my right hon. Friend said that, where a chief constable concluded that he required plastic baton rounds, and this was endorsed by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, he regarded it as essential that the equipment should be available to the force concerned. The purpose of the meeting with officials on 5 December, which was attended by the police authority chairmen and chief constables of Greater Manchester, West Midlands, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, was to work out how such a requirement was best met.

At the meeting the chairmen of the police authorities explained the position in their particular authorities. The chief constables expressed the view that there was a need for their forces to have plastic baton rounds available. None of the four police authorities had yet agreed to their purchase. The Department's officials stressed that it was my right hon. Friend's wish that all parties should consult and proceed in co-operation, if possible. It was made clear, however, that, if necessary, the equipment and training in its use would be provided through central facilities under Home Office auspices.

Arrangements for the loan of items of equipment between forces are, in the first instance, a matter for the chief officers of police concerned.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will advise the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to increase the awards made to victims of rape or serious sexual attack.

Mr. Mellor: It is the practice of the board to review from time to time the guidelines it uses on compensation in particular classes of case, having regard to the current level of damages awarded in civil proceedings and the terms of the criminal injuries compensation scheme. This is not a process in which my right hon. Friend would think it right to intervene.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will allocate more resources and manpower to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Mr. Mellor: Financial provision for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in 1986-87 will allow for an increase in staff and in compensation.

Victims Support Scheme (Kirkby)

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will allocate funds to the Kirkby victims support scheme.

Mr. Mellor: We have no funds available for this purpose during the current financial year.

10 Downing Street (Intruder)

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to the circumstances in which a man was apprehended on the roof of 10 Downing street on Friday 13 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on the circumstances surrounding the apprehending and subsequent release of an unnamed man on the roof of 10 Downing street during the night of Friday 13 December.

Mr. Hurd: I have now received a report from the Commissioner. At 8.13 pm on Friday 13 December, a security alarm system was activated at 10 Downing street. Officers of the Metropolitan police on duty there chased a man found on the roof. The man climbed down to Horse Guards parade where he was arrested at 8.16 pm.

The Metropolitan police conducted a thorough search of the roof area of 10 Downing street and adjacent buildings, as well as neighbouring streets and open spaces. Nothing was found.

In the absence of any evidence that any criminal offence had been committed and after police inquiries about the individual concerned and into the incident generally, the man was released without charge at 7.50 pm on 14 December.

Although the alarm system and the police response were effective, it is a matter of concern that the man was able to reach the roof of 10 Downing street. It would not be right on security grounds to go into detail about the arrangements to protect that building, but I have set in hand an urgent review of this incident in order to ensure that any necessary improvements are undertaken immediately, and that the security arrangements for the complex of buildings adjoining 10 Downing street, which are occupied by several Departments, are adequately co-ordinated.

Dr. Nazemi

Mr. Williams asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to announce a decision on Dr. Nazemi, ref. No. 97047, and his ability to take up an academic post which is on offer for 1 January 1986.

Mr. Waddington: Dr. Nazemi was interviewed on 17 December. A decision on his application will be taken as soon as possible when the report of the interview has been considered.

Civil Defence

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what civil defence grant allocations were made to county councils and the Greater London council for 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The total initial allocations made to county councils, the GLC and police authorities for civil defence grant-eligible expenditure were as follows:

	£'000s
1983-84	10,456
1984-85	10,877
1985-86	12,418

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department where training courses, for which civil defence grant was paid, were held since 1 December 1983.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what grants have been made to county councils and to the Greater London council for the attendance on any civil defence training course of members of those authorities since 1 December 1983; and in what year;

(2) what grants have been made to county councils and to the Greater London council for the attendance on any civil defence training course of members of their staff pursuant to regulation 4(1)*(d)* of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 since 1 December 1983; and in what year;

(3) what grants have been made to county councils and to the Greater London council for the training of their own staff and the staff of district or borough councils in their area pursuant to regulation 4(1)*(c)* of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 since 1 December 1983; and in what year.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grants were made under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations in each of the years 1980-81 to 1984-85 inclusive to *(a)* police authorities, *(b)* fire authorities, *(c)* county councils and the Greater London council, other than in their role as fire or police authorities, *(d)* district councils, London boroughs and the City of London and *(e)* any other bodies.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grants were made for civil defence

purposes other than under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations to any body or organisation other than a local or police authority in each of the years 1979-80 to 1984-85, inclusive.

Mr. Giles Shaw: None.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grants have been made to county councils and to the Greater London council for the purpose of enabling persons to undertake to serve as civil defence volunteers pursuant to regulation 4(1)*(f)* of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983 since 1 December 1983; and in what year.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The information is not available. Local authorities do not itemise such costs in their civil defence grant estimates or claims.

Immigration Statistics

Mr. Clelland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will supply the statistics relating to passenger admissions and refusals at Newcastle airport categorised according to old Commonwealth, new Commonwealth and Pakistan, and so on.

Mr. Waddington: The numbers of passengers admitted into the United Kingdom at Newcastle airport during the 12 months ending November 1985 are given in the following table. During this period, eight passengers who had been refused leave to enter were removed.

Admissions at Newcastle Airport, December 1984-November 1985

Nationality	*Admissions*
Old Commonwealth	1,090
New Commonwealth and Pakistan	470
Western Europe (excluding European Community)	8,880
Rest of World (including Cyprus and Malta)	2,270

Ms. Clare Short asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people refused entry under the primary purpose rule *(a)* have appealed against the decision and *(b)* have succeeded in winning their appeal.

Mr. Waddington: I regret that the statistics available about appeals and their outcome do not enable this precise information to be provided.

Police

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a statement of, respectively, central Government and total public expenditure on the police, broken down according to the principal items of expenditure, indicating *(a)* intended expenditure for the current financial year, as stated in Cmnd. 9428, *(b)* the expected outturn of expenditure for the current financial year and *(c)* planned expenditure for 1986-87.

Mr. Hurd: The information in respect of England and Wales is as follows:

	£ million cash		
	(a) 1985-86 plans Cmnd 9428	*(b) 1985-86 estimated outturn*	*(c) 1986-87 plans*
Central government expenditure:			
current	50	52	55
capital	34	28	33
Local authority expenditure:			
current	2,655	2,770	2,880
capital	104	94	92
Total	2,843	2,944	3,060

The Government are examining how to ensure that adequate resources continue to be available to enable the police service to discharge its increasing commitments.

Fire Service Equipment

Mr. Terry Fields asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what tests his Department is planning in respect of the new fire and smoke escape masks against existing fire service equipment; what criteria are being used in the tests; who is to fund the tests; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The British Standards Institution is preparing a British standard for respirators for escape from fire. This will constitute a performance specification for such devices and give guidelines on the limited circumstances in which they might be safely used. In order to validate some of the test methods proposed in the draft standard, the BSI technical committee is planning an experimental programme using a range of existing products. The Department of Trade and Industry has offered to make a grant towards the costs of this programme. It would not be appropriate to test the devices against existing self-contained breathing apparatus as used by the fire service.

Hostile Attacks (Monitoring)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being taken to enable the United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation, and the Royal Observer Corps to distinguish between different forms of hostile attack; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Initial warning of air attacks does not distinguish between the different forms it could take. The national warning organisation is equipped with instruments to detect, monitor and give warning of the effects of nuclear weapons. Studies are being conducted into ways of detecting and monitoring the effects of chemical attack and issuing appropriate public warning.

Shotgun Certificates

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has completed his review of the procedures relating to the cost of issuing shotgun certificates.

Mr. Giles Shaw: We are considering the outcome of the review of firearms fees and hope to be in a position to publish the results in the new year.

Women (Violence)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the absolute and percentage increase in violent offences against women recorded in the Metropolitan police district between 1979 and 1984; and what new and additional resources have been used to tackle this problem.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 December 1985, c. *583*]: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the information is as given in the table. In the period 1979 to 1984 the establishment of the Metropolitan police increased from 22,786 to 26,844 officers. It is part of their duty to investigate violent offences against women, as all other criminal offences. Measures designed specifically to assist with the investigation of serious sexual offences against women include the provision of special training in sexual investigation techniques, the establishment of victims' examination suites, which are shortly to be opened and arrangements for interviewing by women police officers and, when requested, by women police surgeons. The number of women police officers in the Metropolitan police increased by 42 per cent., from 1,748 to 2,484 between 1979 and 1984.

Offences of violence against females recorded by the police, 1979-84
Metropolitan Police District
Numbers and percentages

	Absolute increase 1979-1984	*Percentage increase 1979-1984*
Violence against the person	849	22
Rape	118	48
Robbery	2,278	96

Advertising

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department spent on advertising in national and local newspapers, on television and in other printed journals during the financial year 1984-85; and what is the amount budgeted and spent to date in 1985-86.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 6 December 1985, c. *357*]: The information requested is as follows:

Expenditure on advertising	*Press*	*TV*	*Total (£'000)*
1984-85	813	2,227	3,040
1985-86 (Budget)	571	2,607	3,178
1985-86 (Spent to date)	366	373	739

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Food Additives

6. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to amend the regulations governing the use of additives in food; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Fenner: There are no immediate plans to do so. Food additive regulations are amended when necessary following the advice of the Food Advisory Committee and after consultation with all interests.

30. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to discuss food additives with United Kingdom food manufacturers; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Fenner: The Ministry is in regular contact with food manufacturers and with many other interests concerned with food additives.

38. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received about the effects of additives in food for human consumption.

Mrs. Fenner: My Ministry regularly receives a great variety of correspondence on all matters concerning food, including the use of additives.

42. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many of the additives currently added to British food are not approved by the European Economic Community.

Mrs. Fenner: Community directives have been developed for only a limited number of food additives. United Kingdom legislation applies those directives and additionally controls many more food additives.

Cereals

17. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the latest estimate of cereal production in 1985.

Mr. Gummer: United Kingdom production of cereals in 1985 is estimated at 22·3 million tonnes.

37. **Mr. Jackson** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he will be having with his European colleagues on measures to deal with the cereals surplus.

Mr. Gummer: I am my European colleagues have already begun discussions on the Commission's memorandum on cereals policy.

39. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the 1985 cereal harvest; and what is the likely carry over of that harvest.

Mr. Gummer: United Kingdom production of cereals in 1985 is estimated at 22·3 million tonnes. It is not possible to forecast the likely level of carry over stocks at the end of the season, as this will depend on home and export market developments.

41. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals Her Majesty's Government have submitted to the European Commission for reducing the level of cereal production; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: In recent months the Government have made it very clear to the Commission and our European partners that we regard price policy as the essential element in bringing the cereals sector into better balance. We will continue to make this clear in the discussion in the Council following the Commission's presentation of its memorandum on this subject.

Food Surpluses

19. **Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the present food surpluses of the European Economic Community and the cost of storage of these items to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Gummer: A note setting out the volume of United Kingdom and Community intervention stocks, including those of foodstuffs, on the latest available dates is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly.

The storage, handling and related technical costs of intervention products in the United Kingdom (including barley and feedwheat) in 1984 were £46·4 million. The net cost to the United Kingdom was £18·5 million. The United Kingdom contribution to the cost of storage, handling and related technical costs of intervention products in other member states was £61·5 million.

Mr. Thurnham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has made to the European Commission about stocks of surplus food.

Mr. Gummer: The Government press the Community at every opportunity to tackle the underlying problem of surplus production by reducing the effective support levels.

Food Labelling

20. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will introduce legislation to compel the listing of contents of food products to enable purchasers to be aware of the percentage fat content and the nature of the additives within such products.

Mrs. Fenner: It is our intention to introduce legislation to require the labelling of foods with their fat content. We expect to issue detailed proposals shortly. The Food Labelling Regulations 1984 already require food additives to be indicated on the ingredients lists on food by the category of function they perform in the food as well as the specific name or serial number, or both.

Protein Crops

21. **Mr. Charles Morrison** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to what extent he is encouraging an increase in the output of protein crops in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Gummer: The Government actively support Community action to encourage the protein sector, which includes the payment of a subsidy on dried peas and field beans production. In 1982 we pressed successfully for this scheme to be extended to human consumption products, as well as those for animal feed. Earlier this year we secured the introduction of monthly increments in order to assist orderly marketing of this expanding crop. The Government have maintained their funding of research designed to produce improved varieties of these protein crops and advice to growers is available from ADAS.

Food Quality

22. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what new initiatives he proposes to take to improve the quality of food.

Mrs. Fenner: Comprehensive legislation already exists regulating the safety, quality and labelling of food. Regulations are kept under review so that appropriate initiatives can be taken in response to new developments.

Agriculture Policy

23. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a White Paper setting out Her Majesty's Government's future policy on agriculture.

Mr. Gummer: The farming industry faces a difficult period of change and the Government will continue to give the industry the guidance it needs as the situation develops.

Dairy Products

24. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to rectify current deficiencies in the food production of dairy products.

Mr. Gummer: I am not clear what deficiencies the hon. Member has in mind. It is in the industry's own interest to meet its customers' needs. I shall be happy to consider any particular point that the hon. Member wishes to make.

Common Agricultural Policy

25. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if Her Majesty's Government have put forward any recent proposals for the reform of the common agricultural policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply my right hon. Friend the Minister gave him on 20 November 1985.

Horticulture Industry

26. **Mrs. Roe** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what transitional arrangements have been made to protect the horticulture industry after the accession to the European Economic Community of Spain and Portugal.

Mrs. Fenner: The transitional arrangements for fresh fruit and vegetables have been designed to give a long period of gradual adjustment and to minimise the risk of disruption of markets. For Spain the transition period will be divided into two phases of four and six years. During the first phase, the gradual reduction of tariffs over the full 10-year period will begin. During the second phase, starting on 1 January 1990, there will be a progressive dismantling of the Community's system of minimum import prices (reference prices) on trade with Spain. During this phase the supplementary trade mechanism, under which trade levels will be monitored to ensure that markets are not disrupted by too rapid a rise, will operate.

For trade with the Canary Islands, where the common agriculture policy will not operate, separate arrangements will apply. Tariffs on some products, including tomatoes and cucumbers, will be phased out but only within quotas based on traditional trade flows; reference prices will continue to apply.

For Portugal the arrangements for fruit and vegetables will be similar to those for Spain, although there is provision for variation of the length of each phase within a 10-year period.

For ornamental horticultural products, tariffs will be phased out in equal stages over seven years.

Sugar

28. **Mr. Lyell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will outline future arrangements in the United Kingdom for industrial uses of sugar; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Commission has proposed to make quota sugar available to the Community's chemical industry with the aid of a production refund corresponding broadly to the production levy on B quota sugar. My right hon. Friend and I have urged that this proposal be amended so that our chemical industry has access to sugar broadly on the same basis as it is available to its competitors outside the Community with access to world-priced raw materials.

Butter

29. **Mr. Budgen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on European Commission proposals to reduce surplus European Economic Community butter stocks.

Mr. Gummer: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply recently given to the right hon. Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) on 9 December at column 485.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, for each calendar year since 1977, he will give *(a)* the tonnage of New Zealand butter imported into the United Kingdom, *(b)* the tonnage imported into bonded stores in the United Kingdom, and *(c)* the tonnage released from bonded stores in the United Kingdom; and whether, in his enforcement of the tonnage of New Zealand butter permitted to be imported into the United Kingdom each year under protocol 18 of the treaty of accession to the European Economic Community, he has regard to the quantity imported into bonded stores in the United Kingdom, or to the total released from bonded stores within the United Kingdom plus any tonnage imported into the United Kingdom from New Zealand without passing through bonded stores.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply,* 18 December 1985, c. *210*]: For enforcement purposes, the limitation on imports of New Zealand butter into the United Kingdom at a reduced rate of levy under the arrangements stemming from protocol 18 of the treaty of accession applies to the amounts entering into free circulation (either directly on import or from bonded stores) rather than to the quantities physically entering the country in any one year. The levels of the quotas, the amounts entering into free circulation under these arrangements, and the total quantities of butter imported from New Zealand are shown in the table for the period requested.

The figures for total imports of New Zealand butter include quantities of butter outside the scope of the arrangements, such as those imported under inward processing relief, and into bond. Figures on the amount of New Zealand butter imported into and released from bond in the United Kingdom are not readily available.

	1977	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*Tonnes 1984*
Quantity of butter which the United Kingdom is entitled to import from New Zealand at a reduced rate of levy	138,176	125,000	120,000	95,000	94,600	92,000	87,000	83,000
Quantity of New Zealand butter entering free circulation against entitlement	137,756	125,000	120,000	95,000	93,998	91,999	87,000	83,000
Total quantity of butter imported into the United Kingdom from New Zealand	129,016	129,968	119,878	107,972	99,422	99,152	93,760	89,110

Intervention Stores

31. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total tonnage of food in private and public intervention stores in the European Economic Community; and what was the comparable total five and 10 years previously.

Mr. Gummer: A note setting out the volume of Community intervention stocks and private storage stocks, including those of foodstuffs, on the latest available dates is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly. Information on stock levels in previous years (including 1975 and 1980) is contained in the table published in *Hansard,* volume 71, column *452*.

Agricultural Development and Advisory Service

32. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total number of employees of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service as at 1 April; and what changes he expects to see by 1 April 1986 and 1 April 1987.

Mrs. Fenner: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. Friend the Minister gave to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 3 December 1985 at column *193*. The total number of ADAS staff is expected to change from 4,786 at 1 April 1985 to about 4,700 at 1 April 1986 and around 4,300 at 1 April 1987, the exact figures depending upon arrangements consequential on the measures my right hon. Friend announced on 11 October and 7 November.

33. **Mr. Alex Carlile** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the main sources of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service's income in 1986-87; and if he will provide a breakdown according to the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service's main areas of activity.

Mrs. Fenner: ADAS currently generates annual receipts of over £7 million. For 1985-86, current estimates

of the principal receipts are £4,343,000 for sales of produce and other receipts at experimental centres; £1,257,000 for services provided under the agricultural services scheme; £554,000 for fees from the National Coal Board for work on restoration of land subjected to opencast mining; and £424,000 for supplies of other goods. The Supply Estimates for 1986-87 will be presented to Parliament in March 1986.

Milk Quotas

34. **Mr. Temple-Morris** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether progress is being made towards greater flexibility in the transfer and acquisition of milk quotas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 21 November at columns *409-410* to my hon. Friends the Members for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) and for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith).

Untreated Milk

35. **Mr. Nicholls** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what conditions he proposes to attach to new licences for the sale of untreated milk by producer-retailers.

Mr. Gummer: The Milk (Special Designation) (Amendment) Regulations 1985 (SI No. 530) lay down certain additional conditions which apply from 1 November 1985 to licences authorising the sale of untreated milk by producers. I am sending my hon. Friend an extract from the relevant provisions.

Farm Incomes

36. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals for raising farm incomes in 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Farm incomes will be one of a number of factors to be taken into account when decisions are taken on the European Commission's proposals for prices and other measures for the 1986-87 year. These proposals will also affect consumers and taxpayers; and the Government are very conscious of the need to secure a better balance in the markets for commodities in surplus and to ensure that the financial guideline is respected.

43. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the average increase in the net income of farmers in 1984-85; and by what proportion he expects this income to rise in 1985-86.

Mr. Gummer: Details of farming income are given at table 23 of the "Annual Review of Agriculture 1985" White Paper (Cmd. 9423) which shows that farming income rose from £1,502 million in 1983 to £1,826 million in 1984. It is expected that income in 1985 will be at well below the record level achieved in 1984. A forecast will be published in the forthcoming annual review White Paper.

Horses, Ponies and Donkeys

40. **Mr. Amess** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about the abandonment in the countryside of horses, ponies and donkeys on agricultural wasteland.

Mrs. Fenner: I have received some representations concerning this matter.

The welfare of horses, ponies or donkeys considered to be livestock on agricultural land is protected by the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968 which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to such livestock. More generally these animals, like all domestic and captive animals, have protection under the Protection of Animals Act 1911 and the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960 which are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Common Fisheries Policy

44. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the December meeting of the European Council of Fisheries Ministers, with specific reference to the share-out of North sea herring between the European Community and Norway.

Mr. Harris asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Fisheries Ministers' meeting in Brussels on 16 and 17 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to the statement which I made in the House this afternoon.

Farmers (Debts)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the farming industry concerning the current level of indebtedness of farmers.

Mrs. Fenner: My right hon. Friend has had no specific discussions recently with representatives of the farming industry on farmers indebtedness. However, he is in constant touch with farmers and their representative bodies and in such contacts this is one of the subjects discussed.

European Commission (Environmental Protection)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy towards the European Commission's proposals to regulate and control practices harmful to the environment, as laid out in paragraphs 8-11 of Part IV of the Commission's Green Paper "Perspectives for the Common Agriculture Policy."

Mr. Gummer: I found the references in the Green Paper to agriculture and the environment to be thoughtful and constructive. They clearly reflect the Commission's acceptance that the development of the community's agricultural policies must have due regard to environmental considerations. These policies must also take full account of the need to retain a viable industry and to avoid unreasonable restrictions on farmers.

However, I believe we need to adopt a cautious approach in relation to extensive programmes of action at Community level. In my view, the emphasis should be on national measures based on the best practicable environmental options appropriate to each member state, taking account of their often differing economic, ecological and structural circumstances.

Intervention Storage (Grain)

Mr. Body asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much money has been received in the last 12 months out of the European agriculture guidance and guarantee fund to pay for the storage of grain in intervention.

Mr. Gummer: During the period December 1984 to November 1985, £35·263 million was received by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce for storage of grain in intervention.

Apralan

Dr. Cunningham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what work has been commissioned by, or done in, his Department into the effect of administering the drug Apralan on calves; and what work has been undertaken by the medicines unit of the Central Veterinary Laboratory, Weybridge, into the effects of the drug Apralan on calves and livestock in general.

Mrs. Fenner: Several formulations of the drug Apralan are currently licensed under the Medicines Act 1968 for administration to calves and pigs.

Licences are issued only after a thorough evaluation of data submitted by the applicant demonstrating the safety, quality and efficacy of the product. The assessment of safety includes the safety of the consumer of meat, milk or eggs from treated animals and of persons handling or administering the product as well as the safety of the target animal. In the case of antimicrobial products it also includes an assessment of the likelihood of the development of resistant strains of bacteria which may pose a hazard to human health. In licensing veterinary products, we are advised by the Veterinary Products Committee, a statutory committee of independent experts in human and animal health.

The central veterinary laboratory of my Department undertakes routine monitoring for antibiotic resistance which covers resistance to apramycin, the active ingredient of Apralan.

Brucellosis

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many cattle have been slaughtered in each of t he last five years under the provisions of his scheme to eradicate brucellosis.

Mrs. Fenner: The numbers of cattle slaughtered in Great Britain in each of the last five years under the brucellosis eradication scheme analysed between reactor animals and those taken as dangerous contacts are as follows:

Year	*Number of brucellosis reactors slaughtered*	*Number of dangerous contacts slaughtered*	*Total cattle slaughtered*
1980	6,305	7,658	13,963
1981	1,886	4,723	6,609
1982	548	2,383	2,931
1983	688	3,228	3,916
1984	510	5,609	6,119

Dr. David Clark asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many outbreaks of brucellosis among cattle have been reported in each of the last five years.

Mrs. Fenner: The numbers of new herd breakdowns due to brucellosis disclosed in each of the last five years are as follows:

Year	*Number of new herd breakdowns*
1980	1,397
1981	686
1982	207
1983	162
1984	94

WALES

Hospitals (Children)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what proportion of children in hospitals in Wales were accommodated in adult wards at the most recent date for which figures are available;

(2) what was the number of children in hospitals in Wales who were accommodated in adult wards at the most recent date for which figures are available.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The information requested is not available centrally. On 27 March 1985 there were 905 patients aged under 16 years in non-psychiatric hospitals in Wales, of which 435 (48 per cent.) were either in special care baby units or were paediatric cases.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gow asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many civil servants there are in his Department employed *(a)* in the Principality and *(b)* outside the Principality; and how many in each category were born within the Principality.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: At 1 December 1985 the number of permanent civil servants employed in my Department in the Principality was 2,258 and outside the Principality was 35. Information about place of birth could not be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Hospitals

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list all new hospitals which have opened since May 1979 or are due to open over the next 18 months, indicating the first date on which approval for each scheme was given.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The information on new hospital developments in Wales in given in the following table:

Hospital	Approval date	Date of opening
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd	November 1966	May 1980
Royal Gwent scheme 5	February 1970	October 1979
Ysbyty Gwynedd	June 1971	July 1984
St. Woolas scheme 1	October 1976	March 1983
Mold community hospital	August 1978	April 1984
The Princess of Wales hospital, Bridgend	December 1976	October 1985
Morriston hospital, Swansea	December 1976	October 1985
Ystradgynlais community hospital	July 1980	February 1986*
Wrexham (Maelor) DGH	December 1976	April 1986*

* Anticipated.

Job Losses

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the number of manufacturing jobs lost in Wales since June 1977; and what is the proportion of employees employed in manufacturing at the latest available date.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Comprehensive information is not available on job losses. Estimates prepared by my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment show that in June 1985 204,000 persons, 22·6 per cent. of all employees in employment, were engaged in manufacturing industry. This compares with 308,000 so employed in June 1977.

Population Statistics

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the proportion of the population in Wales living in households of social class I or II.

Mr. Mark Robinson: At the time of the 1981 census, 20·3 per cent. of the population of Wales lived in private households where the economically active head was of social class I or II.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the change in population in Wales between 1961 and 1983.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The population of Wales increased from 2,635,000 in 1961 to 2,807,800 in 1983, that is by 172,800. (Source — OPCS mid year estimates).

Labour Statistics

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the ratio of registered unemployment to notified vacancies in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The number of unemployed claimants in Wales as at 14 November 1985 was 180,853. The number of unfilled vacancies at job centres in Wales (including the community programme) as at 8 November was 9,458 giving a ratio of 19:1.

School Playing Fields

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy on the sale of school playing fields in Wales for housing purposes.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The Government believe that all surplus land held by public authorities should be disposed of. It is for local authorities themselves to decide in each case whether land used for educational purposes is surplus to requirements.

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales what acreage of school playing fields in Wales has been sold for development in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Mark Robinson: This information is not collected by the Department.

Wales Tourist Board

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has yet decided what resources he intends to allocate to the Wales Tourist Board for 1986-87.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Subject to parliamentary approval I intend to allocate nearly £8 million to the Wales Tourist Board for 1986-87. This includes a continuation of the exceptional addition of £½ million for grants and loans to the tourist industry which I was able to make available to the board this year from savings achieved elsewhere. It represents a 25 per cent. increase in funds available for assisting tourism projects in Wales and a 9 per cent. increase overall on the position at the start of the present financial year.

Small Firms Service

Mr. Harvey asked the Secretary of State for Wales what conclusions he has reached following his review of the small firms service in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The purpose of the review of the small firms service in Wales, which was guided by an independent report by consultants, was to determine how best the service should be organised in future. I have decided, in line with the recommendation in the consultants report that the overall effectiveness of the small firms service in Wales and the service it provides to the small firms sector will be enhanced if the two arms of the service—the counselling service in Wales, which is administered by the Welsh Development Agency, and the small firms centre, which is the responsibility of my Department—are in future combined in a single unit. Therefore responsibility for my Department's small firms centre will be transferred to the Welsh Development Agency on 1 January 1986.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Plant Breeding Institute, Cambridge

48. **Mr Livsey** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what bids have been received for the sale of the Plant Breeding Institute at Cambridge.

Mr. Walden: My noble Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced on

28 November in another place that the Government were considering the possibility of privatising applied plant breeding at the Plant Breeding Institute. No decisions have yet been taken. A number of private sector companies have expressed interest in acquiring that part of the PBI. It could be prejudicial to possible future negotiations to give further details.

National Advisory Council for the Youth Service

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the members of the National Advisory Council for the Youth Service, their ages, the organisations they represent and the criteria that were used in deciding membership.

Mr. Dunn: The members of the National Advisory Council for the Youth Service, and the position each currently holds, are as follows:—

Professor Walter James, CBE—Chairman
Mr. Wally Brown — District Co-ordinator for Community Education, Manchester Education Authority
Miss Lynda Carr—Principal Officer, Education Department, Equal Opportunities Commission
Miss Ann Davies — Development Officer, Young Farmers Clubs Movement, Wales
Mr. Michael Edwards — County Education Officer, Norfolk County Council
Mr. Harold Haywood — Director, the Royal Jubilee and Prince's Trusts
Mr. Geoffrey Jones—County Adviser, Youth Education, West Glamorgan County Council, and Vice-Chairman of International Youth Year (Wales)
Ms Sushila Khoot — Neighbourhood Development Worker, Youth and Community Service, London Borough of Brent
Mr. Anthony Lawton—Chief Project Officer, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat
Ms Mary Marken — Assistant Education Officer, Sheffield Youth and Community Service
Mr. John Naylor — National Secretary, National Council of YMCAs, and Vice-Chairman, National Council for Voluntary Youth Services
Mr. Mike Nichol — Director of Education, Wirral Local Education Authority, Member of the Executive Committee, Society of Education Officers
Mr. David Owen—Group Chairman, Rubery Owen Holdings Ltd.
Mr. Michael Richardson — Pro Vice-Chancellor (Continuing Education) at The Open University. Chairman-elect of the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (CETYCW)
Mr. Malcolm Ryan—Chairperson, British Youth Council
Mr. Gavton Shepherd — Principal Race Relations Adviser, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Miss Elizabeth Smith—Headmistress of St. Joseph's (Aided) Primary School, Newton Abbot, Devon. Member of the Girl Guides Association
Ms Janice Smith — Chairperson, International Youth Year Committee for England. Member of the Executive Committee for the Boys Brigade
Mr. Linbert Spencer — Chief Executive, Project Fullemploy, and a member of the In-Service Training Panel of the CETYCW
Mr. Alan Sutton — Head of the School of Teaching and Community Studies, Bradford and Ilkley Community College. Member of the Initial Training Panel of the CETYCW
Mr. Phil Treseder — Member of the British Youth Council Executive Committee, and of the IYY (Wales) Committee. Student at the Polytechnic of North London
Mrs. Madeline Webster — Deputy Principal Youth Officer, Inner Education Authority
Mr. Ivor Widdison—Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Youth Bureau, and Adviser to the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth Workers and Community Centre Wardens. Principal Administrative Assistant, Council of Local Education Authorities.
The Rev. David Winwood — National Secretary, The Methodist Association of Youth Clubs.

In determining invitations to be in membership of the council, the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales had regard to the wide range of interests in the youth service field. Individual members have, however, been appointed in a personal capacity according to the contribution each can make to the work of the council. I shall write to the hon. Member about the ages of council members in due course.

Religious Education

Mr. Watts asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the number of specialist teachers of religious education required in the secondary sector to ensure that teaching of religious education is conducted primarily by appropriately qualified specialists; what assessment he has made of the number of such specialist teachers who should be undergoing training at any one time in order to maintain an adequate supply of qualified teachers; and how many are currently undergoing such training.

Mr. Chris Patten: In 1984, 16,900 full-time teachers in maintained secondary schools in England reported that they held a higher education qualification with religious education as a main or subsidiary subject. If all schools were to give first priority to ensuring that religious education was taught by appropriately qualified staff, the supply of such teachers nationally would be more than sufficient to meet their needs. In practice, schools have thought it necessary to assign many of those teachers for some or all of their time to teach other subjects in which they are qualified, and many teachers without a qualification in religious education have been asked to teach the subject for a few periods a week. It is for local education authorities and head teachers to consider the scope for managing the teacher force so as to allow a closer match between qualifications and assignments. Target intakes to initial teacher training in England and Wales in religious education have been set so as to meet anticipated demand from the schools for teachers qualified in the subject: in 1985, 259 students were admitted to PGCE courses, and 45 to BEd courses, against targets of 249 and 105 respectively. The increased emphasis on the one year PGCE courses from 1986 in preference to the BEd should allow output to increase in the next few years.

Initial Teacher Training (Portsmouth)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science why he has asked the National Advisory Board to give further consideration to initial teacher training courses in Portsmouth.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend considered that the proposals submitted to him by the National Advisory Body in September on 1986 to 1989 intakes to courses of initial teacher training in the public sector were insufficient to realise the full potential for securing a high quality, cost-effective system of initial teacher training. He therefore asked the NAB to give further consideration to intakes to all such courses.

Children (Special Education Needs)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has yet received the transcript

of the judgment of Mr. Justice Taylor on the education of a dyslexic child, referred to in his answer of 11 December, *Official Report*, column 628; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has not yet received the transcript.

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how the pupil-teacher ratio in *(a)* Amber Valley and *(b)* Derbyshire at the latest available date compares with the figures for 1979.

Mr. Dunn: The pupil-teacher ratio in Amber Valley is not available centrally. The pupil-teacher ratio in Derbyshire in 1979 was 20·2; in January 1985, the corresponding figure was 18·3.

Education Support Grants

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the expenditure to be supported through education support grants in 1986-87.

Sir Keith Joseph: On 22 May I announced the Government's intention to increase the expenditure supported through education support grants in the financial year 1986-87 up to around £40 million of expenditure by local education authorities in England. Of this sum, £18·6 million is committed to projects which began in 1985-86, including £1 million held in reserve for projects concerning the management and appraisal of school-teachers. Local education authorities were therefore invited to bid for new starts in 1986-87 amounting in value to £21·5 million.

The programme of new starts next year will consist of 12 activities, five newly introduced, and seven which were in the 1985-86 programme and have further starts in 1986-87. All 96 local education authorities in England have bid for grant support. For each of the 12 activities the total of bids exceeded the expenditure which could be supported.

In respect of 11 of the 12 activities, the Department will shortly inform local education authorities of the levels of expenditure for each activity which I have approved for 1986-87. Bids for the remaining activity (pilot projects to meet the educational needs of ethnic minorities) are being considered alongside educational bids under the urban programme. I shall announce approvals for that activity in the early spring.

Subject to the passage of the necessary legislation, a further activity will be added to the 1986-87 programme securing the supervision of pupils in schools at midday. Approvals will be announced later.

The table sets out for the 11 activities which are the subject of the present approvals the level of expenditure to be supported in the financial year 1986-87 and the number of authorities for whom I have approved projects.

Split of expenditure between activities
£ million at 1986-87 prices

Activity	*Total allocation*	*Number of LEAs to be supported*
I: The teaching of science and technology as part of primary education.	2·5	55
II: Pilot projects to improve the quality or range of the curriculum provided in primary schools in rural areas.	0·5	7
IV: The provision of retraining and updating courses directed towards the needs of industry and commerce (PICKUP).	1·6	37
V: The development of the use of information technology in further education.	9·0	96
VI: The planning, development and coordination of provision to meet the educational needs of the unemployed.	1·6	40
VII: The provision of data processing equipment for use in the management of further education establishments.	1·0	70
VIII: The development, provision and appraisal of courses of initial training for school governers.	0·1	10
IX: The provision of services to support parents in the teaching of children under five with special educational needs.	1·2	44
X: The provision of computerised learning aids at further education establishments for use by students with special educational needs.	0·5	32
XI: The strengthening of college employer links to improve the quality and relevance of NAFE provision.	0·5	22
XII: Action within the education service to combat the misuse of drugs.	2·0	96
Total	20·5	508

SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND

Sexual Offence Trials (Evidence)

Mr. Malone asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland when it is intended to bring into force the provisions in section 36 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1985 dealing with evidence in sexual offence trials.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: My noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate has made a commencement order under section 60(3)*(b)* of the 1985 Act bringing section 36 into force on 1 January 1986. The Act contains a transitional provision in paragraph 1 of schedule 3 to the effect that the new evidential rules will apply to all trials commencing after that date.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans Her Majesty's

Government have to resume trilateral negotiations with the United States and Soviet Union on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty following the requirement in the final consensus document of the third review conference of the non-proliferation treaty that the nuclear weapon states party to the non-proliferation treaty begin trilateral negotiations before the end of 1985.

Mr. Renton: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave yesterday at column *196*, to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas).

Overseas Missions (Security)

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if there have been any changes in the cash limits for his Department's Votes in so far as they affect security arrangements at missions overseas.

Mr. Eggar: A spring Supplementary Estimate will be presented to Parliament inviting the provision of funds needed for overseas expenditure, including security expenditure, as a result of movements in overseas prices in accordance with the arrangements set out in Cmnd. 9367. Priorities have been adjusted to meet the most immediate requirements of recent studies on the security of missions and personnel overseas. Planning is under way to ensure that the full implications can be handled.

Entry Clearance Fees

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if there will be any change in entry clearances fees for 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Yes. With effect from 1 January, entry clearance fees will be increased and amended as follows:

	£
Visitors (including students, passengers in transit, working holidaymakers and au pairs)	12
Multiple entry clearances in the above categories	24
Applications lodged on behalf of those applying for settlement or long-term stay in the United Kingdom	25

The last fee will be non-refundable.

Transit visas will be subsumed into the visitors grouping.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Select Committees

Mr. Alton asked the Lord Privy Seal how many times since June 1983 departmental Select Committees have not proceeded to business because a quorum was not present; how many times proceedings of departmental Select Committees have been suspended or adjourned because a quorum was not present; and if he will list the occasions by date and by committee.

Mr. Biffen: Since June 1983, none of the main departmental Select Committees has been unable to proceed to business due to the lack of a quorum. The Treasury and Civil Service Sub-Committee could not proceed to business for this reason on 19 December 1984. Committee proceedings have been adjourned twice due to the lack of a quorum. The Scottish Affairs Committee was so adjourned on 13 February 1985, and the Employment Committee was so adjourned on 17 July 1985.

SCOTLAND

Blood Products

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when Scotland and Northern Ireland became self-sufficient in blood products.

Mr. John MacKay: Scotland has been virtually self-sufficient in blood products since the end of 1983. From time to time imported blood products are prescribed on clinical grounds.

The position in Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and I have asked my right hon. Friend to write to the hon. Member.

Motorways (Lighting)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many miles of the M8 motorway between Edinburgh, Glasgow and Bishopton are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections.

Mr. Ancram: Approximately 31 miles of the M8 motorway are unlit. The unlit sections are as follows:

	Miles
Newbridge roundabout (junction 2)—Dechmont (junction 3)	6
Approximately 1½ miles west of Dechmont—Newhouse (junction 6)	18
St. James interchange (junction 29)—West Ferry (junction 31)	7
	31

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many miles of the M9 motorway between Edinburgh and Dunblane are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections.

Mr. Ancram: Two short sections, totalling half a mile, at the Newbridge and Kirkliston junctions, are lit. The remaining 34 miles of the M9 motorway are unlit.

Lothian Health Board

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the answer of 25 November, *Official Report*, columns *429-32*, if he will make a statement concerning the £28,774 written off by the Lothian health board in 1984-85.

Mr. John MacKay: I shall reply fully to the hon. Member when inquiries of Lothian health board about the sum in question are completed.

Civil Defence

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what grants were made under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations in each of the years 1978-79 to 1984-85 inclusive to *(a)* police authorities, *(b)* fire authorities, *(c)* regional councils, other than in their role as fire or police authorities and *(d)* district councils.

Mr. John MacKay: The following table shows the grants made to local authorities in Scotland under the Civil Defence (Grant) (Scotland) Regulations 1953 in respect of

the years in question. Normally grants are made to regional councils without distinguishing between their police, fire and other functions; but payments are made direct to joint boards/committees as shown.

	Regional Councils £	*Joint Fire Boards* £	*Joint Police Committees* £	*District Councils* £
1978-79	254,434	91	13,359	228
1979-80	313,802	105	15,576	1,482
1980-81	441,313	68	17,115	985
1981-82	502,895	34	20,255	1,606
1982-83	616,702	47	33,363	1,107
1983-84	657,911	91	32,263	462
1984-85	700,130	—	38,000	820

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what grants were made for civil defence purposes other than under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations to any body or organisation other than a local or police authority in each of the years 1979-80 to 1984-85, inclusive;

(2) what grants were made under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations to any body or organisation other than a local police authority in each of the years 1979-80 to 1984-85, inclusive.

Mr. John MacKay: None.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what civil defence grant allocations were made to regional councils for 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86.

Mr. John MacKay: The Scottish Home and Health Department has not been in the practice of making allocations of civil defence grant to regional councils.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what grants have been made to regional councils for the purpose of enabling persons to undertake to serve as civil defence volunteers pursuant to the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) (Scotland) Regulations 1983 since 1 December 1983; and in what year;

(2) what grants have been made to regional councils for the attendance on any civil defence training course of members of their staff pursuant to the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) (Scotland) Regulations 1983 since 1 December 1983; and in what year;

(3) what grants have been made to regional councils for the training of their own staff and the staff of district councils in their area pursuant to the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) (Scotland) Regulations 1983 since 1 December 1983; and in what year.

Mr. John MacKay: As the grant applications from regional councils do not distinguish these activities in detail, the information requested is not centrally available.

Hospital Catering Services

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether he requires health board members to disclose to him particular financial interests which could lead to a conflict of interest when awarding hospital catering services;

(2) whether he requires health board chairmen to disclose to him particular financial interests which could lead to a conflict of interest when awarding contracts for hospital cleaning services.

Mr. John MacKay: Under the National Health Service (Health Boards: Membership, Procedure and Payment of Subscriptions) (Scotland) Regulations 1975, chairmen and members of boards are required, if they have any interest in a particular contract and if they are present at a relevant meeting of a board or one of its committees, to declare that interest and take no part in the discussions about the award of the contract.

Mr. Donald Grant

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he was aware of Mr. Donald Grant's business interests when he appointed him as chairman of Tayside health board.

Mr. John MacKay: Yes.

Jordanhill College School

Mr. Hirst asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the future of Jordanhill college school.

Mr. Younger: My Department wrote on 18 December to the governing body of Jordanhill college of education about the administration and funding by the college of Jordanhill college school. The letter seeks the views of the governing body on whether the school is still required for the exercise by the college of its functions under part II of the Teachers (Colleges of Education) (Scotland) Regulations 1967. It makes the point that I hold the school in high regard; and it indicates that, if the school is no longer required for the discharge of the functions of the college, my objective would be to secure the establishment of new arrangements which would involve as little disruption as possible for pupils and staff.

Ravenscraig

Mr. Fletcher asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what response he has made to the representations made to him on 31 October by the Ravenscraig trade union committee.

Mr. Younger: I am arranging to place in the Library a copy of a letter which has been sent to the committee, together with a copy of a letter to me from the chairman of the British Steel Corporation, and the corporation's comments on the committee's representations.

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances

Mr. Corrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will now give details of the effects of the recently-announced increases in hill livestock compensatory allowances, on the graded supplements paid to farmers in the Highlands and Islands Development Board area.

Mr. Younger: Yes. The existing rates of supplement are £2·50, £9·50 and £13 per eligible cow on land classified A, B or C respectively, and 55p per eligible hill sheep.

I have today made a scheme under the powers contained in section 4 of the Congested Districts Act 1897 which,

subject to clearance by the European Commission, will increase these supplements in line with those awarded in the less-favoured areas generally. However, because of the payment limit imposed by the European Council regulation EC 797/85, the supplements on cows on B and C class land will be limited to £7·98 a cow which, when added to the new HLCA rate for cows on severely disadvantaged land of £54·50, will give a total payment of £62·48, the maximum permitted by the EC regulation. The new rate of HLCA supplement for cows on A class land will be raised to £3·05, and for all eligible hill sheep to 58p. The increases will apply from 1 January 1986 and their cost will be covered by the provisions already made for such supplements within the Vote for agricultural support in Scotland (Class XV, Vote 1).

TRANSPORT

Traffic Statistics (A45)

Sir Eldon Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table of the number of heavy goods vehicles, other commercial vehicles and cars estimated to have travelled along the A45 between Felixstowe and the A11, A12 and A604 roads in the years 1970, 1980 and each of the years since then.

Mrs. Chalker: The Department cannot provide data for the years 1970 to 1982 inclusive. The data for 1983 to 1985 are as set out:

Thousand Vehicles per year

	1983	*1984*	*1985*
A45, Between Felixstowe and A12			
Cars and Taxis	4,234	4,428	4,599
Heavy Goods Vehicles	1,022	805	840
Other Commercial Vehicles (Light Goods Vehicles)	292	256	256
A45, Between A12 and A11			
Cars and Taxis	4,270	4,418	4,563
Heavy Goods Vehicles	1,132	1,244	1,278
Other Commercial Vehicles (Light Goods Vehicles)	438	403	438
A45, At the point where A11 and A45 are the same road			
Cars and Taxis	6,205	6,222	6,570
Heavy Goods Vehicles	1,971	2,013	2,081
Other Commercial Vehicles (Light Goods Vehicles)	548	549	584
A45, Between A11 and A604			
Cars and Taxis	4,818	4,721	4,891
Heavy Goods Vehicles	1,314	1,391	1,460
Other Commercial Vehicles (Light Goods Vehicles)	365	330	365

A127 (Crash Barriers)

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many car accidents involving death or serious injury occurred on the A127 in 1984 and in 1985 to date; in how many cases these were cross-over accidents; and what action he is taking to ensure that crash barriers are installed without further delay in the most vulnerable areas.

Mr. Ridley: The number of car accidents involving death or serious injury on the A127 and the number of these which were cross-over accidents, is as follows:

	1984	**1985*
Car accidents	52	18
of which		
Cross-over accidents	5	0

*First six months.

It is my intention to install safety barriers along all of the A127 in the eastern region. Some work has already been completed. A contract for the installation of remaining sections will be let in the next financial year. My engineers are assessing the provision of safety barriers along sections of the A127 in London.

Roads (Lighting and Signs)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many miles of the M4 motorway between London and Pont Abraham are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(2) how many miles of the M5 motorway between Birmingham and Exeter are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(3) how many miles of the M3 motorway between London and Southampton are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(4) how many miles of the M2 motorway between Rochester and Faversham are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(5) how many miles of the M62 motorway between Liverpool and Wakefield are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(6) how many miles of the M62 motorway between Hull and Wakefield are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(7) when the advance sign direction on the A1 northbound approaching junction B6275 will be replaced;

(8) when the advance direction signs on the A66 junction with the A66 will be replaced;

(9) if his Department intends to carry out any electrification work on the unlit section of the M1 motorway between junctions 26 to 29;

(10) if his Department intends to carry out any electrification work on the unlit section of the M1 motorway between Newport Pagnell and junction 18;

(11) if his Department intends to carry out any electrification work on the unlit section of the M1 motorway between junction 17 and junction 24;

(12) how many miles of the M6 motorway between Rugby and Carlisle are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(13) how many miles of the M26 between Sevenoaks and Wrotham Heath are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(14) how many miles of the M27 between Cadnam and Portsmouth are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(15) how many miles of the M25 orbital motorway are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(16) how many miles of the M32 between Bristol and Parkway are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(17) how many miles of the M40 between Denham and Oxford are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(18) how many miles of the M10-St. Albans bypass are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(19) how many miles of the M11 between London and Cambridge are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(20) how many miles of the M18 between Rotherham and Goole are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(21) how many miles of the M20 between London and Folkestone are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections;

(22) how many miles of the M23 between Hooley and Pease Pottage are unlit; and if he will list the unlit sections.

Mr. Ridley: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost to my Department.

Motorways (Delays)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now take steps to ensure that figures relating to delays of over 30 minutes on the motorway system and their general distribution are published annually by him or the Transport and Road Research Laboratory.

Mrs. Chalker: I have no plans to publish such information for the reasons given in my previous replies to the hon. Member on 6 December 1985 at column *388* and 13 December at column *803*.

A19 (Defects)

Mr. Wigglesworth asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has yet completed his consideration of the reports of Cleveland county council and the independent consultants into the defects of the A19; what conclusions he has drawn; what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The reports have been received. I will make a statement as soon as possible.

British Rail

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance is given by his Department to the British Railways Board about maintaining power on the system and its use of electricity for power, signalling, lighting and other operational matters on days when no services are operated such as Christmas Day.

Mr. David Mitchell: None. These operational matters are the responsibility of the British Railways Board.

Manchester International Airport

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received about the future ownership and control of Manchester international airport; and what replies he has sent or will be sending.

Mr. Ridley: Apart from my Department's correspondence with the town clerk of Manchester city council (to which I referred in the answer I gave the right hon. Member on 18 December) I have received a number of letters from hon. Members and others about the future ownership and control of the airport, nearly all of which express opposition to Manchester city's proposals for an airport company. In reply we have generally pointed out that these proposals are, in the first instance, a matter for agreement between the Greater Manchester district councils.

Cars (Spare Wheels)

Mr. Conlan asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what tests have been carried out by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory on skinny, non-standard motor car spare wheels; and what conclusions the laboratory has arrived at;

(2) if he has had any discussions with the Commission of the European Economic Community on the use of skinny, non-standard motor car spare wheels; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what representations he has received on the use of skinny, non-standard motor car spare wheels; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what estimates have been made of the number of cars currently in use in the United Kingdom that are equipped with skinny, non-standard spare wheels.

Mrs. Chalker: We estimate there are 60,000 cars on our roads supplied with a temporary use spare wheel/tyre. The Transport and Road Research Laboratory has carried out tests which have shown a car's braking and cornering abilities remain satisfactory under normal conditions, but if the car is driven at its limits of braking or cornering it could be more difficult to control than if fitted with a normal wheel.

The European Commission has not to our knowledge held any recent discussions on this subject. Recent international work has taken place under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe which has now published regulation 64 containing safety requirements for temporary use spare wheels.

In the near future we shall be consulting on draft regulations which would permit the temporary use of these spares on our roads providing the vehicle is not driven at a speed exceeding 50 mph. New vehicles supplied with a temporary use spare wheel would have to meet the safety requirements of ECE regulation 64. Some representations have already been received, but this consultation exercise will allow all the organisations concerned to study our proposals in full and to make representations.

Efficiency Scrutinies

Mr. Lewis Stevens asked the Secretary of State for Transport what conclusions he has come to on recent efficiency scrutinies carried out in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Copies of the scrutiny of marine examinations and the certification of seamen, incorporating our response, have today been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Copies of the scrutinies of the identification and development of internal talent, and of the management of office accommodation, again incorporating our response, have also today been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The latter two scrutinies were carried out jointly with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment's Department. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given today by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment.

EMPLOYMENT

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General how much money has been directed towards the funding of the youth training scheme from the European social fund.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The youth training scheme has been allocated the following amounts from the European social fund since its introduction in 1983:

Year	*Period covered*	*Social fund allocation* £
1983	1 September 1983 to 31 March 1984	70,866,334
1984	1 April 1984 to 31 December 1984	137,949,591
1985 (to date)*	1 January 1984 to 31 December 1985	90,132,802

* A further allocation of about £3·6 million for 1985 is expected.

Information Technology

Mr. Thurnham asked the Paymaster General what action he is taking to increase the facilities for information technology training in the north-west.

Mr. Trippier: Precise information about provision in the north-west is not readily available, but I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Self-Employment

Mr. Thurnham asked the Paymaster General if he will ensure that statistics about self-employment are made available at more regular intervals than at present; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Firm estimates of the numbers in self-employment are based on the censuses of population, the latest of which was for 1981, updated by annual results from the labour force survey. Quarterly totals for Great Britain are derived by interpolation or extrapolation. The next firm estimates, for 1985, will be available in the spring when the results of the 1985 labour force survey become available. My officials are examining ways in which the range and quality of the estimates of self-employment might be improved.

Job Creation

Mr. Deakins asked the Paymaster General what proportion of new jobs created in the past two years have been in Greater London and the south-east region.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information about job gains and job losses is not available from the Department's statistics, but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Between June 1983 and June 1985 (the latest date for which figures are availabale) the civilian employed labour force in the south-east region grew by 332,000; equal to 51 per cent. of the net increase in the civilian employed labour force in Great Britain.

Comparable figures are not available for Greater London but over the same period the number of employees in employment in the area rose by 6,000; equal to 2·5 per cent. of the net increase in the number of employees in employment in Great Britain.

The net increases in the civilian employed labour force and employees in employment in Great Britain between June 1983 and June 1985 were the result of increases in some regions, including the south-east, and decreases in others.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Robert B. Jones asked the Paymaster General how many of those in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and the Thames Valley who have voluntarily withdrawn their claims to unemployment benefit as a result of the recent benefit fraud exercise were previously registered as unemployed in the Hertfordshire, West constituency.

Mr. Alan Clark: Twenty nine people who were claiming unemployment benefit within the Hertfordshire, West constituency voluntarily withdrew their claims to benefit as a result of the recent fraud exercise in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Mr. Meacher asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to the proportion and number of *(a)* male and *(b)* female full-time workers (i) nationally and (ii) in each standard ecomomic planning region who earned (1) with overtime and (2) without overtime less than (x) £60 per week in 1979 and (y) £110 per week in 1985.

Mr. Alan Clark: The available information relating to full-time adult employees in the new earnings surveys for April 1979 and April 1985 is as set out:

	Percentage earning less than:			
	£60 per week in 1979		*£110 per week in 1985*	
	†*Males*	‡*Females*	‖*Males*	‖*Females*
Gross weekly earnings*				
South East	6·4	41·8	9·0	32·9
East Anglia	10·7	59·3	13·1	51·4
South West	11·8	60·5	14·9	51·1
West Midlands	7·0	56·6	12·8	52·9
East Midlands	8·4	59·8	13·9	55·1
Yorkshire & Humberside	8·6	61·0	13·6	48·6
North West	8·7	58·2	13·0	48·6
North	8·1	60·2	13·1	52·0
England	7·9	52·4	11·8	44·0
Scotland	9·3	59·5	14·2	51·5
Wales	9·9	56·8	14·4	49·9
Great Britain	8·1	53·3	12·1	45·0

	Percentage earning less than:			
	£60 per week in 1979		*£110 per week in 1985*	
	†*Males*	‡*Females*	‖*Males*	‖*Females*
Gross weekly earnings (excluding overtime)*				
South East	10·1	44·1	12·9	35·1
East Anglia	19·3	61·2	21·7	53·7
South West	17·4	62·4	21·3	54·0
West Midlands	11·4	58·8	18·7	55·2
East Midlands	14·6	62·6	21·6	57·8
Yorkshire & Humberside	14·4	63·3	20·0	55·2
North West	14·1	60·4	18·5	51·5
North	12·6	62·3	18·0	54·4
England	12·8	54·6	17·1	46·5
Scotland	14·9	62·2	20·7	54·5
Wales	14·5	58·7	19·7	51·7
Great Britain	13·0	55·6	17·6	47·5

*Where earnings were not affected by absence.
†Aged 21 and over.
‡Aged 18 and over.
‖On adult rates.

The numbers corresponding to the percentages for Great Britain are estimated to be:

Millions

	Males	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*
Gross weekly earnings	0·9	2·8	1·3	2·1
Gross weekly earnings (excluding overtime)	1·5	2·9	1·8	2·2

Mr. Meacher asked the Paymaster General what was the number and rate per 1,000 of the population of people unemployed *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region in each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following table shows the available information, which is also in the Library. Figures are given for the United Kingdom and the standard economic planning regions for November of each year since 1979. They are adjusted for discontinuities and relate to unemployed claimants, seasonally adjusted excluding school leavers. Unemployment rates are the number of unemployed expressed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed. Precise unemployment figures for social security regions are not available except at disproportionate cost.

Unemployed claimants—seasonally adjusted excluding school leavers—November each year

Thousands

	1979		*1980*		*1981*		*1982*		*1983*		*1984*		*1985*	
	Number	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*
United Kingdom	1,145·7	4·7	1,844·6	7·6	2,503·8	10·3	2,780·0	11·5	2,947·2	12·3	3,097·1	12·8	3,165·2	13·1
South East	225·0	2·9	380·9	4·9	565·7	7·3	643·2	8·3	698·1	9·0	744·1	9·4	764·5	9·7
East Anglia	27·0	3·7	45·0	6·1	60·9	8·2	71·3	9·6	73·6	9·7	75·7	9·9	80·3	10·5
South West	76·7	4·6	114·7	6·8	152·3	9·0	167·4	9·9	180·0	10·7	194·4	11·4	201·2	11·8
West Midlands	109·4	4·7	201·4	8·6	290·7	12·5	320·3	14·0	329·5	14·6	335·2	14·9	335·9	14·9
East Midlands	62·0	3·8	112·1	6·9	150·2	9·3	166·5	10·3	179·5	11·3	192·3	12·0	195·8	12·3
Yorkshire & Humberside	98·7	4·7	171·7	8·2	231·7	11·1	257·3	12·5	267·6	13·1	285·0	14·0	294·2	14·5
North West	168·2	5·9	265·3	9·3	356·2	12·7	394·7	14·2	419·0	15·1	429·9	15·5	433·8	15·6
North	99·9	7·3	143·8	10·7	184·3	14·1	199·4	15·4	211·2	16·7	225·6	17·9	225·9	17·9
Wales	68·8	6·2	112·4	10·3	142·0	13·2	154·7	14·5	159·1	15·0	170·8	16·0	172·8	16·2
Scotland	154·3	6·8	217·9	9·6	277·0	12·2	300·1	13·2	313·9	14·0	325·9	14·4	336·7	14·9
Northern Ireland	55·6	9·6	79·3	13·6	92·8	16·0	105·1	18·2	115·7	20·0	118·2	20·3	124·0	21·3

Loan Guarantee Scheme

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what was the distribution of loans on the loan guarantee scheme by *(a)* amount loaned, *(b)* number of employees in the company and *(c)* turnover of the company to which money has been loaned for each year since the introduction of the scheme in 1981.

Mr. Trippier: The following information is available:

A. Loans covered by the loan guarantee scheme since its inception in 1981 broken down by size of loan

Amount of loan £	*Number of loans*	*Percentage of total*
0 to 15,000	5,558	30
15,001 to 30,000	5,368	29
30,001 to 45,000	2,434	13
45,001 to 60,000	2,101	11
60,001 to 75,000	2,880	16

Notes:

(a) The maximum size of loan under the scheme has been £75,000 throughout the period.

(b) A business may obtain more than one loan (up to a cumulative maximum of £75,000). The figures given are for the number of loans.

B. Employment data are collected from time to time in sample surveys of firms receiving loans under the scheme. The following information is derived from the latest survey data on loans issued in the stated period

Number employed	*Percentage of firms in size categories*			
	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*mid 1984-85*
0 to 5	24	25	26	47
5½ to 10	38	33	38	22
10½ to 15	11	18	15	10
15½ to 20	11	4	7	9
Over 20	16	20	24	12

Notes:

(a) Part-time employees are counted as ½.

(b) Data relates to loans in force and employment at the time of the survey.

C. The following information on turnover is on the same basis as the employment information in B above

Turnover range £	*Percentage of firms in size categories*			
	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*mid 1984-85*
Up to 100,000	22	27	22	29
100,001 to 200,000	30	25	19	31
200,001 to 300,000	14	6	11	10
300,001 to 400,000	19	8	17	8
400,001 to 500,000	11	4	9	8
500,001 to 750,000	3	12	13	6
750,001 to 1 million	0	12	2	7
Over 1 million	3	6	7	7

Note:

Figures give estimated annual turnover at the time of the survey.

Business (Safety Regulations)

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what changes in safety regulations for businesses have been implemented since the publication of "Burdens on Business".

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Since the report "Burdens on Business" was published in March 1985, the following regulations have been made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974:

The Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1985.

The Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Amendment Regulation 1985.

The Explosives (Licensing of Stores and Registration of Premises) Fees Regulations 1985.

The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985.

The Baking and Sausage-Making (Christmas and New Year) Regulations 1985.

Community Programme

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General what is the minimum number of job hours per week that must be available in order for a part-time community programme place to be included as a vacancy in the monthly unfilled vacancy totals.

Mr. Alan Clark: Community programme jobs must be for at least two days or 16 hours if spread over more than two days.

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General how many of the 24,000 community programme places listed as unfilled vacancies for November 1985 were for part-time jobs.

Mr. Alan Clark: There were about 18,000 unfilled part-time community programme vacancies on 8 November. Part-time jobs on the programme are defined as those involving work for less than 35 hours per week.

Business (Deregulation)

Mr. Lewis Stevens asked the Paymaster General what progress has been made in deregulation since the publication of the White Paper, "Lifting the Burden."

Mr. Trippier: We have made good progress on deregulation and a number of the proposals set out in the White Paper "Lifting the Burden" (Cmnd. 9571) are being implemented. My right hon. and noble Friend has set up the enterprise and deregulation unit reporting directly to him, and procedures for monitoring the impact of new regulations on business have been introduced.

Steps so far taken to reduce burdens on business include the extension to two years of the qualifying period in unfair dismissal cases, the introduction of new building regulations, the publication of a review of the use classes order and proposals for amending legislation on wages councils and women's hours of work.

My right hon. and noble Friend has announced the Government's intention to publish a second White Paper on deregulation in the spring.

Small Firms

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Paymaster General what is the estimated number of people employed in small firms.

Mr. Trippier: While accurate information on employment in small firms is not available, small firms probably provide employment for over one quarter of the employed labour force. The Department is investigating possible methods of improving the quality of information on the level of employment in small firms without increasing the burdens on small businesses.

Local Enterprise Agencies

Mr. Evennett asked the Paymaster General if he will seek to encourage local authorities to become more involved in local enterprise agencies.

Mr. Trippier: I am anxious to see local authorities support their local enterprise agencies, but this is a decision which rests with them. I would not like to see local authorities reduce their support as a result of the recently announced new funding scheme for local enterprise agencies. The strength of the local enterprise agency movement lies in the fact that they are a partnership of local interests both private and public. This is the reason why they are so successful.

Trade Unions (Ballots)

Dr. Twinn asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to the manner in which trade unions are fulfilling the obligations laid upon them by recent legislation concerning the maintenance of political funds and the holding of ballots of their memberships.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Twenty seven of the unions which will have to hold ballots before 31 March 1986 if they wish to retain their political funds have already done so. These ballots have been held under rules approved by the certification officer and have generally been free from complaint about the ballot procedures.

The campaign that the TUC has been co-ordinating has been less honest. Some unions have failed to make it clear that they need a political fund only if they wish to spend money on party political or electoral matters. They have misrepresented the changes made by the Trade Unions Act 1984 to the definition of "political objects". That legislation did no more than clarify and bring up to date the definition provided by the Trade Union Act 1913. They have argued misleadingly that unions' ability to campaign on their members' behalf will be constrained without a fund. They have omitted to tell their members how much of their political funds go directly to the Labour party.

All the unions conducting political fund review ballots have an obligation under the 1913 Act to advise members of their right not to pay the levy. Most have adopted rules which oblige them to notify members individually. I hope they will do so and that thereafter they will comply with the TUC's undertaking to ensure that all members are freely and effectively able to exercise their right to contract out of payment.

THE ARTS

Liverpool Empire and Philharmonic Halls

Mr. Parry asked the Minister for the Arts if he will take steps to seek to ensure that the Liverpool Empire and Philharmonic Halls do not lose grant as a result of the abolition of Merseyside county council, following the decision of the Arts Council not to fund them in 1986.

Mr. Luce: Grants to individual arts bodies are a matter for the Arts Council to determine. It has long been the policy of the council to support artists rather than buildings and on this basis it announced recently that it did not feel able to use any of the £25 million post-abolition funding allocated to it by the Government to fund receiving theatres such as the Liverpool Empire and Philharmonic Hall in the abolition areas.

The council has, however, made clear that it is prepared to take into account any increase in funding for these theatres from the successor authorities, when it considers the funding of the other arts organisations in the areas affected. I hope that the successor authorities will now

enter into serious discussions with the Arts Council and regional arts associations with a view to devising suitable joint funding arrangements which will safeguard all the arts organisations in their areas.

NATIONAL FINANCE

MO (Percentage Rise)

Mr. Knox asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer by what percentage MO rose in the 12-month periods to the beginning of each month since May 1979.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Figures are not available for the beginning of each calendar month. The figures for 12-month increases are derived mainly from the average of the levels for the Wednesdays of each banking month.

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
January		12·6	4·7	5·8	2·9	6·0	5·4
February		10·3	6·1	3·9	3·4	6·3	5·4
March		10·0	6·5	2·7	5·3	5·7	5·3
April		9·7	7·1	1·7	6·1	4·9	6·0
May	14·4	8·8	7·4	0·3	6·7	5·2	5·4
June	12·5	9·5	4·8	2·8	6·4	5·5	5·2
July	11·1	8·7	6·3	1·3	6·3	5·8	5·1
August	12·3	8·4	4·7	1·8	6·6	5·4	4·5
September	12·4	8·0	5·1	2·3	6·4	5·3	4·2
October	13·0	6·5	5·3	2·6	6·7	5·5	3·4
November	13·3	5·3	4·4	3·4	6·4	5·6	
December	12·1	5·6	4·4	4·0	6·5	6·5	

Full details of the average month series for MO are given in the March 1984 Bank of England "Quarterly Bulletin" (pages 78 and 80).

Value Added Tax

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current turnover for value added tax; and what are the equivalent figures for the other member states of the European Economic Community.

Mr. Brooke: The current United Kingdom VAT registration threshold is £19,500 taxable turnover per annum. The sterling equivalents of the thresholds in other member states are:

Member State		
Belgium	Nil	
Denmark	£ 739	taxable turnover
France	£ 118	tax liability
Germany	£ 5,362	taxable turnover
Ireland	£20,636	Taxable turnover where 90 per cent. of turnover is derived from goods;
		or
	£ 9,905	for other traders
Italy	Nil	
Luxembourg	£ 2,645	taxable turnover
Netherlands	£ 546	tax liability

Note:
Exchange rates as at 25 November 1985. Greece has not yet introduced VAT.

Public Borrowing

Mr. Beith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about the projected level of public borrowing in 1986-87.

Mr. MacGregor: Various differing suggestions have been made.

Johnson Matthey Bankers

Mr. Dalyell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the City on the proposed sale of Johnson Matthey Bankers.

Mr. Ian Stewart: None. The sale of Johnson Matthey Bankers is a matter for the Bank of England.

Manufacturing Exports

Mr. Merchant asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the present level of manufacturing exports compares with the level in 1978.

Mr. MacGregor: The value of manufactured exports in 1984 was £47 billion compared to £28 billion in 1978.

Family Taxation

Mr. Ashdown asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the level of indirect taxation, as a percentage of income, levied on a married man with two children earning *(a)* £8,000 and *(b)* £20,000 per annum in 1979 and the latest year for which figurs are available.

Mr. Brooke: Estimates of indirect tax payments cannot reliably be made at earnings levels as high as £20,000 in 1979-80. Estimates for a married man with two children earning £8,000 in 1979-80 and the same amount in real terms in 1985-86 are as follows:

Indirect taxes as a percentage of gross income

	Percentage
1979-80	10·6
1985-86	11·0

Energy Efficiency Projects

Mr. Wallace asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is considering any fiscal incentives for industry to invest in energy efficiency projects.

Mr. Moore: Our tax policy is designed to provide adequate incentives for all worthwhile projects, including those directed at improved energy efficiency.

European Monetary System

Mr. Livsey asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has recently received concerning joining the European monetary system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The United Kingdom is already a member of the European monetary system but does not participate in the exchange rate mechanism, regarding which the position is kept under regular review. My right hon. Friend has received representations on this subject from the CBI and a number of others.

Stamp Duty

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has received representations concerning the thresholds for stamp duty.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations concerning the stamp duty threshold.

Oil Revenue

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his estimates for oil revenue for the year 1986-87.

Mr. Moore: I have nothing to add to my right hon. Friend's opening remarks in the debate on the autumn statement on 12 December 1985 at column 180.

Double Taxation (Canada)

Mr. Dover asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what concessions he was able to obtain from Canada in relation to the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Canada) Order 1985.

Mr. Moore: The provisions of double taxation agreements represent a package of measures which both countries are able to accept as part of a fair and balanced treaty. Among the changes of benefit to the United Kingdom in the new Canadian agreement are the reductions in the Canadian withholding tax on dividends from direct investment in Canada, in the Canadian branch profits tax, and in the withholding tax on interest. In addition, there are provisions which will benefit United Kingdom pensioners living in Canada.

Mr. Dover asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consultations he had regarding the provisions of Article 27A of the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Canada) Order 1985.

Mr. Moore: The usual press release was issued announcing that negotiations would take place on possible changes to the existing United Kingdom/Canada double taxation convention and inviting representations from interested parties. No detailed consultations took place on individual articles.

Mr. Dover asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer why he has not exempted existing contracts from the provisions of the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Canada) Order 1985.

Mr. Moore: It would not be normal practice to include an open-ended exemption of this kind in a double taxation agreement.

Inland Revenue (Waste)

Mr. Higgins asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer why five income tax assessments were sent from the same Inland Revenue office to a constituent of the right hon. Member for Worthing on the same day in separate envelopes; and what steps he proposes to take to avoid such waste of public funds and resources.

Mr. Moore: Tax districts have instructions to make arrangements to ensure that, as far as possible, all notices of assessment are issued in the same envelope. Without details of my right hon. Friend's constituent I cannot comment specifically on his case.

Sub-Saharan Africa (Government Debt)

Mr. Blair asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give details of the amount of outstanding Government debt to countries in sub-Saharan Africa and if he will give a breakdown by country.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1985, c. *176*]: Capital repayments outstanding on loan disbursements from the official United Kingdom aid programme and by the Commonwealth Development Corporation to developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa totalled £132 million and £281 million, respectively, at the most recent dates for which the information is available (31 March or 30 September 1985 for the former, and 30 September 1985 for the latter). Interest already due on these disbursements but not yet received by the same dates amounted to £2 million on the aid programme loans and £5 million on the CDC loans. A breakdown of the total capital repayments and interest by country is as follows.

Outstanding principal due under contracts with sub-Saharan African countries guaranteed by the Export Credits Guarantee Department totalled £2,608 million at 30 September 1985. Past interest already due but not yet received and future interest related to the outstanding amount totalled £573 million at the same date. It has been the practice of successive Administrations not to make public ECGD's involvement with particular countries.

	United Kingdom Aid Programme	*Commonwealth Development Corporation*
Botswana		18·5
Cameroon	0·2	24·8
Gambia		0·8
Ghana	0·8	2·5
Ivory Coast	0·2	15·1
Kenya		47·6
Lesotho		1·9
Liberia	0·1	7·1
Malawi		39·3
Mauritius	11·1	2·9
Nigeria	9·8	6·9
Senegal	1·1	
Seychelles	9·6	1·8
Sierra Leone		1·6
Sudan		1·2
Swaziland	13·7	23·0
Tanzania		23·2
Uganda		2·1
Zambia	42·6	51·1
Zimbabwe	44·7	15·1
Total	*133·7	286·5
Capital	†131·7	281·4
Interest	2·0	5·1

* Total does not add up due to roundings.

† This includes a very small amount of interest that cannot be separated.

Taxation Revenue

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the additional income to the Exchequer if *(a)* all present tax allowances and *(b)* those tax reliefs for which estimates can be made are set against the standard rate of tax only.

Mr. Moore [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 December 1985, c. *542*]: The cost at 1985-86 levels of income of allowing personal tax allowances at rates in excess of the basic rate of income tax is estimated to be about £490 million. Information on the similar cost of other income tax reliefs is available only in respect of mortgage interest, retirement annuity premiums and employees' superannuation contributions; in total it is about £530 million. It is not possible to estimate precisely the combined yield from restricting these reliefs and personal allowances to the basic rate, but it is thought to be about £1,150 million.

Mutual Organisations (Recognition)

Mr. Wilson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the policy of the Bank of England towards granting recognition under the Banking Act to mutual organisations.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 December 1985, c. *806*]: Under the terms of the Banking Act 1979, the Bank of England may only authorise a United Kingdom organisation as a recognised bank or licensed deposit-taker if that organisation is a body corporate or a partnership meeting the other minimum criteria specified in the Act.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Food (Irradiation Techniques)

47. **Mr. Jim Callaghan** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has received any recent representations about the use of irradiation techniques in respect of food for domestic consumption; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: A few representations about food irradiation have been received recently from hon. Members, organisations and members of the public. We expect to publish the forthcoming report on the subject by the advisory committee on irradiated and novel foods early in 1986 for public comment. The representations already received will be fully considered in the light of the report, along with other comments received on it.

Social Security

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish the further consultative papers foreshadowed in his White Paper on social security.

Mr. Newton: The Department has issued two consultation papers today seeking views on proposals for a statutory maternity allowance scheme and changes to the industrial injuries scheme as foreshadowed in paragraphs 5.22 and 5.9 of the recent White Paper on social security.* Comments on both papers have been requested by 15 February 1986. I am arranging for copies of the papers to be placed in the Library and in the Vote Office.

As I informed the House yesterday in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) at columns *229-30*, a consultation paper on proposed changes in benefits for students, along the lines indicated in paragraph 3.34 of the White Paper, will be published early in the new year.

* Reform of Social Security: Programme for Action (Cmnd. 9691.)

McColl Report

Mr. Hawksley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects to publish the McColl report on artifical limb and appliance centres.

Mr. Newton: I regret to say that it has not proved practicable to publish the report before Christmas, as we originally expected. We therefore intend to publish it as soon as possible after the forthcoming recess.

Kidney Patients

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many kidney transplants took place in 1984; and how that compares with the three previous years.

Mr. Whitney: According to data supplied by the United Kingdom transplant service, the number of cadaveric renal transplant operations performed in the United Kingdom in 1984 was 1,443. This compares with 1,144 such operations performed in 1983, 1,070 in 1982, and 905 in 1981.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he proposes to find out how many patients with chronic renal failure might benefit from treatment.

Mr. Whitney: The assessment of whether individul renal patients would benefit from treatment is a matter for the clinical judgment of the doctors involved. The most recent formal study in 1978 indicated that each year between 45 and 50 new chronic renal failure patients per million population might benefit from treatment. Although the incidence of renal failure has not changed since then, improving techniques are making it possible to extend the range of patients who can be successfully treated.

NHS Privatisation

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services pursuant to the answer of 25 November, *Official Report*, columns *499-502*, whether the figures quoted for estimated annual savings from putting services out to tender were all calculated following a standard procedure.

Mr. Hayhoe: This information is extracted from returns submitted by health authorities giving their estimates of the savings which will be made.

Private Practice

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 9 December, *Official Report*, columns *499-506*, why the number of authorised amenity beds fell between 1983 and 1984.

Mr. Hayhoe: Authorisation of amenity beds is delegated to health authorities. The total number decreased between 1983 and 1984 because that was the net effect of authorities' decisions.

Health Authorities (Revenue Allocations)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now reply to the question No. 70 of the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras tabled for answer on 4 December concerning revenue allocations to London health authorities.

Mr. Hayhoe: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 17 December at columns *145-48*.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what the chairmen of the Bloomsbury, City and Hackney, Lewisham and North Southwark, West Lambeth and Lambeth social health districts have represented to him about the adequacy of funding of their health authorities in the talks he had with them in the current year.

Mr. Hayhoe: There have been no such talks this year with the chairmen of these district health authorities. Funding by district health authorities is a matter for the regional health authorities concerned.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will bear in mind any sponsorship arrangements when allocating funds to regional health authorities; and whether he expects regional health authorities to bear sponsorship funds in mind when allocating funds to districts.

Mr. Hayhoe: No.

NHS (Consultants)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the health authorities which have instituted formal arrangements to monitor consultants' commitment to National Health Service work;

(2) if he will list the health authorities which have instituted disciplinary proceedings against consultants in relation to their commitment to National Health Service work.

Mr. Hayhoe: I regret that this information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he is satisfied with the present monitoring by health authorities of consultants' commitment to National Health Service work.

Mr. Hayhoe: Consultants' sessional commitments to National Health Service work depend upon their individual contracts. It is for their employing authorities to satisfy themselves that the terms of those contracts are being met and, where this is not the case, to take appropriate action. If prima facie evidence of the failure of a consultant to meet the terms of his contract were to come to my notice, I would ensure that it was drawn to the attention of the employing authority.

Teaching Hospitals

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each region and for England in 1985-86 *(a)* the revenue allocation, *(b)* the growth addition in revenue over 1984-85 after allowing for movements in National Health Service pay and prices, *(c)* the service increment for teaching, *(d)* the capital allocation, *(e)* the percentage share of their weighted population entitlement and *(f)* the central capital contribution to major teaching hospital schemes.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

NHS (Pay)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the index for the movement of National Health Service pay and prices since 1970, expressing 1970 costs as 100; and whether separate indices are used to deflate health service costs in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

NHS (Staff)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for 1978-79 and for 1984-85 the average pay levels for the following categories of National Health Service staff *(a)* nursing and midwifery, *(b)* medical and dental, *(c)* professional and technical, *(d)* works, *(e)* maintenance, *(f)* administrative and clerical and *(g)* ancillary, expressing the figures for 1984-85 both in money terms and in 1978-79 terms, as deflated by the retail prices index.

Mr. Whitney: Figures for 1978-79 are not available in any form. The following average gross weekly earnings for full-time staff in 1984-85 are estimated from returns supplied by 10 English regions.

	(1) Average gross weekly earnings 1984-85	*(1) Col (1) deflated by RPI to show 1978-79 equivalent*
	£	£
a. nursing and midwifery	128.14	72.48
b. medical and dental	[Reliable estimates not available]	
c. professional and technical	146.36	82.78
d. works	221.73	125.41
e. maintenance	159.42	90.17
f. administrative and clerical	123.92	70.09
g. ancillary	111.67	63.16

Amenity Beds

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each regional health authority and for England as a whole the number of authorised amenity beds, the average daily number of occupied amenity beds, the number of discharges and deaths of amenity patients and the income under section 63 of the National Health Service Act 1977 for each year since 1979.

Mr. Hayhoe: The information requested is given in the tables.

Table 1 Number of authorised amenity beds on 31 December each year in NHS hospitals

*Region**	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	**1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Northern	216	230	219	215	218	212
Yorkshire	262	264	282	256	309	289
Trent	283	306	280	288	198	175
East Anglian	49	59	50	53	54	47
North West Thames*	88	111	108	92	96	109
North East Thames*	163	127	127	116	86	94
South East Thames*	140	143	189	160	183	164
South West Thames*	328	190	167	173	110	105
Wessex	177	157	146	144	144	144
Oxford	103	79	85	79	79	75
South Western	136	131	200	129	118	123
West Midlands	291	207	203	177	173	159
Mersey	200	198	223	185	172	137
North Western	194	169	167	122	115	118
Special Health Authorities and Boards of Governors*	49	55	58	54	36	27
England†	2,679	2,426	2,504	2,243	2,091	1,978

* Because of NHS restructuring in 1982 the regional figures are not strictly comparable over the whole period.
† Regional figures may not sum exactly to the England total because of rounding.

Table 2 Average daily number of beds occupied by amenity patients in NHS hospitals

*Region**	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	**1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Northern	8·7	12·5	17·2	9·0	7·8	8·5
Yorkshire	55 7	51·1	54·4	39·5	35·8	30·9
Trent	25·8	34·2	17·6	17·5	10·5	5·9
East Anglian	3·0	1·8	5·0	1·2	1·1	5·6
North West Thames*	11·1	26·8	21·3	4·9	13·2	8·3
North East Thames*	29·1	10·0	11·2	20·9	11·5	5·8
South East Thames*	8·5	7·9	3·1	2·6	4·4	14·7
South West Thames*	53·4	58·4	35·5	52·9	27·8	17·0
Wessex	15·1	11·5	11·6	10·5	8·5	8·7
Oxford	12·6	4·6	7·1	5·6	4·0	3·6
South Western	8·7	11·4	5·6	5·3	5·2	4·1
West Midlands	8·4	8·7	9·4	4·1	4·0	2·1
Mersey	16·9	15·8	13·4	9·8	9·6	7·7
North Western	12·1	19·3	20·3	12·3	9·4	7·5
Special Health Authorities and Boards of Governors*	10·5	12·3	12·9	7·7	7·5	2·4
England†	279·6	286·3	245·6	203·8	160·3	132·8

* Because of NHS restructuring in 1982 the regional figures are not strictly comparable over the whole period.
† Regional figures may not sum exactly to the England total because of rounding.

Table 3 Discharges and deaths of amenity patients in NHS hospitals

*Region**	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	**1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Northern	444	625	484	516	414	431
Yorkshire	1,485	1,495	1,638	1,280	1,311	1,104

Region*	1979	1980	1981	*1982	1983	1984
Trent	272	299	265	202	279	124
East Anglian	125	119	108	85	71	73
North West Thames*	467	580	743	375	360	378
North East Thames*	1,180	470	547	463	283	370
South East Thames*	271	277	152	166	235	1,017
South West Thames*	512	613	394	640	462	497
Wessex	411	429	412	338	293	276
Oxford	247	218	266	206	171	158
South Western	358	337	204	269	264	196
West Midlands	233	255	247	205	230	181
Mersey	657	645	595	489	447	449
North Western	735	1,128	1,375	879	723	628
Special Health Authorities and Boards of Governors*	475	530	542	492	501	363
England†	7,872	8,020	7,972	6,605	6,044	6,245

* Because of NHS restructuring in 1982 the regional figures are not strictly comparable over the whole period.
† Regional figures may not sum exactly to the England total because of rounding.

Income under section 63 of the National Health Service Act 1977

Table 4

Region	1979-80 £	1980-81 £	1981-82 £	1982-83 £	1983-84 £	1984-85 £
Northern	11,488	13,345	17,177	22,996	27,118	26,997
Yorkshire	32,433	34,461	36,607	62,102	66,623	55,746
Trent	25,916	22,638	16,962	27,239	21,728	18,727
East Anglian	3,099	2,308	3,167	6,075	4,235	4,564
North West Thames*	10,356	15,769	8,495	*17,205	24,180	18,023
North East Thames*	17,368	14,414	14,794	*17,379	26,082	18,285
South East Thames*	9,936	7,540	6,118	*15,631	27,146	34,319
South West Thames*	23,427	21,334	17,040	*35,197	27,459	35,870
Wessex	14,443	29,533	40,150	33,532	28,096	26,671
Oxford	8,326	7,367	9,006	16,063	12,278	10,599
South Western	11,476	12,156	8,015	20,527	17,281	16,630
West Midlands	7,552	8,626	6,977	11,441	14,714	12,171
Mersey	16,779	17,531	18,781	23,494	25,604	23,607
North Western	22,203	25,756	29,330	36,956	46,013	33,300
London SHAs*	8,833	5,940	8,680	*22,850	20,780	10,060
Total (England)	223,635	238,718	241,299	368,687	389,337	345,569

* Because of NHS restructuring in 1982 the regional figures are not strictly comparable over the whole period.

Nicorette

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why he is not prepared to allow Nicorette and other such substitutes to be supplied on a National Health Service prescription.

Mr. Whitney: The advisory committee on borderline substances which considers anti-smoking preparations has consistently advised that Nicorette and similar preparations should not be prescribed by general practitioners.

Single Payments

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he intends to continue making single payments for draught-proofing under his proposed social fund.

Mr. Newton: We are considering future arrangements for help with draught-proofing with the other Government Departments concerned, in the context of the overall help available to people on low incomes with energy conservation measures.

Families (Disabled Children)

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the number of families with more than one disabled child.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information is not available centrally to enable us to make any reliable estimate of the number of families with more than one disabled child.

Funeral Expenses

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements he will make to help with funeral expenses following the proposed abolition of the death grant in April 1987 and before the full implementation of his proposed social fund in April 1988.

Mr. Newton: The new arrangements for funeral expenses from 1987 will be consistent with the approach we shall adopt when the full social fund is implemented, as outlined in chapter 4 of the White Paper.

Death Grant

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what savings he estimates will be made in one year as a result of the abolition of the death grant and the introduction of help with funeral expenses under the social fund.

Mr. Newton: The financial effect of replacing the death grant and supplementary benefit single payments for funeral expenses with help under the social fund will depend on a number of factors, including local funeral

prices and the extent of recovery from estates under the new scheme, and reliable estimates of the net effect are not available.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the amount of money to be saved in the first full year after transitional arrangements from the housing benefit proposals contained in Cmnd. 9691, showing the amounts to be saved *(a)* in applying his 20 per cent. contribution requirement for rates, *(b)* in help with rents and *(c)* in help with rates, other than the allowance for a 20 per cent. contribution.

Mr. Newton: The White Paper shows that expenditure on housing benefit is expected to be of the order of £450 million less, on the basis of the illustrative assumptions, than if no changes were made to the current scheme. About three quarters of the reduction in expenditure would arise from the 20 per cent. contribution towards domestic rates. Nearly all of the remaining savings would be in housing benefit expenditure on rents.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the cost of housing benefit in *(a)* 1985-86, *(b)* 1986-87, *(c)* 1987-88, *(d)* 1988-89 and *(e)* 1989-90, respectively.

Mr. Major: The figures for the total cost of housing benefit underlying the last public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 9428) published in January 1985, are £4,330 million in 1985-86, £4,500 million in 1986-87 and £4,600 million in 1987-88 including rate rebates which do not count as public expenditure. Up to date estimates for those years, and an estimate for 1988-89 will be included in the next public expenditure White Paper to be published in January.

Income Support

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how much an unemployed single person, aged 24 years and who receives *(a)* heating additions and *(b)* the average amount of single payment per annum, will lose in benefit following the introduction of income support, using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), and calculated on (i) a weekly and (ii) a yearly basis;

(2) how much a 60 to 79-year-old single pensioner who currently receives *(a)* diet, *(b)* clothing, *(c)* heating additions and *(d)* the average single payment help will lose under his new income support scheme, using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691);

(3) how much a pensioner couple who both currently receive *(a)* diet, *(b)* clothing, *(c)* heating additions and *(d)* the average single payment help and are aged between 60 and 79 years will lose under his new income support scheme using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691);

(4) using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), how many claimants who currently receive supplementary benefit will receive no help under the new income support scheme;

(5) using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), how many claimants who now receive housing benefit will receive no help under the new income support scheme.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what deduction he proposes in income support for the families of workers engaged in industrial disputes.

Mr. Newton: Section 6(1)*(b)* of the Social Security (No. 2) Act 1980 requires a deduction, now £17, to be made from any supplementary benefit otherwise payable for the dependants of a person involved in a trade dispute. We intend to make similar provision in the income support scheme; and meanwhile, of course, the deduction will continue to be uprated in accordance with section 6(2) of the same Act.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) in his assumption of the pensioner premium for income support in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), what allowance is made for heating additions currently paid;

(2) how allowances for heating will be made under the new income support scheme;

(3) on what basis the assumptions of the basic income support and premium rates for *(a)* a single pensioner aged under 80 years, *(b)* a single pensioner over 80 years and *(c)* a lone parent in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), were calculated.

Mr. Newton: The illustrative assumptions take account of pressures faced by different groups and the present pattern of help, including heating additions.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how exceptionally severe weather allowances will be paid under the new income support scheme.

Mr. Newton: The income support scheme, like the present supplementary benefit scale rates and weekly additions, is designed to make regular weekly payments, not single payments of the kind to which the hon. Member refers.

Child Benefit

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what rate of child benefit is assumed in the calculation of gainers and losers in the technical annex to the White Paper "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691).

Mr. Newton: For those tables illustrating the effect of structural reform, the current child benefit rate of £7 is assumed. As for other benefit rates, an uprating factor of 3·25 per cent. in April 1988 is assumed for the tables showing the cash position at the point of change.

Rates and Rent

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many claimants will receive less money in housing benefit as a result of his proposed taper for help with rates;

(2) how many claimants will receive less money in housing benefit as a result of his proposed taper for help with rents.

Mr. Newton: The illustrative tapers form only one element of the basic structural reform of the housing benefit scheme. It is therefore not possible to estimate their separate effects.

Benefits

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the combined cost of single payments, death grant and maternity grant in *(a)* 1985-86, *(b)* 1986-87 and *(c)* 1987-88, respectively.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Social Fund

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the budget for the social fund for its first year of operation.

Mr. Newton: Final decisions have not been taken on the size of the budget.

Public Life (Standards of Conduct)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what advice he has issued to regional health authorities and district health authorities on compliance with the recommendations of the Salmon committee on standards of conduct in public life with reference to interests of members, officers, employees and consultants of authorities and representations received from others, including Members of Parliament;

(2) whether the recommendations of the Salmon committee on standards of conduct in public life apply to the Health Services Board.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Pensions

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how he proposes to provide special protection *(a)* for women with breaks in work to bring up families, *(b)* for those who become disabled and *(c)* for those looking after disabled people, following the proposed abolition of the best-20-years rule in SERPS; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services under the proposals in the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), on the basis of what number of years life-time average earnings will be calculated for *(a)* men and *(b)* women, for the purposes of obtaining full pension entitlement.

Mr. Newton: For people reaching state pensionable age after 4 April 1999, when the 20 best years rule would have come into effect, state earnings related pensions will be calculated on the basis of earnings in all the tax years in their working life between 1978-79, or the tax year in which their 16th birthday falls if later, and the tax year in which a woman reaches age 59 or a man age 64. Years from 1978-79 in which a person does not have sufficient earnings to qualify for basic pension will be excluded from the calculation (provided they do not reduce the total left in the working life to less than 20) if any of the following conditions are satisfied:

(i) they were entitled to home responsibilities protection because they were looking after a child or a disabled or elderly person, or

(ii) they were entitled to national insurance contribution (NIC) credits because of their own incapacity for work, or

(iii) they qualified for NIC credits with invalid care allowance.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the guaranteed minimum level of contributions towards contracted out occupational or personal pension schemes proposed in the White Paper "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), will include both employer and employee contributions.

Mr. Newton: Paragraphs 2.48 to 2.50 of the White Paper explain how guaranteed minimum contributions will be paid to personal pensions. These contributions will include both employers' and employees' shares of the contracted-out national insurance contribution rebate.

The test for a contracted-out money purchase occupational scheme will be that the employer make contributions to the scheme at least equal to the total contracted-out rebate. But he will be entitled to recover up to the employee's share of the rebate from scheme members. This arrangement will leave employers, who choose to do so, free to operate schemes in which employees are not required to make any contributions.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish versions of tables P1-P6 of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security," (Cmnd. 9691), showing projections based on current SERPS provisions.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services under the proposals in the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), if all employees will have the right to choose between *(a)* SERPS, *(b)* occupational pensions and *(c)* personal portable pensions.

Mr. Newton: All employees will have the right to take an approved personal pension rather than staying fully in the state earnings — related pension scheme or an occupational pension scheme. An employee will have access to an occupational scheme only if his employer operates a scheme which he is eligible to join. The White Paper also makes it clear that once someone has left an occupational scheme to take a personal pension it will be up to his employer whether or not he can rejoin the scheme later on. Any employee, with sufficient earnings to make him eligible, will continue to be fully in SERPS, if he is not in a contracted-out occupational or personal pension scheme.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, under the proposals in the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691); if all employees will be able to make additional contributions towards SERPS pensions as well as to occupational and personal pensions.

Mr. Newton: No.

Supplementary Benefit (Statistics)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what was the number and rate per 1,000 of each category of single payments in the years 1978 to 1985 inclusive;

(2) what was the number and rate per 1,000 of the population of people on supplementary pension *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region for each year from 1979 to the latest available date;

(3) what was the number and rate per 1,000 of the population of people on supplementary benefit *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region for each year from 1979 to the latest available date;

(4) what was the number and rate per 1,000 claimants of people who received single payments *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region for each year from 1979 to the latest available date in 1985 with the average payment; and what proportion were (i) pensioners and (ii) families with children;

(5) what was the ratio of claimants to staff in local offices of his Department *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region for each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Hypothermia

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of people who have died each year from 1979 to the latest available year from hypothermia *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region.

Mr. Whitney: The information is not readily available in the exact form requested. However, the number of deaths with a mention of hypothermia on the death certificate, regardless of whether it did or did not appear as the underlying cause of death is shown in the table for England and Wales, and the standard regions for 1979 to 1984, the latest available full year.

Hypothermia deaths: number of mentions, England and Wales and Standard Region of usual residence—1979-1984

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
England and Wales*	862	596	686	664	539	554
Wales	50	34	40	47	24	25
North	73	41	67	57	53	65
Yorkshire and Humberside	146	111	97	103	63	66
East Midlands	74	53	56	48	39	55
East Anglia	94	54	74	76	61	51
South East	52	34	44	33	27	25
South West	240	182	187	200	198	185
West Midlands	60	46	64	47	45	44
North West	73	41	57	53	29	37

* Figures may not cast because of deaths of residents from outside England and Wales.

Mr Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why more people died of hypothermia in the first six months of the current year than in the whole of the previous year.

Mr Whitney: The OPCS records kept on this since 1971 show that the largest number of deaths occurs in the March quarter each year, and in the first quarter of 1985 there were of course two periods of exceptionally cold weather. I have, however, asked officials to analyse recent statistics on deaths where hypothermia was shown as a contributory cause of death, and to let me have a report.

NHS Employees

Mr Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number and rate per thousand of the population of whole time equivalent *(a)* nurses, *(b)* midwives, *(c)* doctors, *(d)* dentists and *(e)* health visitors employed in each year from 1978 to 1985 (i) nationally, (ii) in each district health authority and (iii) in each regional health authority.

Mr Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Health Statistics (Amber Valley)

Mr Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how hospital waiting lists in *(a)* Amber Valley and *(b)* Derbyshire for 1985 compare with those for 1979.

Mr Whitney: On 31 March 1985, the latest date for which information is available centrally, there were 9,810 hospital inpatient waiting list cases in north and southern Derbyshire district health authorities. The corresponding figure on 31 March 1979 was 10,952. Waiting list information is not available centrally by parliamentary constituency. My hon. Friend may wish to write to the chairman of the southern Derbyshire district health authority which may be able to provide information relating to Amber Valley.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the change in the number of doctors, nurses and midwives in *(a)* Amber Valley and *(b)* Derbyshire between 1979 and 1985.

Mr. Hayhoe: Figures for Amber Valley are not centrally available. To obtain information to this level of detail the hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the south Derbyshire district health authority.

In my reply to my hon. Friend on 13 November, at column *208*, I provided figures for doctors, nurses and midwives in Derbyshire for 30 September 1979, 1981 and 1984. The September 1984 figures are the latest available to this level of detail. However, a figure for nurses and midwives combined is available for June 1985. The table shows the changes.

NHS Staff in Derbyshire†‡‖ *Whole Time Equivalent‡*

	Change	
	1979 to 1984 (September 30)	*September 1979 to June 1985*
Doctors¶—excluding consultants and senior registrars	30	*
Nursing staff‖	540	*
Midwifery staff‖	10	*
Total nursing and midwifery staff‖	550	590
Total doctors,¶ nursing and midwifery staff	580	*

Notes:
* Not available.
† Staff in health authorities covering the county of Derbyshire.
‡ Figures are whole-time equivalent rounded to nearest 10 (Ten). Change is calculated from un-rounded figures.
‖ In 1980 the working week for nursing and midwifery staff is directly attributable to this change.
¶ Includes hospital practitioners, paragraph 94 appointments and locums.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many new hospitals have been built in *(a)* Amber Valley, *(b)* Derbyshire and *(c)* the east midlands since 1979.

Mr. Whitney: Hospital building schemes completed since 1979 are as follows:

(a) Amber Valley
Nil

(b) Derbyshire
Chesterfield DGH/Phase 1

(c) East Midlands
Glenfield DGH/Phase 1
Kilton (Bassetlaw) DGH/Phase 1
Leicester General/Mental Illness Unit
Leicester Royal Infirmary/Phase 3
Lincoln County/Phase 1
Queens Medical Centre Nottingham/Phase 2

External Consultants

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to his answer of 13 December to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, what was the breakdown between health, social security and social services of the expenditure from 1979 to 1980 to 1984-85 on external consultants.

Mr. Fowler: Expenditure on external consultancies was split between *(a)* health and personal social services, and, *(b)* social security as follows:

(£'000, 1984-85 prices)

	Health and Personal Social Services	*Social Security*
1979-80	59	567
1980-81	46	456
1981-82	76	778
1982-83	125	1,312
1983-84	324	3,460
1984-85	698	7,028

A division of expenditure between health and personal social services is not available.

Hospitals (Staff Sickness)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department is keeping details of hospital and ward closures caused by staff sickness during the current winter.

Mr. Whitney: No. It is for health authorities to deal with the consequences of staff sickness.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people will lose all benefit under the White Paper, "Structural Reforms", taking 20 per cent. rates contribution into account; and what is their client group and family status.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Cervical Cancer Screening

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services further to his answer of 9 December, *Official Report*, columns 490 and 491, to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, if he will list those authorities which are running call and recall schemes for cervical cancer screening and those which plan to provide them.

Mr. Hayhoe: The information is as follows:
Aylesbury Vale
Barnsley
Bristol and Weston
Camberwell
Central Manchester
Cheltenham and District
Chichester
Croydon
East Berkshire
Enfield
Exeter
Gloucester
Harrogate
Isle of Wight
Kettering
Mid-Downs
Milton Keynes
Northampton
North Bedfordshire
North Derbyshire
North Devon
North Manchester
North Staffordshire
North Tees
Plymouth
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire
Rochdale
Rotherham

Salford
South Bedfordshire
South Manchester
South Tees
Stockport
Torbay
Winchester
Worthing
Wycombe

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information is available within his Department on times taken by pathology laboratories to process cervical smears.

Mr. Hayhoe: Very little, as this is a matter for local management.

General Practitioner Surgeries

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people attended general practitioner surgeries in 1979 and each subsequent year.

Mr. Hayhoe: Data are not collected in the form requested. According to the general houshold survey, patients visit their doctors on average about three times per annum.

Post-operative Infection

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the sample information on post-operative infection held by his Department.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Stanley Royd Hospital (Inquiry)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects that the report of the inquiry into the deaths at Stanley Royd hospital will be published.

Mr. Fowler: I have now received the report of the committee of inquiry into the outbreak of food poisoning at the Stanley Royd hospital, Wakefield. I intend to publish the report early in the new year and a full statement will be made at that time. I am most grateful to the chairman and members of the committee for giving up so much of their time to inquire into this outbreak and its tragic consequences.

Cardiac Bypass Treatment

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he proposes to take steps to find out how many patients are awaiting cardiac bypass treatment.

Mr. Whitney: No. Waiting list information is collected centrally by consultant specialty and not by type of operation.

Fertility Clinics

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether it is his policy that each National Health Service region should have a clinic providing artificial insemination by donor and in vitro fertilisation, respectively.

Mr. Hayhoe: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) on 10 December, at column *604*. This applies also to provision of artificial insemination by donor.

Cost Improvement Programmes

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the money anticipated to be saved by cost improvement programmes in 1986-87.

Mr. Hayhoe: I expect to see an increase on the total of some £150 million which health authorities plan for 1985-86. Regional health authorities will set out their detailed plans in their 1986-87 short-term programmes, which they will be submitting to the Department shortly.

AIDS

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department first became aware that blood products imported from the United States of America might be affected by acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Hayhoe: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Bolton, South-East (Mr. Young) on 10 December, at column *616*.

Regional and District Managers

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses have been appointed regional or district general managers.

Mr. Hayhoe: Six. One at regional and five at district level.

Nursing Management

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about the post-Griffiths reorganisation of the management of nursing functions.

Mr. Hayhoe: A few letters from hon. Members and others have been received in the last three months.

Hospital (Peterborough)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has received any representations from the Peterborough health authority about the level of revenue funding in the current year and the proposed level of revenue funding for the new hospital being built there; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: I have received no such representations from the Peterborough health authority. The allocation of revenue funds to the Peterborough health authority is a matter for the East Anglian regional health authority and the hon. Member may care to contact the regional chairman direct for further details.

Spectacle Frames

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the Minister of State's answer of 9 December, *Official Report*, column 490, if he will name the companies which have ceased or limited, respectively, production of National Health Service frames; and how many fewer such frames are consequently being produced.

Mr. Hayhoe: Companies manufacturing National Health Service frames are not required to report their production figures, nor are they obliged to advise my Department when they discontinue manufacture.

However, formal and informal contacts indicate that the manufacture of National Health Service frames is now concentrated mainly on the largest companies.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 20 December 1985

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Magistrates (County Palatine)

Mr. Hoyle asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will enumerate magistrates in the county palatine under the following categories *(a)* sex, *(b)* age groupings, *(c)* occupation, *(d)* social background, *(e)* resident or non-resident within their petty sessional area and *(f)* any political viewpoint or affiliation they have acknowledged.

Mr. Tebbit: This information is not held centrally and could therefore only be obtained at a disproportionate cost. But if the hon. Member would care to write to me about any particular bench, I would do my best to provide the information for which he asks.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Africa (Food Aid)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received advocating using European Economic Community food mountains to relieve starvation in Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Raison: I have received numerous representations on the subject from hon. Members, voluntary organisations and from the general public.

It is not a primary purpose of the food aid programme to reduce EC food surpluses. But the European Community does draw on them as part of a food aid programme which cost about £420 million last year, the United Kingdom share being £91 million. As I have said on a number of occasions, the Government believe the first priority for this programme should be the provision of food aid for the relief of famine.

Between December 1984 and October 1985 about 1·44 million tonnes of cereals were delivered by the Community and its member states to the African countries* worst affected by famine.

*Ethiopia, Sudan, Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Angola, Mozambique.

ENERGY

National Coal Board

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many establishments other than pits and workshops have been closed by the National Coal Board since the end of the dispute in March; and if he will list them.

Mr. David Hunt: The only establishments other than collieries covered by the provisions of the coal industry's review procedures and closed since the end of the strike are the Caerphilly tar plant of Thomas Ness Ltd. and Derwenthaugh coking works of National Smokeless Fuels Ltd. The closure of other establishments are matters for the National Coal Board's local management on which information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many workshops have been closed by the National Coal Board since the end of the dispute in March; and if will list them.

Mr. David Hunt: I understand from the National Coal Board that seven workshops have closed since the end of the strike in March. They are:

Whitburn
Carcroft
Elsecar
Birdwell
Blackwell
Kirkless
Tondu

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many pits have been closed by the National Coal Board since the end of the dispute in March; and if he will list them.

Mr. David Hunt: I understand from the National Coal Board that 23 collieries have closed since the end of the strike in March. They are:

Brenkley
Herrington
Sacriston
Ackton Hall
Savile
Yorkshire Main
Cortonwood
Brookhouse
Fryston
Moorgreen
Pye Hill
Wolstanton
Bold
Haig
Bedwas
Celynen South
Markham
Treforgan
Penrikyber
Aberpergwm
Abertillery
St. Johns
Garw

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many mineworkers have been redeployed by the National Coal Board from establishments closed since the end of the dispute in March; and how many have opted for voluntary redundancy.

Mr. David Hunt: The redeployment of mineworkers is a matter for the National Coal Board. Between 9 March 1985 and 30 November 1985 some 18,500 men from colliery books took redundancy. The proportion of these who came from establishments closed since the end of the dispute could be established only at disproportionate cost.

Energy Efficiency Year

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy what are the targets and plans established for domestic sector activity in Energy Efficiency Year.

Mr. David Hunt: The purpose of Energy Efficiency Year is to increase awareness and up-take of appropriate measures as a contribution to the energy efficiency office's objective of a 20 per cent. improvement in energy efficiency by 1995. Present Government programmes relevant to the domestic sector will continue through the year: these include the homes insulation scheme; a review of the thermal insulation standards for new dwellings; demonstration projects for energy efficiency measures in new and existing (including rehabilitated) dwellings; and financial support for the voluntary insulation projects. The

office's domestic publicity campaign includes an information pack for householders as a response to enquiries resulting from national advertising, and part-sponsorship of a win-a-house competition. In addition, the fuel utilities, energy efficiency industries and other bodies are organising events, many of them aimed at the domestic sector. The Office's information pack on "Monergy '86" included the initial list of such events, and further events are being organised.

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of expenditure in energy efficiency will be committed to the domestic sector; and what is the total amount to be spent.

Mr. David Hunt: I will reply to the right hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to brief systematically consumer and voluntary organisations on his plans for Energy Efficiency Year.

Mr. David Hunt: Several thousand information packs on Energy Efficiency Year have been distributed to organisations interested in energy efficiency. Five hundred packs were sent to neighbourhood energy action, the national coordinating body for voluntary insulation projects for distribution to voluntary groups.

WALES

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will now reply to the letter sent to him on 24 October by the hon. Member for Gower concerning the status of approved Welsh Office schemes for the repair of Cornish-unit type houses.

Mr. Mark Robinson: A reply was sent on 18 December.

Capital Investment

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has anything to add to his answer of 11 December, *Official Report*, columns *654-6*, concerning gross capital expenditure in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I regret that, due to an error in compiling the table, the figures in cash terms for local environmental services (including the urban programme) were wrongly quoted for the years 1980-81, 1984-85 and 1985-86. The correct figures are £63 million, £77 million and £97 million respectively.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Timber

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total value of *(a)* imports and *(b)* exports of (i) hardwood and (ii) softwood timber in each of the years 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984; and if he will also give details of the value of home-produced timber (1) hardwood and (2) softwood for each of these years and show in each case the total used on the home market.

Mr. Channon: The information is as follows:

Value £ million

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
(i) Hardwood						
United Kingdom imports (cif)	143	114	133	136	213	228
United Kingdom exports (fob)	8	9	8	7	8	8
Homegrown hardwood*	80	60	50	55	55	45
Homegrown hardwood* used on home market	70	50	45	50	50	35
(ii) Softwood						
United Kingdom imports (cif)	593	563	464	529	716	767
United Kingdom exports (fob)	4	6	18	20	14	15
Homegrown softwood*	50	85	70	85	95	105
Homegrown softwood* used on home market	45	80	55	65	80	90

* Approximate.

Source: The following SITC/R2 headings in the United Kingdom Overseas Trade Statistics; for hardwoods sub-groups 247.2, 247.9 (part) and 248.3 and item 246.01 (part); for softwoods sub-groups 247.1, 247.9 (part) and 248.2 and item 246.01 (part).

Iran

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will state the volume of the United Kingdom's trade with Iran for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Channon: The information is as follows:

Value £ million

	Imports (cif)	*Exports (fob)*
1975	701	495
1976	1,047	515
1977	787	658
1978	527	751
1979	243	232
1980	107	393
1981	154	403
1982	226	334
1983	101	631
1984	369	703

Note: Figures shown are on a current statistical basis.
Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom.

Regional Aid

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish a table showing for

each regional area in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* at 1985 prices (i) the amount of money paid in regional development grants and selective regional assistance and (ii) the total investment in manufacturing industry in 1979 and in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Pattie: The latest year for which figures are available is 1984 in respect of payments of regional development grant and regional selective assistance, and 1983 in respect of investment in manufacturing industry. Tables 1 and 3 provide the information requested. In addition table 2 sets out regional development grant and regional selective assistance figures for 1983 in order to provide a basis for comparison between the categories of information supplied for the years 1979 and 1984. Figures for investment in manufacturing industry for 1984 are not available:

TABLE *1*
1979

	RDG		*RSA*		*Investment in manufacturing industry**	
	A†	*B*‡	*A*†	*B*‡	*A*†	*B*¶
Region						
Scotland	81·5	135·3	12·9	21·4	589·0	918·0
Wales	62·0	103·0	24·6	40·9	472·1	735·8
Northern	129·0	214·2	11·9	19·8	613·3	955·8
North West	61·2	101·6	27·0	44·8	971·2	1513·6
Yorkshire and Humberside	21·4	35·5	6·2	10·3	625·0	974·1
East Midlands	2·4	4·0	·8	1·3	478·3	745·4
West Midlands	0·026	0·043	0·03	0·05	705·3	1099·2
South West	6·0	10·0	3·1	5·1	377·1	587·7
East Anglia●	—	—	—	—	210·5	328·1
South East●	—	—	—	—	1581·1	2464·2

TABLE *2*
1983

	RDG		*RSA*		*Investment in manufacturing industry*	
	A	*B*	*A*	*B*	*A*	*B*
Region						
Scotland	246·9	270·7	23·9	26·2	490·6	542·3
Wales	74·6	81·8	13·8	15·1	353·2	390·4
Northern	95·3	104·5	15·6	17·1	392·8	434·2
North West	81·1	88·9	13·4	14·7	837·7	926·0
Yorkshire and Humberside	24·3	26·6	9·6	10·5	499·1	551·7
East Midlands	8·2	9·0	7·9	8·7	455·0	502·9
West Midlands	—	—	—	—	598·5	661·6
South West	7·4	8·1	2·2	2·4	434·7	480·5
East Anglia	—	—	—	—	226·4	250·3
South East	—	—	—	—	1626·7	1798·1

TABLE *3*
1984

	RDG		*RSA*		*Investment in manufacturing industry*	
	A	*B*	*A*	*B*	*A*	*B*
Region						
Scotland	115·4	121·3	26·0	27·3	n/a	—
Wales	80·8	84·9	18·3	19·2	n/a	—
Northern	89·5	94·0	15·5	16·3	n/a	—
North West	81·9	86·1	11·0	11·6	n/a	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	21·2	22·3	8·9	9·4	n/a	—
East Midlands	4·8	5·0	7·9	8·3	n/a	—
West Midlands	—	—	—	—	n/a	—
South West	8·1	8·5	1·8	1·9	n/a	—
East Anglia	—	—	—	—	n/a	—
South East	—	—	—	—	n/a	—

* Manufacturing investment comprises net capital expenditure by manufacturers in classes 2 to 4 of the standard industrial clasification 1980 (source: annual census of production).

† columns headed "A" in all tables show current prices.

‡ columns headed "B" under RDG and RSA in all tables show current prices adjusted to 1985 prices by use of the implied market price GDP deflator.

¶ columns head "B" under "Investment in manufacturing industry" in all tables show current prices adjusted to 1985 prices by use of the implied manufacturing investment deflator.

‖ West midlands ceased being an assisted area on 1 August 1982 under earlier regional measures but was designated an assisted area (with intermediate area status) under the measures which became effective on 29 November 1984.

● East Anglia and the south east have never been designated as assisted areas.

Takeovers and Mergers (Code of Practice)

Mr Yeo asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has plans to introduce legislation to give statutory backing to the City code on takeovers and mergers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Howard: The Government have decided not to include provisions on the regulation of takeovers in the Financial Services Bill. In reaching this decision we have considered carefully the views which the panel, the Bank of England, the Securities and Investments Board Ltd and others have put to us. The Government believe that the panel is doing a good job in regulating takeovers on a non-statutory basis, that it injoys the support of the City, and that no change is desirable at present in the status of the panel and the take-over code.

Crown Suppliers (Commission)

Mr Speller asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has received any representations regarding the implications for British firms in the home market of the recent increase in commission charged by the Crown Suppliers; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young: I have been asked to reply.

The Crown Suppliers has received two approaches about the increase in commission rates. One from G F E Bartlett & Sons Ltd which manufactures catering equipment and one from the Catering Equipment Manufacturers Association. Total sales of all products subject to increase in commission rates were 20 per cent. higher in the first quarter of 1985-86 than in the corresponding quarter last year. The increases were to ensure that the contracts make a full economic return for the resources employed.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Business Schools

Mr Maclean asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy on the maintenance of business schools within the university sector in the light of the Institute of Economic Affairs' paper, "Whose Business," a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr Walden: My right hon. Friend is reviewing his policy for postgraduate management education in the light of consultation with relevant interests about the analysis and recommendations in the Institute of Economic Affairs paper. He hopes to make a policy statement on this subject in 1986.

University Teaching Staff

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the scale of salaries for university teaching staff and the hours they are contracted to work.

Mr. Walden: The current (1 April 1984) pay scales for university non-clinical academic staff are as follows:

Assistant Lecturer and Lecturer	
£	£
7,520	11,205
7,980	11,675
8,450	12,150
*8,920	12,635
9,390	13,120
9,860	13,625
10,330	14,135
10,720	14,925
Senior Lecturer/Reader	
14,135	16,170
14,775	16,675
15,150	17,190
15,665	17,705
Professor—Mininum Average	
18,070	21,235

*Minimum point for those aged 27 and over

There is no national agreement on hours of work. Conditions of service are negotiated locally.

Agriculture Food Research Council

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the grades of the new posts of the director of research and the site directors of the new animals and grassland research institute of the Agriculture Food Research Council; what will be the preferred specialisation of the successful candidates.

Mr. Walden: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 13 December to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) at column *790*.

Welsh Plant Breeding Station (Overseas Students)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the numbers of overseas students pursuing studies for higher degrees at the University College of Wales of the Welsh plant breeding station, giving an indication of the broad areas of work involved; and what comparable data are available in respect of 1979-80.

Mr. Walden: I refer to my reply of 13 December to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) at column *788*.

Higher Education (Graduates)

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the subsequent career of those who graduated from institutions of higher education in England and Wales over the past five years.

Mr. Walden: Regular information on the subsequent career of those who graduated from institutions of higher education is limited to surveys of the first destination of graduates and diplomates as at 31 December of the year in which they graduated.

The position for the years 1980 to 1984—the latest year for which data are available — for first degree graduates only is as follows. A statistical bulletin is to be published shortly on this subject and a copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

First destination of graduates 1980 to 1984 (6 months after graduation)

Numbers (Thousands)

	Permanent home employment	*Temporary home employment*	*Full-time education or training*	*Believed unemployed*	**Others*	*Total of known destination*	*Destination unknown*	*All graduates*
1980								
Universities (Great Britain)	29·8	1·4	16·9	5·0	6·4	59·5	6·3	65·8
Polytechnics (England and Wales)	7·8	0·9	3·1	1·8	1·8	15·4	4·0	19·4
1981								
Universities (Great Britain)	28·4	1·6	17·7	6·4	7·5	61·5	6·5	68·0
Polytechnics (England and Wales)	7·5	0·9	3·3	2·4	2·2	16·3	4·2	20·5
1982								
Universities (Great Britain)	29·4	1·5	17·3	7·8	6·9	62·9	7·2	70·1
Polytechnics (England and Wales)	7·8	0·9	3·0	2·6	2·1	16·4	5·0	21·4
1983								
Universities (Great Britain)	32·3	1·9	17·3	6·9	6·1	64·5	7·7	72·2
Polytechnics (England and Wales)	9·2	0·9	2·9	2·6	1·9	17·5	†6·1	†23·5
CHE's‡ (England and Wales)	4·1	0·4	1·2	1·0	0·5	7·2	0·9	8·1
1984								
Universities (Great Britain)	33·8	1·8	16·2	5·7	6·2	63·7	7·5	31·2
Polytechnics (England and Wales)	12·0	1·2	3·5	2·9	1·8	21·3	5·4	26·7
CHE's‡ (England and Wales)	4·6	0·4	1·3	0·9	0·5	7·8	1·2	9·0

* Employment overseas, overseas students leaving the United Kingdom, not available for employment.
† Including an estimated 1,300 graduates for one polytechnic which did not submit data in 1983.
‡ Comparable data for colleges of higher education (CHE's) was collected for the first time in 1983.

Information on the subsequent careers of graduates is not collected on a regular basis. However, the 1981 Census of Population qualified manpower tables provide considerable detail about the industries and occupations of graduates. The Department of Education and Science is also sponsoring, in conjunction with the Department of Employment, a special survey of the subsequent careers of those who graduated in 1980.

Educational Psychologists

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether any changes are envisaged in the recognition of educational psychologists; if existing students on recognised courses will be protected; if additional time with children will be required; and if he will make a statement on any changes envisaged in the qualification, training or standards for educational psychologists;

(2) if he will indicate the minimum qualification to be recognised as an educational psychologist; if he will give the minimum period of training or experience required for full recognition in such a post; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend does not determine these requirements. The qualifications, training and experience normally required by local education authorities for educational psychologists in their employment are published in the "Report of the Committee on Salary Scales and Service Conditions of Inspectors, Organisers and Advisory Officers of Local Education Authorities." I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the Library. My right hon. Friend is not aware of any plans to change those requirements.

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the local education authorities that are short of educational psychologists; if he will give the number in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The complement of educational psychologists employed by local education authorities is a matter for individual authorities to determine. The Department has no information about authorities that are below their complement of educational psychologists; this information is not collected centrally.

Higher and Advanced Further Education

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will now announce his decisions on public sector higher education provision in 1986-87 and on the distribution of the advanced further education pool and voluntary sector quantum for 1986-87; and if he wil make a statement.

Sir Keith Joseph: I have today written to the chairman of the committee of the National Advisory Body for public

sector higher education (NAB) in response to its advice on the planned disposition of academic provision and of students in public sector higher education in 1986-87, and on the basis for distributing the advanced further education quantum of £661 million and the voluntary sector quantum of £45·4 million for the financial year 1986-87, which I announced in the House on 12 November 1985 at columns 104-108. I have accepted its advice in its entirety, with the exception of recommendations bearing on intakes to part I architecture courses in 1986-87.

NAB's plans provide for overall student numbers to remain roughly stable compared with the targets set for 1985-86 and for the continuation of the policies reflected in those targets, notably, the preservation of student access. They also offer a continuing incentive to institutions to maintain provision in science, engineering and other vocational disiplines and provision for sub-degree and part-time students.

In relation to architectural education, I have accepted NAB's recommendation that intakes to public sector courses in England should be reduced so as, with parallel reductions in universities and Scottish provision, to stabilise the size of the architectural profession at the level reached when students at present on course qualify. I have not been able however to accept NAB's advice that this reduction should be accomplished with the closure alone among the 18 public sector schools in England of the Department at the North East London polytechnic. Accordingly, I propose to consider further the pattern of provision in 1986, consulting as appropriate with institutions, before coming to a final decision in one to two months. In the meantime, in order to avoid pre-empting my final decision, I have determined intakes for the purpose of financial allocations in 1986-87 so as to allow for possible intakes at all the existing public sector schools, including NELP.

In 1986-87 the greater part of the local authority quantum and the whole of the voluntary sector quantum are being allocated to local education authorities and voluntary colleges in relation to target student numbers by institution, mode of attendance and subject. The allocations have been made so as to allow every institution a standard teaching unit of resource for each weighted student. This is supplemented in the case of institutions where advanced provision exceeds 25 per cent. of the total in recognition of the higher costs associated with predominantly higher education work. The effect of this is to continue the pressure on high spending institutions to reduce their costs and to afford increased protection to the more economical institutions.

The allocations announced today also include for a few selected local authority institutions sums to a total of £2·5 million to continue the selective support of research and £451,000 for further support of the biotechnology initiative, both of which began last year. A further £648,000 is included in respect of the recurrent costs in 1986-87 to the institutions selected for participation in phase 2 of the engineering and technology programme. This assumes that the institutions concerned will be able to demonstrate satisfactory support for their approved courses from industry.

Letters are today being sent to local education authorities and institutions notifying them of my decision. Copies of my letter to the NAB committee chairman and of a note explaining the method by which the two quanta for 1986-87 are being distributed, together with full details of the allocations, have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Voluntary Schools

Mr. Viggers asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent consultations he has had with providing bodies about the voluntary schools sector.

Sir Keith Joseph: There have been a number of meetings following the publication of "Better Schools" (Cmnd. 9469); in addition I have recently invited the voluntary bodies and the local authority associations to consider with the Department how I can achieve a closer match between capital expenditure at aided and special agreement schools and what is voted annually for this purpose.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast Rally (Photographic Surveillance)

Mr. Proctor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what photographic surveillance was used by Her Majesty's security forces for the purpose of estimating the size of the rally which took place in Belfast city centre on Saturday 23 November; and what was the resulting estimate.

Mr. Scott [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985]: Photographic surveillance was not used to estimate the size of the crowd attending the rally.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Experimental Projects

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding is available for experimental crime prevention projects involving the use of television cameras as a means of surveillance and countering vandalism in town and city centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The funding and installation of closed circuit television systems in town and city centres for experimental crime prevention projects is a matter for local authorities and other relevant local agencies, including the owners of private shopping centres, in consultation with the police.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of his Department's budget is spent on experimental projects of all types; if he will list the projects concerned; and if he will indicate in each case the costs so far incurred and the date the project started.

Mr. Hurd: Detailed information in the form requested is not readily available. The Home Office spends 1·8 per cent. of its central budget on research and development. The expenditure is allocated between main subject areas as follows:

Subject area	*1985-86 £ million*
Equal opportunities	0·3
Law services	2·2

Subject area	1985-86 £ million
Race relations	0·1
Prison security	0·3
Civil defence	0·9
Police research	5·7
Forensic science	1·6
Fire research	1·1
Telecommunications	2·1
Research into the voluntary sector	0·1
Sex discrimination and equality	0·2
Other costs	0·4
Total	15·0

Mr. P. Reid

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he proposes to answer the letter of the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside of 18 October concerning Mr. P. Reid.

Mr. Mellor: My noble Friend will reply very soon.

Police

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a statement with appropriate statistics, explaining the basis on which expenditure on the police is budgeted to increase by 6 per cent. in 1986-87, and by 2 per cent. in real terms, over what was scheduled to be spent in that year, as stated by the hon. Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) on 5 December, *Official Report*, column *419*.

Mr. Hurd: The basis for the reply of my hon. Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) on 5 December was as follows.

Planned expenditure on the police in 1985-86, as given in the 1985 public expenditure White Paper, was £2,843 million. Planned expenditure on the police for 1986-87 was given in a reply to a question from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) on 18 November at columns *15-16* as £3,025 million. Those figures would represent increases in planned provision for police expenditure between 1985-86 and 1986-87 of just over 6 per cent. in cash terms and nearly 2 per cent. in real terms. In fact planned expenditure on the police in 1986-87, to be published shortly in the 1986 public expenditure White Paper, is £3,060 million. The planned increases are therefore nearly 8 per cent. in cash terms and 3 per cent. in real terms. I regret that the figure for 1986-87 given on 18 November was incorrect.

Sentencing Policy

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes in the guidelines on sentencing powers and principles relating to violent crime he proposes to incorporate in the new edition of "The Sentence of the Court."

Mr. Giles Shaw: The previous edition of "The Sentence of the Court" was published in 1978. The new edition will reflect the many changes in courts' statutory powers since then, including the revised custodial sentences for young offenders introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 1982 and the criteria, set out in the Act, for imposing them. It will also refer to sentencing guidance given by the Court of Appeal during the same period, including that concerning the need for substantial prison terms for serious violence.

Immigration

Mr. Proctor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Billericay about visitors from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan to which he gave a holding answer on 29 November.

Mr. Waddington: I regret that I am not yet able to do so since the information requested has not been produced routinely hitherto and a detailed analysis of computer records is required. I shall reply as soon as possible.

Visas

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce a visa requirement for visitors from the Indian sub-continent; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) on 5 December at column *311*.

Brixton Prison (Women)

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women in addition to Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer are currently being held in Brixton prison.

Mr. Mellor: One.

Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department why Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer, currently being held in Brixton prison, are being checked on up to four times an hour during the night.

Mr. Mellor: Standard security procedures require frequent checks to be made on category A inmates during the night.

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set up an inquiry into the conditions in which Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer are being held in Brixton prison.

Mr. Mellor: No.

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) on how many occasions on each day in November a strip search was carried out on Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer in Brixton prison;

(2) on how many occasions in November *(a)* Martina Anderson and *(b)* Ella O'Dwyer, currently held in Brixton prison (i) made a court appearance, (ii) received a visit, (iii) made a cell change and (iv) was involved in a wing or cell search.

Mr. Mellor: My noble Friend is writing to the hon. Member.

French Girls (Arrest)

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the

Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on the arrest of two French girls, Jamila Majid and Sylvia Thomarin, on 20 November and on the subsequent strip-searching of one of the girls.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis will require further information before it is possible to trace the details of the arrest of a Jamila Majid and a Sylvia Thomarin.

Mr. Billy Monteith

Mr. Leighton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department with what offence Mr. Billy Monteith, arrested on 20 November, has been charged.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Further information is necessary before the police can trace the details of the arrest of a Mr. Billy Monteith.

Tottenham Riot (Inquiry)

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the Metropolitan police have refused to collaborate with the inquiry to be established by Haringey council into the Tottenham riot on 6 October which was to be chaired by the hon. Mark Bonham Carter.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Metropolitan police are preparing a report on the Tottenham riot for the next meeting of the Haringey police community consultative group. An investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mrs. Jarrett is being carried out under supervision of the Police Complaints Authority. We understand that the commissioner took the view, which we strongly share, that his participation in an inquiry conducted by the Haringey council would not usefully add to the action already being taken.

Prison Officers

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prison officers, both male and female, died in service from January 1982 to November 1985, inclusive;

(2) how many prison officers from the rank of chief officer downwards, both male and female, have retired from the service in the period January 1982 to November 1985, inclusive;

(3) how many prison officers from the rank of chief officer downwards, both male and female, resigned the service in the period January 1982 to November 1985, inclusive.

Mr. Mellor: From 1 January 1982 to 30 November 1985 there have been 943 male and 51 female retirements, 420 male and 195 female resignations and 143 male and one female deaths in service from all grades of prison officer.

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many male officers and how many female officers have been recruited into the prison service during the period January 1982 to November 1985.

Mr. Mellor: From 1 January 1982 to 30 November 1985, 2,365 male and 325 female officers were recruited.

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the overall net gain or loss in the prison officer establishment for the period January 1982 to November 1985, inclusive.

Mr. Mellor: From 1 January 1982 to 30 November 1985 there was a net gain in prison officer establishment of 1,509 male (9 per cent.) and 126 female (14 per cent.) officers.

Wilson and Farbridge (Metropolitan Police)

Mr. Stephen Ross asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis proposes to take in the light of the case of Wilson and Farbridge and the Metropolitan Police.

Mr. Giles Shaw: A complaint was made by Miss Farbridge in 1982 which was investigated and referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who was satisfied that there was insufficient evidence to justify criminal proceedings. The papers were then referred to the Police Complaints Board, as it then was, under the procedures established by the Police Act 1976. The board decided to defer consideration until after the civil proceedings had been completed. The commissioner is reporting the outcome of the civil action to the Police Complaints Authority, as successor to the board, which will decide what action should now be taken in the light of the court's decision.

Fraud

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people received sentences of immediate imprisonment for *(a)* fraud from Her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes and *(b)* fraud from the Department of Health and Social Security for every year since 1979.

Mr. Moore: I have been asked to reply.

(a) The number of people who received immediate prison sentences for Inland Revenue fraud was as follows:

Year ending 31 March

	Number
1979-80	30
1980-81	27
1981-82	21
1982-83	27
1983-84	32
1984-85	41

Criminal prosecutions are undertaken in only a small number of cases because the Inland Revenue deals mainly with tax offences by imposing money penalties graded according to the gravity of the offence rather than by prosecution. These penalties amounted to £371·4 million in the year to 31 March 1984.

(b) The number of people who received immediate prison sentences for social security benefit fraud was as follows:

Year ending 31 March

	Number
1979-80	585
1980-81	868
1981-82	580
1982-83	601
1983-84	580
1984-85	433

TRANSPORT

Seat Belts

Mr. Hubbard-Miles asked the Secretary of State for Transport what decision he has taken on the regulations to require the fitting of rear seat belts.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. Friend has now made regulations which will make rear seat belts or child restraints a legal requirement for all new cars manufactured from 1 October 1986, and first registered from 1 April 1987. The regulations allow for different types of belt or restraint to be fitted in order to meet our European Community obligations and also allow individuals to choose the most suitable type of belt for themselves or restraint for their children. The regulations also require a seat belt to be fitted in the centre front seat of cars and light vans where such a seat is provided. I am particularly anxious that car owners should have the freedom to choose the seat belts that best suit their needs. There are no plans to introduce the compulsory wearing of seat belts in the rear of cars.

Tourism

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce a new system of traffic signs for tourist attractions following Lord Young's report, "Pleasure, Leisure and Jobs—The Business of Tourism", and the experiments in Kent and Nottinghamshire.

Mrs. Chalker: I have recently issued a consultation document to a wide range of interested organisations setting out our proposals for introducing a new system of distinctively coloured white on brown traffic signs for tourist attractions in England. Consultees have been asked to submit their comments by the end of February 1986 so that arrangements can be introduced in time for the 1986 summer tourist season.

Channel Fixed Link

Sir Reginald Eyre asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends making available in the White Paper the Government intend to publish about the Channel fixed link, or elsewhere, the Government's forecasts of the traffic that will use the link and the revenue to be derived therefrom.

Mr. Ridley: No. It would not be right for the Government to seek to influence the banks and other institutions to which a successful promoter will be looking for finance for a chosen link project. If the Government decide to facilitate one of the proposals in January, and subject to the final decision of Parliament, it will be for the successful promoter to put the details of the project, in the form in which it is to go ahead, to potential investors to allow them to decide whether to invest in it, without Government guarantee in any form, express or implied.

A decision by the Government to facilitate one project or another will not constitute endorsement by the Government of the promoter's forecast costs, traffic or revenues.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Rape (Anonymity of Victims)

Ms. Harman asked the Attorney-General if he will seek to amend the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976 to extend the anonymity of rape victims to related civil proceedings.

The Solicitor-General: The Government will consider this in the light of recent events.

Magistrates

Mr. Hoyle asked the Attorney-General if he will enumerate magistrates in the north-west, excluding the county palatine, under the following categories *(a)* sex, *(b)* age groupings, *(c)* occupation, *(d)* social backgrounds, *(e)* resident or non-resident within their petty sessional area and *(f)* any political viewpoint or affiliation they have acknowledged.

The Solicitor-General: The description "north-west excluding the county palatine" is vague. In Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire appointments are made by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Lord Chancellor makes appointments in Cheshire and the rest of England and Wales. The information as to sex, age goupings and political views of magistrates in Cheshire is as set out, with the caveat that views are indicated prior to appointment and may have since changed, and that appointments were at a range of dates widely varying from the present.

The information sought on occupation, social background and whether magistrates reside or do not reside in the petty sessional area is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Justices on the active list in Cheshire

	Number
Male	299
Female	239
Total	538
Age group	
Under 40	35
40-49	157
50-59	234
60-69	112
	538
Conservative	234
Labour	156
Liberal/SDP	52
Independent	73
Undisclosed	23
	538

Lloyd's (Prosecution)

Sir Humphrey Atkins asked the Attorney-General if he is satisfied that the Director of Public Prosecutions, in his consideration of possible prosecutions against certain members of the Peter Cameron-Webb syndicate and Howdens, has access to all the evidence available to Lloyd's concerning those individuals.

The Solicitor-General: So far as the Director of Public Prosecutions is aware, he has received from Lloyd's all evidence in its possession material to the fraud investigation group's inquiries into the affair of Peter Cameron-Webb and Howden. This includes the transcripts of evidence given at relevant disciplinary proceedings which were passed to him on 16 December 1985.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc

Mr. Adley asked the Prime Minister what representations she has received from the General Electric Company about the proposed sale of a controlling interest in Westland to a United States company.

The Prime Minister: None.

PSBR (Privatisation)

Mr. Blair asked the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, columns 1060-1, she will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the public sector borrowing requirement in cash, at 1984-85 prices and as a percentage of gross domestic product for the years 1970-71 to 1984-85 and the projections for 1985-86 to 1988-89 on the assumption that actual or assumed proceeds of privatisation, including sales of land and buildings outside the special sales of assets, were replaced by a similar amount of borrowing.

The Prime Minister: Figures for the public sector borrowing requirement, on the three bases requested, were provided in the answer my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary gave the hon. Member on 2 December at column *101-2*. Figures for the proceeds of privatisation and sales of land and buildings, in cash, were provided in the answers my right hon. Friend gave the hon. Member on the same day at columns *102-3* and the earlier answers referred to therein. Estimates of the gross domestic product (GDP) and the GDP deflator for 1970-71 to 1984-85 were published in *Economic Trends* (Annual Supplement 1985 and November 1985 editions). A forecast of the GDP for 1985-86 was published in the "Autumn Statement 1985" table 1.11. Assumptions for the GDP in 1986-87 to 1988-89 were published in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report 1985-86" table 2.4, which also included assumptions for the GDP deflator in 1985-86 to 1988-89.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Nicholls asked the Prime Minister if she will list all measures her Government have taken to promote the welfare of animals; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Government are committed to promoting the welfare of animals and have taken wide-ranging measures to improve their protection. We played a leading role in the preparation of a draft Council of Europe convention for the protection of vertebrate animals used for scientific and other experimental purposes, and have introduced in another place a Bill to relace the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876 with a new system of controls which will strengthen the safeguards against avoidable suffering by animals used in scientific research.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department has given support and assistance to privately introduced measures to prohibit the sale of pet animals at markets (the Pet Animals (Amendment) Act 1983), and to strengthen the legal protection of badgers against acts of cruelty (section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985). Further protection was given to a number of wild species by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The Government supported the introduction of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 and in April 1984 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment issued standards of modern zoo practice dealing among other things with the care and accommodation of animals in zoos, in accordance with section 9 of that Act.

This year the Government extended for a further four years the prohibition on the import of skins and products made from harp and hooded seals. The original prohibition, for two years, was introduced in 1983. In 1984, the Government introduced measures to treat all whales as an endangered species and to prohibit all products made from whales for commercial trade.

With regard to the welfare of farm animals, the Government established, in 1979, the Farm Animal Welfare Council which keeps under review the welfare of all farm animals and advises on any legislative or other changes which it considers necessary or desirable in order to improve or maintain standards of welfare. The council has reviewed all the welfare codes for livestock issued under the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968. Revised codes in respect of cattle and pigs have been approved by Parliament and are in operation, and those for domestic fowls and turkeys are under consideration. The council is now considering the revised codes to see whether any of the recommendations could more appropriately be made mandatory by incorporation in regulations.

In addition, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has introduced the Veterinary Surgeons (Operations) Order 1982, further controlling operations on farm animals; the Export of Animals (Protection) Order 1981 which improves protection for animals in transit; and the Slaughter of Poultry (Humane Conditions) Regulations 1984 which provide further protection for poultry at the point of slaughter.

Parliamentary Private Secretaries

Mr. Dewar asked the Prime Minister if she will list the parliamentary private secretaries presently in office and the Ministers they serve.

The Prime Minister: The information is as follows:

Department	*Secretaries of State and Ministers*	*Parliamentary Private Secretaries*
Prime Minister	Mrs. Thatcher	Mr. M. Alison
Foreign Office		
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	Sir Geoffrey Howe	Mr. Richard Ryder
Minister of State	Mr. Rifkind	Lord James Douglas-Hamilton
Minister of State	Lady Young	Mr. Richard Ottaway
Minister for Overseas Development	Mr. Raison	Mr. William Powell
Minister of State	Mr. Renton	Mr. Richard Ottaway
Department of Trade and Industry		
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry	Mr. Brittan	Mr. Gerry Malone
Minister of State	Mr. Channon	Mr. David Atkinson
Minister for Information Technology	Mr. Pattie	Mr. Spencer Batiste
Minister of State	Mr. Morrison	Dr. Ian Twinn
Parliamentary Under-Secretary	Mr. Howard	Mr. Rob Hayward
Her Majesty's Treasury		
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Mr. Lawson	Mr. Peter Lilley
Chief Secretary	Mr. MacGregor	Mr. Michael Lord
Financial Secretary	Mr. Moore	Mr. John Ward
Economic Secretary	Mr. Stewart	Mr. Barry Henderson
Minister of State	Mr. P. Brooke	—
Home Office		
Secretary of State for the Home Department	Mr. Hurd	Mr. Kenneth Carlisle
Ministers of State	Mr. Waddington and Mr. Shaw	Mr. Graham Bright
Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State	Mr. Mellor and Lord Glenarthur	Mr. Patrick Nicholls
Department of Education and Science		
Secretary of State for Education	Sir Keith Joseph	Mrs. Edwina Currie
Minister of State	Mr. C. Patten	Mrs. Virginia Bottomley
Department of Energy		
Secretary of State for Energy	Mr. Walker	Mr. Stephen Dorrell
Minister of State	Mr. Buchanan-Smith	Mr. Robert Key
Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State	Mr. Hunt and Mr. Goodlad	Mr. Michael Hirst
Ministry of Defence		
Secretary of State	Mr. Heseltine	Mr. Nicholas Baker
Minister of State Armed Forces	Mr. Stanley	Mr. Roger Freeman
Minister of State Procurement	Mr. Lamont	Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory
Scottish Office		
Secretary of State for Scotland	Mr. Younger	Mr. Alex Pollock
Welsh Office		
Secretary of State for Wales	Mr. Edwards	Mr. Peter Hubbard-Miles
Lord Privy Seal	Mr. Biffen	Mr. Richard Page
Department of Health and Social Security		
Secretary of State for Social Services	Mr. Fowler	Mr. Charles Wardle
Minister for Health	Mr. Hayhoe	Mr. Tom Sackville
Minister for Social Security	Mr. Newton	Mr. James Couchman
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Mr. Tebbit	Mr. Iain Mills
Northern Ireland Office		
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	Mr. King	Mr. Brian Mawhinney
Minister of State	Dr. Boyson	Mr. Alan Howarth
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food		
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	Mr. Jopling	Mr. Paul Marland
Minister of State	Mr. Gummer	Mr. Nicholas Soames
Department of Transport		
Secretary of State for Transport	Mr. Ridley	Mr. Gerry Neale
Minister of State	Mrs. Chalker	Mr. Tony Baldry
Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State	Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Spicer	Mrs. Marion Roe
	Earl of Caithness	—
Department of Employment		
Secretary of State for Employment	Lord Young	Mr. Robert Atkins
Paymaster General	Mr. Kenneth Clarke	Mr. Colin Moynihan

Department	Secretaries of State and Ministers	Parliamentary Private Secretaries
Department of the Environment		
Secretary of State for the Environment	Mr. Baker	Mr. Alistair Burt
Minister of State, Environment, Countryside and Local Government	Mr. Waldegrave	Mr. Steven Norris
Minister of State,	Lord Elton	—
Minister of State, Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction	Mr. J. Patten	Mr. Martin Brandon-Bravo
Minister for the Arts	Mr. Luce	Mr. Michael Colvin
Attorney-General	Sir Michael Havers	Mr. Nicholas Lyell
Solicitor-General	Sir Patrick Mayhew	—

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Intervention Storage (Butter)

Mr. Hicks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what is the overall cost of storing the surplus butter currently held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community; and what the figure is for storing the surplus butter held within the United Kingdom;

(2) what was the overall cost of storing the surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community for 1983 and 1984, respectively;

(3) what is the estimate for the overall cost of storing the surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community for 1986;

(4) what is the percentage change in the overall cost of storing the surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community for the years 1983, 1984 and 1985, respectively; and what is the estimated percentage change for 1986;

(5) what is the overall cost of storing the surplus butter currently held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community; what was the overall cost for 1983 and 1984, respectively; what is the estimated cost for 1986; and what is the percentage change for each year from 1983 to 1986, respectively;

(6) what is the overall cost of storing one tonne of surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community for one year.

Mr. Gummer: I will reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Maclean asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Agriculture Ministers' meeting held in Brussels on 19 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling: The Council had an initial discussion of a document from the Commission reporting the conclusions reached as a result of the consultations on its earlier paper "Perspectives for the Common Agricultural Policy". This document covers a wide range of issues, including price policy, co-responsibility, changes in intervention arrangements, diversification of production and measures to benefit the environment.

During the discussion I again stressed the paramount importance of price policy in tackling the problems of the CAP, the necessity of observing financial limits, and the need to avoid discrimination between producers.

The Council again considered the Commission's proposal to ban the use of hormones for fattening purposes, which had previously been supported by all member states except the United Kingdom. After a long discussion, the Chairman decided that a revised version of the text, in the form of a directive, should be voted upon by written procedure. If approved by qualified majority vote, the ban would apply from 1 January 1988.

As a result of my pressure, the Commission indicated that it would use the procedures set out in the directive to propose a derogation which would postpone the introduction of the ban in the United Kingdom until 1 January 1989. Nevertheless I intend to vote against the measure. There is no scientific evidence justifying the ban, and the procedure is contrary to the Council's earlier decision that a ban should be introduced only by unanimous agreement between member states.

SCOTLAND

Police (Computers)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has for each constabulary of the capital cost of the mainframe equipment used by that constabulary and the recurrent costs of maintaining that computer.

Mr. John MacKay: I understand that, of the eight Scottish police forces, only Lothian and Borders police have their own mainframe computer (this term being taken as excluding mini and microcomputers). Capital expenditure, including enhancements since the computer was first installed, has amounted to £1·3 million and maintenance costs are of the order of £134,000 per annum.

Some other forces have access, in varying degree, to local authority mainframe equipment, for which appropriate charges are made.

Roads

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the latest estimate of the length of Scottish motorways and trunk roads requiring reconstruction, compared to the total length of the road network.

Mr. Ancram: Estimates of the length of motorways and trunk roads requiring reconstruction, as distinct from structural repairs generally (ie reconstruction, resurfacing, overlay or surface dressing), are not separately available. In 1984, 360 kms of carriageway on such roads were assessed as requiring structural repairs generally, representing 9·5 per cent. of the total network of carriageway length.

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has a long-term programme to reduce the

backlog of Scottish trunk roads requiring reconstruction, analagous to that of the Department of Transport for English trunk roads.

Mr. Ancram: Yes. In view of an increase in the length of trunk road requiring structural repairs, my right hon. Friend has decided to increase expenditure on such work. Provision in the supply estimates for 1985-86 was £13·387 million but this was increased in the winter supplementary estimates to £15·262 million. In 1986-87, this will be further increased to £18 million.

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, further to his answer in the *Official Report* of 9 December, column *457*, to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Shettleston, he will consider co-operating with regional and island councils to produce an annual road maintenance condition survey similar to the one produced for England and Wales.

Mr. Ancram: I do not consider that this would be necessary or helpful in view of the comprehensive information already available for trunk roads and motorways in Scotland, and the participation of most roads authorities in a sample survey for the remaining roads.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been *(a)* the total number of new hospital beds since May 1979 and *(b)* the total number of hospital beds closed, including those in hospitals which have been partially closed since May 1979 by region.

Mr. John MacKay: The information, by health board areas, is as follows. The details in respect of new hospital beds relate to new hospital buildings, funded from the central building programme: information in respect of locally funded developments is not held centrally. Many of the beds have been provided as replacements for outdated facilities and are not additions to the overall complement. The details of beds closed refer only to complete hospitals taken out of use. Information in respect of partial closures of hospitals is not collected centrally.

Health Board	*(a) New Hospital beds*	*(b) Hospital beds closed*
Argyll and Clyde	180	432
Ayrshire and Arran	710	220
Borders	50	47
Fife	492	65
Forth Valley	180	—
Grampian	264	26
Greater Glasgow	754	181
Highland	710	—
Lanarkshire	120	40
Lothian	462	—
Shetland	—	62
Tayside	234	132
Total	4,156	1,205

New Hospitals

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all new hospitals which have opened since May 1979 or are due to open over the next 18 months, indicating the first date on which approval for each scheme was given.

Mr. John MacKay: Details, in respect of projects funded from the central building programme, are as follows. Comprehensive information on locally funded schemes is not held centrally. The total bed complement is shown but it should be noted that not all beds were necessarily brought into use in the given years. Many of the beds provided are replacements for outdated facilities elsewhere and are not additions to the overall complement:

Hospital facilities opened		*Date project approved*
1979		
Greater Glasgow Health Board		
Belvidere hospital—phase I	30 beds	May 1978
Woodilee hospital—phase I	60 beds	May 1978
1980		
Argyll and Clyde Health Board		
Johnstone hospital	30 beds	1978
Grampian Health Board		
Woodend geriatric hospital	30 beds April 1979	
Greater Glasgow Health Board		
Blawarthill hospital	30 beds	May 1978
Canniesburn hospital	30 beds	May 1978
Gartloch hospital	30 beds	May 1978
Gartnavel hospital	30 beds	May 1978
Mearnskirk hospital	30 beds	May 1978
Stobhill hospital	60 beds	May 1978
Tayside Health Board		
Irvine Memorial hospital, Pitlochry	12 beds	June 1977
Murray Royal hospital, Perth	60 beds	June 1977
1981		
Ayrshire and Arran Health Board		
Crosshouse hospital	710 beds	September 1964
Fife Health Board		
Glenrothes hospital	72 beds plus 20 day places	January 1974

Hospital facilities opened		*Date project approved*
Lothian Health Board		
Edinburgh Royal infirmary redevelopment—phase I	Nil	December 1959
Edinburgh Royal hospital—phase I	120 beds plus 50 day places	March 1972
Tayside Health Board		
Perth Royal infirmary	60 beds plus 25 day places	June 1977
Royal Liff hospital, Dundee	60 beds	October 1977
1982		
Grampian Health Board		
Inverurie hospital	30 beds	June 1980
Spynie hospital, Elgin	30 beds	November 1972
Highland Health Board		
Lochaber hospital	30 beds	June 1976
Lothian Health Board		
Astley Ainslie	90 beds plus 40 day places	October 1974
Tayside Health Board		
Blairgowrie cottage hospital	30 beds plus six day places	June 1977
1983		
Borders Health Board		
Hay Lodge, Peebles	50 beds plus 15 day places	May 1974
Fife Health Board		
Whyteman's Brae, Kirkcaldy	180 beds plus 80 day places	November 1973
Forth Valley Health Board		
Royal Scottish National hospital, Larbert	120 beds	April 1979
Grampian Health Board		
Ugie hospital, Peterhead	30 beds	October 1978
Woodend hospital—Glenburn Wing	24 beds	April 1979
Woodlands hospital	120 beds	November 1976
Greater Glasgow Health Board		
Glasgow Royal infirmary—phase I	214 beds	December 1966
Stobhill hospital	90 beds	May 1978
Lothian Health Board		
Herdmanflat hospital	72 beds	April 1974
Tayside Health Board		
Aberfeldy cottage hospital	12 beds	June 1977
1984		
Lanarkshire Health Board		
Kirklands hospital—phase I	120 beds	July 1979
Argyll and Clyde Health Board		
Dunoon and District General Hospital	30 beds plus 10 day places	April 1982
Merchiston hospital—phase I	120 beds	January 1973
Greater Glasgow Health Board		
Gartloch hospital	120 beds	June 1978
Forth Valley Health Board		
Sauchie hospital	60 beds	June 1979
1985		
Fife Health Board		
West Fife district general hospital	240 beds plus 130 day places	March 1976
Highland Health Board		
Raigmore hospital, Inverness	680 beds	June 1973
Lothian Health Board		
Royal Victoria hospital—phase III	180 beds plus 50 day places	January 1974
(b) Openings expected within the next 18 months		
Argyll and Clyde Health Board		
Paisley District general hospital	700 beds	December 1971
Merchiston hospital—phase II	30 beds	May 1984

Hospital facilities opened		Date project approved
Dumfries and Galloway Health Board		
Geriatric unit, Annan	30 beds	October 1980
Forth Valley Health Board		
Falkirk Royal infirmary—maternity geriatric block	176 beds	June 1979
Greater Glasgow Health Board		
Leverndale Hospital Redevelopment—phase 1 A plus B	240 beds	November 1983
Lennox Castle hospital redevelopment	120 beds	May 1983
Highland Health Board		
Caithness hospital—phase II	97 beds	October 1973
Raigmore hospital—phase II	92 beds	June 1973
Lothian Health Board		
Western General hospital—phase II	144 beds	May 1973

Historic Gardens (Working Party)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to receive the report of the working party on historic gardens, concerning maintenance grants and capital grants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: Officials from the Scottish Development Department and the Countryside Commission for Scotland set up an informal discussion group in August 1985 to consider policy issues likely to arise from an inventory of the most important gardens and designed landscapes in Scotland. The inventory is being prepared on behalf of SDD and CCS by Land Use Consultants Ltd. and is due to be completed in autumn 1986. The group will not be preparing a formal report but the outcome of the joint discussions will be reflected in the advice I receive once the inventory is available.

Glasgow Sheriff Court

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many accused persons have appeared from custody in Glasgow sheriff court as new cases in the latest convenient month for which figures are available and in each of the previous 12 months.

Mr. Younger: I regret that reliable information is not available.

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases there have been in which the questioning of a suspect was recorded in a police station and which resulted in a prosecution in Glasgow sheriff court, together with the total number of suspects so interviewed in Glasgow for the last year or the latest convenient date for which figures are available, giving the first total as a percentage of the second.

Mr. Younger: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many summary complaints have been dealt with in Glasgow sheriff court in each of the last five years.

Mr. Younger: The information requested is set out in the table.

Number of persons called to Glasgow sheriff summary court

	Number
1980	27,910
1981	13,808
1982	17,454
1983	15,513
1984	14,939

Prison Population

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was (i) the average daily prison population for the latest month for which figures are available, (ii) the figure for the same month in each of the previous five years and (iii) in each case the number of prisoners within that total who were on remand/awaiting trial or sentence.

Mr. Younger: The information is set out in the table.

Average daily population in penal establishments

November	Persons on remand	Total
1980	744	4,900
1981	838	4,510
1982	884	5,176
1983	862	4,988
1984	1,089	4,951
1985	1,097	5,602

Glasgow District Court

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many summary complaints have been dealt with in Glasgow district court in each of the last five years.

Mr. Younger: The information requested is given in the table.

Glasgow District Court	Number of persons called to court
1980	31,162
1981	32,444
1982	29,598
1983	33,301
1984	31,295

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many complaints relating to offences under the

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 have been dealt with in Glasgow district court for the latest period for which figures are available and for the previous three years.

Mr. Younger: The information requested is set out in the table.

Persons called to Glasgow District Court
Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

	Number
1982	4
1983	0
1984	1
*1985	†0

* January to June.
† Provisional.

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many complaints relating to offences of drinking and driving under sections 5 and 6 of the Road Traffic Act 1972 have been dealt with in Glasgow district court for the latest period for which figures are available and for the previous three years.

Mr. Younger: No cases of drinking and driving have been dealt with by Glasgow district court.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Corporation Tax

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue yield in 1984-85 and 1985-86, respectively, from corporation tax on companies' capital gains.

Mr. Moore: Provisional estimates of receipts of corporation tax on capital gains are :

Receipts in	*£ million*
1984-85	325
1985-86	450

Bank of England

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to answer questions on commitments or guarantees of, or relating to, public money by the Bank of England in support of financial institutions where the resources come, or may have to come, other than wholly from the bank's own resources; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Any funds provided by Parliament, or financial guarantees relying on such funds, are subject to the normal procedures—including the accountability of the responsible Minister and if appropriate, the laying of a minute in respect of proposed guarantees. These procedures would naturally apply to any such funds or guarantees to enable the Bank of England to support financial institutions.

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to the answer of 25 November, *Official Report*, column *466*, he will define what is encompassed within the term "the Bank's own resources".

Mr. Ian Stewart: The resources at the disposal of the Bank of England which are reported annually in the accounts of its banking department.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the yield of capital gains tax in the current tax year were the indexation provisions to apply to chargeable gains relating to the period 1965 to 1982.

Mr. Moore: I regret that a precise estimate cannot be made. A large proportion of the yield of capital gains tax would be lost, possibly as much as two thirds of it.

City Financial Institutions (Alleged Corruption)

Mr. Alton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning alleged corruption in City financial institutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My right hon. Friend has received a small number of letters from hon. Members and members of the public about the problem of fraud. Specific allegations of fraudulent behaviour or corruption have been passed to the police, who are the appropriate authority to deal with such matters.

The Government are taking determined action to ensure high standards of conduct in the financial sector. The Government's White Paper on banking supervision, and the Financial Services Bill, both published this week, are designed to provide for the first time a comprehensive system of financial supervision. We have also taken steps to improve the effectiveness of the prosecution of fraud.

The fraud investigations group was established in January this year to improve co-operation between the police, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Department of Trade and Industry. My hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General yesterday announced additional resources for the fraud investigation group. We will give urgent attention to the recommendations of Lord Justice Roskill on what can be done to improve the law and procedure governing complex fraud trials, in order to increase the prospects of successful prosecution.

Industrial Building Allowances

Mr. Butterfill asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost to the Exchequer of extending industrial building allowances to *(a)* hotels and *(b)* leisure and entertainment buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: Capital allowances are already given for hotels and will be 4 per cent. straight line writing-down allowances from 1 April 1986, the same rate as for all industrial buildings.

Leisure and entertainment buildings do not receive capital allowances for the cost of buildings, although some of the cost of many of these buildings will qualify for plant and machinery allowances. If industrial building allowances were extended to this sector, the first full year cost to the Exchequer would be less than £5 million; this could rise over 25 years to around £50 million a year at current levels of expenditure.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Fallon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the amount of identifiable public

expenditure per capita in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, excluding security expenditure, in each year since the inception of the territorial block formulae.

Mr. MacGregor: The territorial block formulae were adopted in their existing form in all three categories in the 1980 public expenditure survey to apply from 1981-82 onwards. Figures of identifiable public expenditure per capita up to 1983-84 were included in a previous answer on 22 February 1985 at columns *608-18*. Later information is not yet available.

Berox Milling Machine (Southampton Docks)

Mr. Anderson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Berox 800 KV milling machine impounded by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise officials at Southampton docks en route to South Africa remains in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The machine to which the hon. Member refers is still in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Anderson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Her Majesty's Customs and Excise intend to institute a prosecution following the seizure by customs officials of a Berox KV milling machine at Southampton docks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: No.

Spirits Duty

Mr. George Gardiner asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest forecast of receipts from spirits duty in 1985-86; and how much of this figure is attributable to the change in the rate of duty fixed in his last Budget.

Mr. Brooke: It is estimated that duty on spirits will yield £1,460 million in 1985-86, of which some £10 million is attributable to the increase in duty in the last Budget.

Civil Service (Fife)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for each Department the number of Civil Service posts based within the Fife region at the following grades *(a)* clerical assistant, *(b)* clerical officer, *(c)* executive officer, *(d)* higher executive officer, *(e)* senior executive officer, *(f)* principal, *(g)* deputy principal and *(h)* senior deputy principal; and what is the current rate of turnover in staff.

Mr. Brooke: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Privatisation Programme

Mr. Pike asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the effects on tax revenues in 1985-86 of Her Majesty's Government's privatisation programme.

Mr. Moore: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) on 28 November at column *661*.

Domestic Credit

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his assessment of the effect of the purchase of commercial bills by the Bank of England on the level of domestic credit.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Rapid increases in the bank's holdings of commercial bills can distort financial markets. But it is not possible to quantify precisely their effects on domestic credit.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the increase in the Bank of England's holding of commercial bills from May 1979 to May 1983 and from May 1983 to date, together with the increase in domestic credit as a percentage of £M3 money stock at the beginning of each period.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Figures for the increase in the bank's holdings of commercial bills over these periods are as follows:

Increase over banking months	*£ billion*
May 1979 to May 1983	6·8
May 1983 to November 1985	3·5

Information on changes in domestic credit and the £M3 stock may be found in "Financial Statistics", tables 11.1, 11.2 and 11.5.

Prices

Mr. Ralph Howell: asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will compare the prices of one pint of milk, one pound of beef sirloin, one loaf of bread, 20 cigarettes, the average price of a three-bedroomed house and a medium-sized car, in 1970, 1979, 1984 and 1985, taking prices as 100; and if he will show the percentage increases in each case.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have been asked to reply.

The available component indices of the retail prices index are as follows:

Annual average prices indices, 1979 = 100

	1970	*1979*	*1984*	**1985*
Fresh milk	30·3	100	150·0	158·1
Beef	24·3	100	142·2	142·2
Bread	29·4	100	141·0	146·3
Cigarettes	38·7	100	198·1	215·6
House prices†	24·4	100	159·5	170·3
Purchase of motor vehicles	31·7	100	128·8	131·3

Percentage increases in these price indices

	1979	*1979-84*	*1984-85**
Fresh milk	230·0	50·0	5·4
Beef	311·5	42·2	0·0
Bread	240·1	41·0	3·8
Cigarettes	158·4	98·1	8·8
House prices	309·8	59·5	6·8
Purchase of motor vehicles	215·5	28·8	1·9

* Average January—November 1985

† Sources: Department of the Environment mix adjusted house price index for all United Kingdom dwellings.

Trustee Savings Bank

Mr. Wilson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current position regarding progress towards recognition of the Trustee Savings bank under the Banking Act.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 December 1985, c. 806]: Though the central Trustees Savings Bank Limited is a recognised bank under the 1979 Act the trustees savings banks themselves are exempted by schedule 1 of that Act from the prohibition on deposit-taking in section 1 of the Act. So long as they remain exempt, therefore, they do not require recognition. They are however supervised by the Bank of England on an informal basis on behalf of the Treasury, and in their regular prudential discussions the bank and the TSBs have considered future authorisation of the proposed future TSB companies.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iran

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Iran about human rights in that country.

Mr. Renton: We continue to take all suitable opportunities to raise human rights matters with the Government of Iran. We co-sponsored the resolution on violations of human rights in Iran adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December, which called for the Government of Iran to respect and ensure to all individuals within its territory the rights enshrined in the international covenant on civil and political rights, to which Iran is a party.

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations with Iran and on the main factors which influence them.

Mr. Renton: We maintain diplomatic relations with Iran. Since the Iranian revolution in 1979 we have worked towards achieving a dialogue on issues of bilateral and international concern. These issues include the need for an urgent settlement to the Iran-Iraq conflict, and a bettering of human rights in Iran.

Torture

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards international action to prevent the use of torture in the light of the Amnesty programme for the prevention of torture, a copy of which has been sent to him by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill.

Mr. Eggar: We share Amnesty's concern about all violations of human rights, including the widespread use of torture. We strongly supported the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly last December of the United Nations convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. We signed this convention on 15 March and we intend to ratify it in due course. We are participating constructively in the Council of Europe's negotiations on a draft European convention against torture. At the United Nations and in other international fora we have repeatedly condemned the use of torture, and we shall continue to do so, and shall make clear our hope that all member states of the United Nations will adhere to the United Nations convention against torture.

Tristan da Cunha

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer on 16 December, *Official Report*, column *33*, if he will indicate the relationship between Table Bay Marine and Tristan Investments Limited.

Mr. Eggar: Table Bay Marine and Tristan Investments Limited have certain directors in common, but the former is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Palinauris Investments Limited and the latter of South Atlantic Islands Development Corporation Limited.

Treaties

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all treaties signed by the European Economic Community on behalf of the United Kingdom in the last 10 years.

Mr. Rifkind: The list of treaties concluded by the Community between 1957 and June 1984 has been published by the Commission. I am arranging for a copy of the English language version dated July 1984 to be placed in the Library of the House. I will write to the hon. Member with a consolidated list for the last 10 years as soon as possible.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy on the question of fisheries around the Falklands in the light of the report published by Imperial college, London, a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr. Eggar: We are continuing to support actively the Food and Agriculture Organisation's efforts directed towards the establishment of a multilaterally based fisheries conservation and management regime in the south-west Atlantic. Dr. John Beddington's report on the fisheries around the Falklands, which was commissioned by the Falkland Islands Development Corporation for the United Kingdom and Falkland Islands Governments, constitutes an authoritative technical contribution to consideration of the issue. Copies of the report have been made available to the FAO and placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to discuss the question of fisheries in the south Atlantic with Argentina.

Mr. Eggar: In my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) on 20 November at column *206-7* I made it clear that we are in contact with all Governments with an interest in the south-west Atlantic fishery.

CMAO (Seizure)

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received and what action he is taking about the seizure by the Government of Djibouti of the British owned company CMAO.

Mr. Rifkind: We have been informed of action which the Djibouti port authority proposes to take against the interests of Compagnie Maritime Auxiliaire D'Outre-Mer (CMAO) in Djibouti. It is our understanding that such action does not involve the seizure of the company but concerns the amount of rent to be paid in the future by CMAO under its lease with the port authority.

It is the responsibility of CMAO to take such action to protect its interests as it deems appropirate having regard to the remedies available under local law. But Her Majesty's ambassador has raised the matter with the Government of Djibouti and the relevant authorities; Foreign and Commonwealth officials have also had discussions with officers of CMAO. We are monitoring developments closely.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Rhodes James asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement of forthcoming business in the European Community Council of Ministers.

Mr. Rifkind: The usual written forecast was deposited in the House today. At present four formal and one informal meeting of the Council are scheduled for January.

On 8 and 9 January there will be an informal meeting of Transport Ministers in The Hague. For the meeting the Dutch Presidency has produced three papers covering air, inland and maritime transport which will form the basis for discussion.

On 13-14 January the Fisheries Council may meet to discuss any matters not resolved at the December meetings.

The Economic and Finance Council is expected to meet on 20 January to consider further the calculation of commercial interest reference rates which apply to export finance; the terms of reference of the high level working party on fiscal harmonisation, agreed on at the December Council and to discuss international debt issues.

The Agriculture Council is expected to meet on 20-21 January 1986. Among the subjects expected to be discussed are the reform of the starch regime, sugar for the chemical industry, and outstanding points on Portuguese and Spanish accession.

In the Foreign Affairs Council Ministers will discuss Commission proposals for a negotiating mandate on the renewal of the multi-fibre arrangement.

Ministers will also discuss the adaptation of the EC-EFTA agreements to take account of the enlargement of the Community.

European Act (Preamble)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* the section of the preamble to the European Act agreed at the Council of Ministers on 17 December relating to European Union and the commitment of member states to realise that objective by means of a new treaty article.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As I told the House in my statement on 18 December at columns 299-300 the texts agreed by the intergovernmental conference will be made available to the House as soon as we have them in final form.

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff and at what Civil Service grade are employed by Her Majesty's Government on research into the means to provide for effective verification of a nuclear test moratorium or a comprehensive test ban treaty.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave in response to a question from the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) on 6 December 1985 at column *387*.

British Embassy (Moscow)

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what will be the additional annual cost to public funds of replacing the 79 Soviet citizens working in the United Kingdom embassy and residences by United Kingdom citizens.

Mr. Eggar: Pursuant to the reply I gave on 13 December at column *814*, the information is as follows. The estimated annual cost of employing 79 United Kingdom citizens to replace the Soviet citizens working in the embassy and residences in Moscow would be £921,010 if all 79 were single. It would be even higher if a substantial proportion were accompanied by their families, as would be normal.

Since the employment of Soviet citizens currently costs £257,310 per annum, the additional annual cost to public funds would be £663,700. But there would also be additional expenditure on, for instance, language training and the furnishing of accommodation, even assuming the Soviet authorities could provide it, and a number of the major practical problems.

ENVIRONMENT

Docklands STOLport

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if the planning application for aircraft terminal positions to be located within 50m of residential houses in Camel Road, Silvertown is compatible with the outline conditions of planning and associated restrictions which he approved earlier this year.

Mr. Tracey: It is for the London Docklands development corporation, as local planning authority, to consider applications concerning the details of the development.

GLC (Consents)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all applications outstanding for more than a month from the Greater London council for

consents under the Local Government act 1985; and in each case, what is the reason why a decision has not yet been reached.

Mr. Tracey: A list of these applications follows. This list could be provided in a more detailed form, with reasons why decisions have not yet been issued, only at a disproportionate cost.

1-11 Deancross Street E1
1-21 Blackbury Close
10 Seddon Road, Morden
105 Marlow Road
14 Catering Licences
18-24 Albemarle Road, Beckenham
1985 Brent Carnival
2-4 Thorpe Road E6
200 Venner Road SE26
36-60 South Lambeth Road
39, 58, 65, 73 Moram Road N4
5 Westminster Bridge Road SE1
50-62 King Street, Southall
57-62 High Street, Stroud, Gloucester
59 Mildhay Park N1
72 Acre At Gladstone Terrace
93 Venner Road SE26
A21 Sevenoaks Road, Bromley
Advance
Advice and Information Service
Afro-Caribbean Community Radio
Agricultural Restoration
Anti-Racist Awareness
Anti-Racist Activity
Arcade, Stamford Wharf SE1
Asian Radio Project
Athletic Track Development
Avon Trading Estate W14
Battersea Park
Beaver Estate, Hounslow
Beddington-Mitchan Area
Betty May Gray House, Peir Street
Block B, Camberwell Green
Breakthrough Trust
Bridge Road, Southall
British Deaf Association
Burgess Park
Burgess Park
Burgess Park
Burgess Park
Bus Priority Measures
Car Park at Fenelon Place
Children's Legal Centre
Civil Defence Video Films
Clays Road, Thorns Way, Walton
Coin Street
Coin Street
Coin Street
Community Radio Project
Computer Equip for Office
Computer Equipment
Consultants to Study Abolition
Crayford Stadium Site, Bexley
Deephams, Edmonton, Sandy Lane
Dericte Street—Hackney
Dial-a-Ride
Disability Resource Team
East Hackney
East Hackney
Employment In GLC
Ethnic Minority Radio
Finsbury Park
Friends for the Young Deaf
Friends of the Young Deaf
George Green Centre
GLC Arts+Recreation Department
GLC/LRT Travel Diary OP
Grants for "Special Areas"
Grants for "Special Areas"
Grants for "Special Areas"
Grants for "Special Areas"
Hainault Forest
Heckford Street/Cranford Street/Cable
Homeless Families
Homelessness Inititives
Indemnity
Indemnity to Employees
Lambeth Walk Area (Ethelred VI)
Langdon Park
LFB Training Centre
LFB Training Centre
Local Household Survey
Local Information Initiatives
Local Radio Workshop
London Boroughs
London Ecology Centre
Londoners Action Kit
Londoners' Guide to Benefits
Malham Road SE23
Medway Homes, Kent
Metropolitan Roads in Lambeth
Mile End
Mile End Park
Mile End Park
Mile End Park
Monier Road E3, Tower Hamlets
Museum Service (Mobile Museum)
Neasden Rail Freight Depot
Neighbourhood Gypsy Worker
New Covent Garden, Nine Elms
New Lydenburg 11
Northern Distributor Road
Oldfield Road SWTS
Oldfield Road SWTS
One Islington
Parks and Open Spaces
Parliament Hill
Peace Street E!
Perivale Park Athletics Track
Playgrounds—fixed equipment
Pollution monitoring station
Polytechnic of Central London
Prov of Specialist Information
Railway Tavern, Hale Lane NW7
Relay
Ripple Road junction with Upney Lane
Road Safety
Roman Road/Grove Road junction
Roman Road/Grove Road junction
Roundhouse Arts Centre
Royal society for Mewntally
Scientific Branch Equipment
Shoreditch Park
Spinal Injuries Association
Summer Holiday Sports Activity
Surrey Docks Sports Ground
Surrey Univ+Comm Infor Project
Sutton Housing Trust, Southwark
T W Sound
Thames TV and LWT
Thamesmead Moorings
The Emerald Club W14
The Highway—Tower Hamlets
Thistlebrook Traveller Site
Tower Hamlets Advanced Tech
Tramshed Theatre
Translation and Interpretation
Travellers sites
Trinity College
Unit 1 Parkhouse trading estate
Upgrading of Microcomputers
Victoria PK+Burdett Gdns
Vietnamese Project
Wapping Sports Centre
Welfare Benefits Project
Welfare Rights Advice
Wilton's Music Hall Supplement
Women Enjoy Building
Women's Airwaves
Wormwood Scrubs

Wormscrubs
Wyke House Hotel Site
Yarnton Way Thamesmead

County Hall, London

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if the London residuary body is currently considering any proposal to turn county hall into a superstore; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: I have seen a press report that proposals of this kind are being contemplated. It will be for the London residuary body to evaluate any proposals that are made for the purchase of county hall.

Pollution (Access to Information)

Mr. Forman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the report of the working party on public access to information held by pollution control authorities.

Mr. Waldegrave: A decision about publication of the working party's report will be taken in the new year.

Public Consultation Documents (Responses)

Mr. Forman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to make public the responses received by his Department to public consultation documents, except where respondents have specifically asked that their responses should be kept confidential.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

"Lifting the Burden"

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to introduce the changes to the town and county planning general development orders which were announced in the recent White Paper, "Lifting the Burden".

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to introduce the changes to the town and country planning general development orders which were announced in the recent White Paper, "Lifting the Burden".

Mr. Tracey: The necessary orders, made by my right hon. Friend, have been laid before Parliament today. They make amendments to the general development orders 1977 to 1985, and to the special development order of 1985 which deals with national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, conservation areas and the Broads. An order made by the Secretary of State for Scotland, amending the Scottish general development order 1981 in broadly similar ways has also been laid before Parliament today. All the new orders will come into operation on 1 March 1986.

Several of the changes to the planning system being made by these new orders were announced in our White Paper, "Lifting the Burden," last July. Extensive public consultation has taken place on most of them as part of our review of the general development order, which began in 1983 and which is continuing. The amendments remove specific planning controls which can be lifted without significant risk to the environment. But one or two of the amendments increase or maintain control where necessary.

The amendments to the general development order mostly introduce or extend permitted development rights for several categories of minor development, so reducing or removing the need for specific planning applications to local planning authorities, as follows.

The limits of the existing right to extend industrial buildings are raised from 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. of cubic content, subject to a permitted increase in floor space of 1000 sq m. rather than the present 750 sq m. These increases will not apply in national parks, AONBs, conservation areas in England and Wales and the Broads.

A new exemption for warehouse extensions, based on the same limits is also introduced. In areas to which the SDO applies the right to extend will be limited to not more than 10 per cent. of cubic content subject to a limit of 500 sq m. on the increase in aggregate floorspace.

A new relaxation in the existing size limits on operational building erected by electricity undertakings except in the SDO areas is introduced, together with an exemption for the Civil Aviation Authority's developments relating to air traffic control.

New exemptions are introduced for the improvement and restoration by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England of property in its care and also for certain minor developments within existing amusement parks, such as the erection of new rides and sideshows, subject to various precise limits.

House occupiers will be able without specific planning permission to erect satellite dish antennas of up to 90 cm. in diameter on or at the front of their houses, as well as at the rear as now, but this relaxation will not apply in the SDO areas (or, in Scotland in the national scenic areas and conservation areas), where present controls will remain in operation. The requirements for listed building consent will also remain unchanged.

The amendments also introduce a new permission for small scale exploratory operations for minerals, and for the removal of material from small, temporary mineral working deposits. Parts of these new permissions will be subject to a new power of direction which will accelerate the process by which mineral planning authorities may intervene to impose full planning controls in certain specified circumstances.

Various other minor procedural changes are being introduced, including a reduction in the requirement upon planning authorities in England and Wales to notify the Department of Transport or the Welsh Office as appropriate of development proposals involving access to certain roads.

One substantive increase in planning controls is proposed. Class VI of the GDO—class V of the Scottish GDO—has sometimes been used to circumvent normal planning controls on the excavation of minerals and on the tipping of waste and spoil on agricultural land; and bonafide agricultural engineering operations on large scale can sometimes present planning problems. The amendments to class VI will greatly reduce the scope for problems and abuses in this area.

The remaining proposals for class VI outlined in the Department's consultation paper of 23 January 1984 are still under active consideration. We propose to introduce further changes, and to consolidate the GDO, and our conclusions will be announced as soon as possible. I

understand that the Secretary of State for Scotland is considering introducing similar arrangements to aid consolidation of the Scottish GDO at about the same time.

Our overall aim in making these changes in planning legislation is to reduce the burden on both developers and planning authorities, without putting at risk the essential protection which the planning system provides both in general and in areas of special significance.

Departmental Party (Cost)

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was spent by his Department on the party held on 18 December to celebrate Parliament's consideration of the Okehampton bypass (Confirmation of Order) Bill.

Mr. Ridley: I have been asked to reply.

The Department of the Environment spent nothing on this party. I refer the hon. Member to the answer to his identical question to me.

Domestic Heaters (Asbestos)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what account is taken of the cost of removing asbestos from domestic heaters in the housing investment programme allocation to local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young: A detailed description of the methodology for making housing investment programme allocations for 1986-87 has been placed in the Library. A local authority stock condition indicator now represents 28 per cent. of the generalised needs index. The scores of individual authorities on that indicator reflect information about their expenditure needs supplied to my Department in the stock condition inquiry. The categories of works used in that inquiry included heating systems and asbestos treatment.

The Electricity Council has given guidance that storage heaters incorporating asbestos do not need to be replaced until the end of their useful life. Comprehensive guidance about domestic heaters will be included in the revised edition of my Department's booklet, "Asbestos materials in buildings."

Glanford and Scunthorpe

Mr. Hickmet asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate what effect regional aid grant of three enterprise zones, his Department's special employment measures, grants and cheap loans from the European Economic Community, derelict land grants, urban aid grants and the activities of English Industrial Estates have had upon employment in the parliamentary constituency of Glanford and Scunthorpe.

Sir George Young [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. 59]: I estimate that since September 1983 just over 1,000 jobs have been created in the three areas within the two enterprise zones in Glanford and Scunthorpe, including that managed by English Estates. This includes 64 jobs directly related to schemes aided by derelict land grant and a proportion of the jobs protected or provided with the aid of regional selective assistance which also total nearly 1,000 throughout Glanford and Scunthorpe. In addition, some 20 jobs have been created outside the zones by grants under the urban programme.

I have no information about jobs created as a result of EEC funding. I am asking my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General to write to my hon. Friend with information about the effect of special employment measures.

DEFENCE

Procurement Programme

Mr. Yeo asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken to improve the efficiency of his Department's procurement programme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave on 26 November to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) at column *733*.

Radioactivity

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Defence how recently sites within 10 to 15 miles radius of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment Aldermaston and Royal ordnance factory Burghfield have been monitored for radioactivity; what environmental discharges have been collected and checked; and what was the most recent recommendation of the International Commission on Radiological Protection about a radioactivity level.

Mr. Lee: Environmental surveys are carried out on a continuing and routine basis around the Atomic Weapons Research Establishmnt, Aldermaston, and the Royal ordnance factory, Burghfield, in the area up to some 10 to 15 miles from the sites. These include monitoring at fortnightly, monthly and quarterly intervals, depending on the type of monitoring. The last fortnightly cycle was completed during the week commencing 9 December; the last monthly cycle at the end of November; and the last quarterly cycle at the end of September. All three cycles will have been completed again by the end of the year. Monitoring covers both airborne and liquid discharges, the former on a continuous basis, the latter prior to each batch being released.

The International Commission on Radiological Protection made its last major recommendations in 1977 and has made minor changes as necessary at roughly annual intervals since then. The commission makes recommendations on radiological doses to people, including both classified radiation workers and members of the general public, rather than on levels of radioactivity in waste discharges.

The principal recommendation for members of the public is that it would be prudent to limit exposure on the basis of a lifetime average annual dose of 1 millisievert. Our aim is that the levels of radioactivity in waste discharges from AWRE and ROF Burghfield are such that they could lead to a radiological dose no greater than one thousandth of this figure. In practice, this aim is usually achieved by a substantial margin.

Footpath 43, Menwith with Darley

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 4 December, *Official Report*, column *277*, concerning a footpath in

Menwith with Darley why he did not use the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 when he decided to stop and reprovide the footpath.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were not applicable in this case.

Footpaths

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will introduce legislation to amend the Defence Act 1842 to provide for proposals to stop up and reprovide footpaths to be subject to formal public representation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In view of the obligation under the Defence Act 1842 to provide a substitute footpath which is not substantially less convenient than the route which is closed, it is not considered necessary to amend the Act in the manner suggested.

United States Submarine (Plymouth)

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current visit to Plymouth Sound of an American submarine.

Mr. Stanley: The USS Henry Clay, an American SSBN, berthed in Plymouth Sound on 10 December on a short routine visit for the purposes of crew rest and recreation. The vessel departed, as planned, on 13 December, after a successful visit.

Military Hospitals (Contract Catering)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy regarding offering alternative employment to civilian catering staff whose jobs are disestablished as the result of the introduction of contract catering at Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich.

Mr. Lee: Every effort will be made to find alternative MOD employment within the vicinity of Woolwich garrison for staff affected by contract catering plans at Queen Elizabeth military hospital. The contractor will also be encouraged to employ those staff whose jobs are affected. If despite these efforts some staff have to be declared redundant, they will be eligible for reduncancy compensation based on length of service in the Department.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the average number of meals produced each week by the catering department at Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich.

Mr. Lee: About 20,000 main meals are prepared each week at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence what annual financial savings he estimates will result from the introduction of contracts catering at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich.

Mr. Lee: Tenders for the catering support contract at Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich, are currently being evaluated. I am unable to give details of the expected savings that will be achieved since this information would reveal the price of the acceptable tender which is agreed in confidence between the Department and the contractor. I can however say that there will be a significant saving over directly employed labour costs.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those military hospitals which have introduced contract catering services together with the starting dates and the names of the contractors involved.

Mr. Lee: No military hospitals have yet introduced a contract catering service. From 1 April 1986, a contract will be introduced at Princess Alexandra's Royal Air Force hospital, Wroughton, Wilts. The contract has been awarded to Pennine Caterers Ltd.

The use of contract catering at other military hospitals is under consideration, but no decisions have been made.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence on what evidence he has based his judgment that contract catering at Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich, can provide an effective service at lower cost.

Mr. Lee: The preparation of any proposal to invite tenders for work performed by MOD staff includes the formulation of a schedule of requirements and the identification of in-house costs. The contractor's acceptance of the schedule of requirements and the conditions of contract will ensure an effective service.

It is our policy that the only work that is carried out within the defence support organisation is that it is essential the Ministry of Defence carries out for clearly proven operational reasons or where there is significant financial advantage for the taxpayer.

Devonport and Rosyth

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many jobs at the Principal Supply and Transport Officer Naval (Stores) at Portsmouth are dependent on the supply of stores to Devonport and Rosyth dockyards.

Mr. Lee: The effort involved equates to about 12 staff, but no job is wholly dependent on the supply of stores to Devonport and Rosyth dockyards.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the stores from the Principal Supply and Transport Officer Naval (Stores), Portsmouth that go to Devonport and Rosyth are strategic stores.

Mr. Lee: This information is not readily available.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the Principal Supply and Transport Officer Naval (Stores) work at Portsmouth involves sending stores to Rosyth and Devonport.

Mr. Lee: About 15 per cent. of store issues by the Principal Supply and Transport Officer (Naval) at Portsmouth are for Devonport and Rosyth naval bases, but under half of those issues are to meet the requirements of the dockyards themselves.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the number of civilians employed in the transport departments of Rosyth and Devonport naval bases.

Mr. Lee: The transport departments of the Principal Supply and Transport Officer (Naval) employ 148 civilian staff at Rosyth, and 310 at Devonport.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list all the services provided by Devonport dockyard to the Royal Navy;

(2) if he will list all the services provided by Rosyth dockyard to the Royal Navy.

Mr. Lee: The services provided by the royal dockyards at Devonport and Rosyth to the Royal Navy fall into five main categories as follows:

(a) Refit, repair, maintenance and modernisation of Royal Navy vessels;

(b) Overhaul and testing of naval equipments, including those to be returned to the Director General of Stores and Transport (Navy) for stock and subsequent issue to the Royal Navy;

(c) Installation and maintenance of machinery and equipment in naval establishments;

(d) Provision of utility services to Royal Navy vessels alongside in the naval base and to adjacent naval shore establishments; and

(e) manufacture of some items of ships' equipment.

Royal Navy (Civilian Staff)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish a list of all Royal Navy establishments in the United Kingdom employing civilian staff, indicating *(a)* the number of staff and *(b)* the rôle of that establishment.

Mr. Lee: The table shows naval establishments employing civilian staff within the main management areas together with details of their role-function. The detailed information on the numbers employed at individual establishments is not readily available but the overall management area strength as at 1 October 1985 is shown for information.

Management Area	*Overall civilian strength as at 1 October 1985*	*Location/Title*	*Function/Role*
Chief Executive Dockyards (CED)	21,252	Devonport Rosyth	Dockyards
		Faslane	Clyde Submarine Base
		Portland	Port Auxiliary Repair unit
		Blackbrook Farm	Internal Combustion Engine Repair Depot
		Navy Department Shore Machinery Offices: Aberporth, Belfast, Forest Moor, Inskip, Hangennoch, Milford Haven, Pembroke Dock, Risley and Trecwn	Support to Fleet and Civil Shore Establishments
		CED Telecommunications: at Fort Southwick, Forest Moor HMS COLLINGWOOD, Mount Wise and Northwood	Telecommunications
Director General of Supplies and Transport (Naval) (DGST(N))	13,581	Arrochar, Beith, Coulport Crombie, Dean Hill, Devonport, Milford Haven, Portsmouth and Trecwn	Armament Depots
		Copenacre, Devonport, Eaglescliffe, Exeter, Faslane, Fleetlands, Kirkliston, Lathalmond, Llangennoch, Newcastle upon Tyne, Perth, Portland, Portsmouth, Rosyth, Slough Woolsten, Wrangaton and Yeovilton	Stores/Victualling Depots
		Devonport, Garelochead, Invergordon, Pembroke Dock, Portland and Portsmouth	Oil Fuel Depots
Commander in Chief Naval Home Command (CINCNAVHOME)	4049	Plymouth, Portsmouth and Scotland/Northern Ireland	Flag Officers
		Dartmouth, Greenwich and Manadan	Royal Naval Colleges
		HMSs—CAMBRIDGE, COLLINGWOOD, DOLPHIN, MERCURY, TEMERAIRE, RALEIGH, ROYAL ARTHUR, SULTAN and VERNON	Training Establishments
		HMSs—CALEDONIA and EXCELLENT	Accommodation Centres
		HMSs—COCHRANE, DRAKE, NELSON, NEPTUNE	Naval Bases
		HMS INSKIP	Wireless Telegraphy Station

Management Area	Overall civilian strength as at 1 October 1985	Location/Title	Function/Role
		Royal Naval Auxiliary Service (RNXS) at—Birkenhead, Clyde, Forth FOSNI, N. Ireland, Plymouth, Portsmouth and Tyne	
		Royal Naval Reserve—HMSs—CALLIOPE, CAMBRIA, CAMPERDOWN, CAROLINE, CLAVERHOUSE, EAGLET, FLYING FOX, GRAHAM, PRESIDENT, SUSSEX, WESSEX	HQ Units
		Royal Naval Reserve Training Centres: Birmingham, Chatham, Coventry, Leeds, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Preston, Sheffield, Southend, Stockton and Swansea	Communications. Training Centres.
Director General Fleet Support Policy and Services	3082	Director of Marine Services (Naval) Clyde, Portland, Portsmouth, Plymouth and Rosyth	Marine Support to the Royal Navy
Fleet Maintenance and Repair Organisation (FMRO)	3045	Portsmouth	Fleet maintenance and repair
Director General Aircraft (Naval) (DGA(N))	1704	Fleetlands Wroughton	Tri-Service helicopter repair facility
		Perth	Component repair Establishment
Flag Officer Naval Air Command (FONAC)	973	HMSs—DAEDALUS, GANNET, HERON, OSPREY and SEAHAWK	Naval Air Stations
Hydrographer	901	Taunton	Headquarters
		Plymouth Portsmouth Rosyth	Chart Depots
Commandant General Royal Marines (CGRM)	761	Bickleigh Eastney Norton Manor Seaton Stonehouse	Royal Marine Barracks/ Camps
		Deal	Royal Marine School of Music
		HMS CONDOR	Commando unit
Medical Director General (Naval) (MDG(N))	629	Haslar Stonehouse	Hospitals
		Greenock	Medical Store
		Alverstoke (Gosport)	Institute of Naval Medicine
Directorate General of Naval Manpower and Training (DGNMT)	481	HMS CENTURION	Naval pay and records
Commander in Chief Fleet (CINCFLEET)	213	HMS WARRIOR	Fleet Operations Control
		Plymouth	Fleet Maintenance Group
		Mount Wise	Wireless and Telegraphy Station
		Gosport	Flag Officer Submarines

Management Area	Overall civilian strength as at 1 October 1985	Location/Title	Function/Role
Department of Naval Recruiting (DNR)	41	Brighton, Bristol, Derby, Glasgow, HQ Western Region, HQ South East Region, Ipswich, Liverpool, Reading, Scotland and Northern Ireland and Southampton	Royal Navy/Royal Marine Careers Officers and School Liaison Officers
		Wroughton	Display Workshop

Procurement Expenditure

Mr. Grylls asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion by value of the total procurement expenditure of his Department was directly with *(a)* firms employing up to 50 employees and *(b)* firms employing up to 200 employees in the financial year 1984-85.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The statistics for financial year 1984-85 are not yet available. I will write to my hon. Friend when they are.

Signals Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men of 9 Signals Regiment have been transferred from 1 Squadron to 3 Squadron since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Stanley: I understand that none has been transferred.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men of 9 Signals Regiment have been interviewed by officers of DI24A since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Stanley: I understand that 47 service men or former service men of 9 Signals Regiment have been interviewed by officers of DI24A since 3 February 1984.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men of 9 Signals Regiment have been interviewed by Colonel Dobson of DI24A since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Stanley: Since 3 February 1984, I understand Lieutenant-Colonel Dobson has interviewed nine former members of 9 Signals Regiment.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men of 9 Signals Regiment have been transferred from 2 Squadron to 3 Squadron since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Stanley: I understand that none has been transferred.

Fox Hunting

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what duties soldiers from the Guards Division would be employed on if they were not acting as grooms for fox hunting at RAVC Melton Mowbray;

(2) what is his policy towards soldiers at RAVC Melton Mowbray concealing their fox hunting activities there from other Army visitors to the centre;

(3) what proportion of Army horses spend their winter at RAVC Melton Mowbray; what exercise and training the remaining horses receive and where; and why they do not participate in hunting there;

(4) who owns the vehicles used to transport horses to hunt meetings; and who is responsible for the fuel and other running costs;

(5) what is the current usage of Land Rover registration number 64 HG 93 and Rice trailer 43 FL 94; and if he will make a statement on their use in connection with attendance at hunts in each of the last two seasons;

(6) if he will make it his policy to prohibit the use of regimental funds in connection with the use of departmental property, such as horses, to participate in fox hunting;

(7) whether any insurance costs arise to public funds in respect of the participation of Army *(a)* horses and *(b)* personnel in hunting activities;

(8) how regiments organise payments for block bookings taken out with hunts each winter; and what costs arise to public funds in this respect;

(9) what is the current annual cost of keeping a cavalry, Guards or King's Troop horse; and if this is fully met from public funds;

(10) what costs arise to public funds in respect of the participation of Army staff and horses in fox hunting; and if he will give the figures for the last two seasons broken down by character of cost;

(11) when, pursuant to the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, Army horses were first permitted to ride in hunts;

(12) on how many days in the 1984-85 season the 19 Army officers referred to in the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, hunted;

(13) on how many days in the 1984-85 season any of the 25 soldiers referred to in the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, actually rode to hounds.

(14) what were the duties of the 25 soldiers referred to in the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, in the 1984-85 season whilst at RAVC Melton Mowbray;

(15) how many horses from each of the Household Cavalry, .Kings' Troop Royal Horse Artillery and the Guards Division were injured whilst hunting; and how many died whilst hunting or from causes directly related to hunting, in each of the last two seasons;

(16) how the horses are selected to participate in hunting activities; how are the *(a)* officers and *(b)* men selected from amongst the volunteers; and how many horses have been selected in total in each of the last five years, broken down by the number of times they have been so selected.

Mr. Lee: I will answer shortly.

Fife Region (Civil Servants)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list for each office or establishment of his Department in the Fife region the number of Civil Service posts at the following grades *(a)* clerical assistant, *(b)* clerical officer, *(c)* executive officer, *(d)* higher executive officer, *(e)* senior executive officer, *(f)* principal, *(g)* deputy principal and *(h)* senior deputy principal; and what is the current rate of turnover in staff.

Mr. Lee: I will reply shortly.

Devonport Dockyard

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to prevent the managing director of Her Majesty's Devonport dockyard using his Department's official notepaper, envelopes and internal post to publicise a private company which he and other senior managers have formed to tender for the contract to manage Devonport dockyard from 1 April 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 December 1985, c. *812*]: No. The managing director of Devonport dockyard may properly use my Department's stationery and internal postal system to make information available to the work force for which he is responsible, and to those with whom he normally has dealings, about the formation of a company by himself and a small team of managers at the dockyard to bid in competition with other companies for the contract to manage the dockyard.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the extent to which the involvement of serving Royal Navy officers in a private company tendering for the contract to manage Devonport dockyard from 1 April 1987 is consistent with the terms of Queen's Regulations so long as those officers continue to occupy their present positions;

(2) if he will make a statement on the extent to which the actions of the managing director of Devonport dockyard and other senior Civil Service managers, in forming a private company for the purposes of tendering for the contract to manage the dockyard after 1 April 1987, are consistent with the regulations governing the ethical conduct of civil servants, so long as those persons continue to occupy their present positions.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 December 1985, c. *812*]: The basic criterion governing the involvement of serving Royal Navy officers and civil servants in private activities is that there must be no conflict of interests between the private activity concerned and the individual's official duties.

As my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State said in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes) at column *781*, there is a broad identity of interest for those concerned, both as managers of the dockyard and as potential bidders for the contract. As my right hon. Friend also made clear, we shall be keeping the arrangements under close review.

Royal Air Force (Aircrew)

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for defence how many of the 147 pilots and 69 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force this year were serving their last posting with Royal Air Force Germany.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Twelve pilots and five navigators have left the Royal Air Force this year who were serving their last tour with Royal Air Force Germany.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year, have served between 12 and 16 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Royal Air Force for non-completion of engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Five. As they have amortised their training costs no reimbursement was necessary.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served between eight and 12 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Royal Air Force for non-completion of engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: One. As he had amortised his training costs no reimbursement was necessary.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between eight and 12 years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Fifteen.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between four and eight years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Seven.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served under four years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: One.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 89 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between 12 and 16 years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Six.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served less than four years; and what is the average amount that they have had to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: None.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal

Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served between four and eight years; and what is the average amount that they have had to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Two. As they had amortised their training costs no reimbursement was necessary.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement at some future date have served between 12 and 16 years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Two.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement have served between eight and 12 years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Two.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement have served between four and eight years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: Two.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 46 navigators who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement have served under four years.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: One.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement in the current year have served between 12 and 16 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagements.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: One. As he had amortised his training costs no reimbursement was necessary.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served under four years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: None.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year have served between four and eight years; and what is the average amount they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: One. As he had amortised his training costs no reimbursement was necessary.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 30 navigators who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement in the current year have served between eight and 12 years; and what is the average amount that they have been asked to reimburse the Ministry of Defence for non-completion of engagement.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]: None.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 74 pilots who have expressed a desire to leave the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement are serving currently with fast jet squadrons in *(a)* Royal Air Force Germany, *(b)* strike command or *(c)* fast jet training schools.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]:

(a) RAF Germany	None
(b) Strike Command	Two
(c) Fast jet training schools	Eight

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 58 pilots who have left the Royal Air Force on premature voluntary retirement this year were serving with fast jet squadrons in *(a)* Royal Air Force Germany, *(b)* strike command or *(c)* fast jet training schools.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *100-101*]:

(a) RAF Germany	None
(b) Strike Command	None
(c) Fast Jet Training Schools	Three

SOCIAL SERVICES

NHS (Services)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give, for each district in 1984-85, the total expenditure on cleaning, the expenditure on services provided by private cleaning companies, the latter figure as a percentage of the former, and the difference between that percentage and the percentage in the previous year;

(2) if he will give for each district in 1984-85 the total expenditure on catering, the expenditure on services provided by private catering companies, the latter figure as a percentage of the former, and the difference between that percentage and the percentage in the previous year;

(3) if he will give for each district in 1984-85 the total expenditure on laundry, the expenditure on services provided by private laundry companies, the latter figure as a percentage of the former and the difference between that percentage and the percentage in the previous year.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 25 November 1985, c. *498-99*]: Following is the information requested, derived from the annual accounts of regional and district health authorities.

Figures for 1984-85 are not entirely comparable with those for 1983-84 as value added tax on contracted-out services became reclaimable by health authorities on 1 September 1983.

Northern Region Health Districts

	Catering				*Domestic/Cleaning*				*Laundry*			
	Total expenditure £	*Private contracts* £	*Percentage of total*	*Difference in percentage from 1983-84*	*Total expenditure* £	*Private contracts* £	*Percentage of total*	*Difference in percentage from 1983-84*	*Total expenditure* £	*Private contracts* £	*Percentage of total*	*Difference in percentage from 1983-84*
Hartlepool	575,270	—	—	—	955,452	12,464	1·30	0·10	146,929	9	0·01	0·01
North Tees	1,028,401	—	—	—	1,213,369	1,460	0·12	(3·96)	177,804	1,063	0·60	0·26
South Tees	2,203,773	—	—	—	2,566,836	31,514	1·23	0·26	296,014	14,562	4·92	2·76
East Cumbria	1,189,390	—	—	—	1,456,655	16,216	1·11	0·27	209,787	3,927	1·87	(0·09)
South Cumbria	952,288	—	—	—	992,828	4,872	0·55	(0·28)	211,495	16,972	8·02	2·08
West Cumbria	1,101,356	2,480	0·23	(0·43)	1,065,617	16,411	1·54	0·14	158,963	631	0·40	(0·34)
Darlington	1,215,972	—	—	—	1,252,632	10,102	0·81	0·16	213,580	—	—	—
Durham	946,792	—	—	—	1,165,659	9,253	0·79	0·61	207,987	29,224	14·05	12·36
North West Durham	650,431	—	—	—	837,957	5,088	0·60	(0·12)	119,620	56	0·05	(0·05)
South West Durham	1,459,693	—	—	—	1,821,595	9,785	0·54	0·02	254,932	342	0·13	0·10
Northumberland	2,996,621	—	—	—	2,955,572	8,635	0·29	(0·07)	397,671	553	0·14	0·08
Gateshead	1,213,091	—	—	—	1,804,481	24,285	1·34	0·05	90,808	69	0·08	0·05
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,876,132	1,465	0·04	(0·05)	4,740,903	41,366	0·87	(0·30)	658,187	128,238	19·48	(7·32)
North Tyneside	919,937	—	—	—	1,019,312	5,165	0·49	—	102,619	2,079	2·03	0·66
South Tyneside	875,212	—	—	—	1,211,911	24,383	2·01	0·62	195,400	755	0·39	(0·01)
Sunderland	2,578,421	972	0·04	—	3,011,124	14,645	0·49	(0·18)	515,434	—	—	—
Regional Health Authority	26,417	2,076	7·86	6·71	137,774	3,432	2·49	(1·22)	9,629	9,629	100·00	—
Regional Total	23,609,197	6,993	0·03	(0·02)	28,169,675	239,036	0·85	(0·14)	3,966,858	208,109	5·25	(0·45)

Yorkshire Region Health Districts

	Catering				*Domestic/Cleaning*				*Laundry*			
	Total expenditure £	*Private contracts* £	*Percentage of total*	*Difference in percentage from 1983-84*	*Total expenditure* £	*Private contracts* £	*Percentage of total*	*Difference in percentage from 1983-84*	*Total expenditure* £	*Private contracts* £	*Percentage of total*	*Difference in percentage from 1983-84*
Hull	1,917,164	—	—	—	2,730,985	45,526	1·65	(0·10)	332,868	13,506	4·06	0·74
East Yorkshire	1,712,273	—	—	—	1,786,590	13,896	0·78	(0·24)	208,883	19,114	9·15	0·81
Grimsby	799,528	—	—	—	1,174,177	10,809	0·92	(0·10)	84,431	2,000	2·37	0·31
Scunthorpe	873,388	—	—	—	1,197,989	13,818	1·15	(0·09)	228,117	1,592	0·70	(0·60)
Northallerton	465,941	20,057	4·30	(0·37)	451,461	9,250	2·05	0·13	63,919	20,506	32·08	(16·21)
York	2,147,115	—	—	—	2,276,594	14,814	0·65	0·17	287,843	12,371	4·30	(3·54)
Scarborough	775,557	—	—	—	845,407	3,907	0·46	(0·04)	138,504	6,496	4·69	1·43
Harrogate	1,090,465	—	—	—	1,199,451	5,100	0·43	(0·05)	141,110	6,467	4·58	(3·17)
Bradford	2,612,750	—	—	—	2,870,592	24,179	0·84	0·05	441,609	9,624	2·18	(0·83)
Airedale	1,482,030	—	—	—	1,101,991	8,780	0·80	0·26	203,863	3,968	1·95	0·16
Calderdale	1,413,977	—	—	—	1,185,488	7,843	0·66	0·09	269,947	2,202	0·82	—
Huddersfield	1,889,112	—	—	—	2,044,898	12,921	0·63	(0·09)	333,100	7,734	2·32	0·88
Dewsbury	841,242	—	—	—	1,253,250	4,075	0·32	(0·08)	174,994	80,254	45·86	7·98
Leeds Western	3,189,644	—	—	—	3,270,506	328,000	10·14	3·32	773,509	33,834	4·37	2·38
Leeds Eastern	2,608,062	—	—	—	3,829,039	44,190	1·15	0·22	483,348	—	—	(0·35)
Wakefield	1,870,607	—	—	—	1,344,128	17,491	1·13	(0·09)	324,426	—	—	—
Pontefract	908,436	—	—	—	1,051,083	6,272	0·60	(0·03)	156,409	525	0·34	0·31
Regional Health Authority	46,457	—	—	—	205,733	8,851	4·30	1·01	15,682	—	—	(68·65)
Regional Total	26,643,750	20,057	0·08	0·01	30,039,342	779,729	2·60	0·36	4,662,562	220,193	4·72	(0·26)

Trent Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
North Derbyshire	1,729,866	—	—	—	2,080,421	6,926	0·34	(0·17)	244,247	20,421	8·36	(0·61)
South Derbyshire	3,787,727	8,887	0·23	0·23	3,692,573	92,108	2·49	0·20	515,651	2,583	0·50	(0·21)
Leicestershire	5,392,630	—	—	—	6,078,800	64,919	1·07	0·08	716,983	20,253	2·82	0·97
North Lincolnshire	1,975,472	—	—	—	2,462,976	17,544	0·71	(0·18)	264,959	7,959	3·00	(1·52)
South Lincolnshire	1,794,547	—	—	—	2,033,478	11,598	0·57	0·02	347,108	1,353	0·39	(0·45)
Bassetlaw	489,028	—	—	—	445,870	7,329	1·64	0·20	139,080	1,553	1·12	(0·22)
Central Nottinghamshire	2,081,345	13,294	0·64	0·59	2,177,324	6,054	0·28	(0·12)	279,140	5,765	2·07	1·97
Nottingham	4,024,195	—	—	—	6,559,407	98,499	1·47	0·78	1,146,031	17,089	1·49	0·43
Barnsley	1,425,959	5,777	0·41	(0·05)	1,506,045	14,970	0·99	(0·31)	282,987	11,998	4·24	3·23
Doncaster	2,037,095	—	—	—	1,504,853	4,567	0·29	(0·11)	272,710	757	0·28	0·28
Rotherham	1,321,802	—	—	—	1,449,320	19,105	1·32	0·07	227,728	4	—	(3·80)
Sheffield	5,090,248	—	—	(0·09)	7,864,337	83,421	1·06	0·61	654,820	730	0·11	(5·25)
Regional Health Authority	77,743	65,096	83·73	29·49	267,204	42,352	15·85	(0·92)	7,633	4,406	57·72	22·21
Region Total	31,227,160	93,054	0·30	0·09	38,162,608	467,390	1·22	0·25	5,099,067	94,869	1·86	(0·42)

East Anglian Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
Cambridge	1,930,744	*			2,119,001	730,512	34·47	—	350,988	3,065	0·87	(1·68)
Peterborough	1,643,438	—	—	—	1,586,422	9,234	0·58	—	273,961	—	—	(0·02)
West Suffolk	1,460,139	—	—	—	1,490,150	27,171	1·82	(0·55)	417,027	—	—	—
East Suffolk	2,558,232	—	—	—	2,689,892	15,143	0·56	(0·08)	448,825	171	0·04	0·01
Norwich	3,623,435	—	—	—	4,366,541	16,547	0·38	(0·62)	400,057	5,691	1·42	(0·99)
Great Yarmouth	1,228,345	—	—	—	1,221,312	(10,422	0·85	0·28	340,805	4,253	1·25	0·75
West Norfolk and Wisbech	947,894	—	—	—	1,289,956	8,221	0·64	0·14	233,885	—	—	—
Huntingdon	467,894	—	—	—	452,479	223,899	49·48	31·85	83,476	31,004	97·04	96·19
Regional Health Authority	9,070	—	—	—	37,911	33,283	87·79	(2·66)	2,473	280	11·73	2·29
Regional Total	13,869,209	—	—	—	15,253,724	1,074,432	7·04	0·54	2,551,497	98,474	3·70	2·77

North West Thames Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
North Bedfordshire	1,221,342	327	0·03	0·03	1,651,204	11,442	0·69	0·09	211,129	11,006	5·21	3·44
South Bedfordshire	1,455,825	—	—	—	1,861,597	20,691	1·11	(0·18)	393,682	251,541	63·86	(0·58)
North Hertfordshire	974,182	—	—	—	1,267,410	20,729	1·64	(0·46)	118,541	1,420	1·20	0·12
East Hertfordshire	725,997	—	—	—	923,918	30,672	3·32	0·08	261,383	35,350	13·52	(3·10)
North West Hertfordshire	2,345,831	—	—	—	2,342,293	7,275	0·31	(0·56)	431,242	5,306	1·23	(0·28)
South West Hertfordshire	1,828,251	—	—	—	2,158,650	30,805	1·43	0·49	305,333	58,649	19·21	7·39
Barnet	2,797,175	—	—	—	3,593,877	34,605	0·96	(0·12)	315,363	2,142	0·68	0·08
Harrow	1,285,027	16,696	1·30	0·33	1,977,104	36,943	1·87	0·61	142,958	17,678	12·37	(11·48)
Hillingdon	1,380,773	—	—	—	2,388,810	15,627	0·65	(0·10)	211,366	1,154	0·55	0·16
Hounslow and Spelthorne	1,695,797	—	—	—	2,534,971	85,210	3·36	2·65	413,318	128,469	31·08	(11·49)
Ealing	1,986,795	—	—	—	2,089,083	7,421	0·36	(0·94)	253,396	7,854	3·10	(4·19)
Brent	2,281,105	—	—	—	2,518,264	20,252	0·80	0·77	338,453	—	—	—
Paddington	2,160,131	—	—	—	3,340,507	23,848	0·71	(0·28)	426,983	167,465	39·41	28·49
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,620,327	—	—	—	2,595,774	43,253	1·67	(0·15)	355,411	60,252	16·95	0·67
Victoria	3,142,914	—	—	—	4,190,949	220,877	5·27	(0·08)	450,101	195,214	43·37	(12·76)
Regional Health Authority	78,392	30,756	40·26	(6·28)	158,724	56,702	35·72	(2·32)	10,841	—	—	(37·20)
Regional Total	26,957,864	47,779	0·18	0·01	35,573,335	666,332	1·87	0·11	4,637,702	943,500	20·34	0·08

North East Thames Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
Basildon and Thurrock	1,724,548	—	—	—	2,729,442	17,642	0·65	(0·06)	402,990	—	—	—
Mid Essex	1,122,806	169	0·02	0·02	1,801,882	44,431	2·47	1·31	405,776	12,895	3·18	0·28
North East Essex	2,516,174	—	—	—	2,577,041	123,114	4·78	3·12	413,764	6,062	1·47	1·47
West Essex	1,185,049	—	—	—	1,503,318	40,695	2·71	(0·04)	205,897	7	—	(1·22)
Southend	1,674,745	—	—	—	2,231,688	23,597	1·06	0·15	394,905	175,359	44·41	(27·40)
Barking Havering Brentwood	2,554,316	—	—	—	3,617,295	31,212	0·86	0·07	442,490	19,020	4·30	2·53
Hampstead	2,422,190	—	—	—	3,141,008	32,101	1·02	(0·53)	381,056	—	—	—
Bloomsbury	4,402,903	—	—	—	6,220,884	122,736	1·97	(0·44)	547,320	464,637	84·89	15·18
Islington	1,792,998	8,521	0·48	(0·09)	2,366,728	17,925	0·76	0·15	236,501	3,966	1·68	0·10
City and Hackney	2,702,650	—	—	—	4,383,607	74,695	1·70	(1·10)	365,268	5,924	1·62	(5·51)
Newham	1,134,531	2,144	0·19	(0·01)	1,779,318	12,345	0·69	0·30	306,608	4,787	1·56	0·11
Tower Hamlets	1,824,893	18,140	0·99	0·31	3,370,068	53,890	1·60	(0·88)	418,889	14,299	3·41	(0·71)
Enfield	913,076	—	—	—	1,763,549	19,734	1·12	0·33	217,274	6,136	2·82	0·94
Haringey	968,516	—	—	—	1,902,744	7,728	0·41	(0·38)	332,838	7,494	2·25	(2·10)
Redbridge	1,539,815	—	—	—	1,788,193	195,329	10·92	(9·23)	279,709	565	0·20	(0·05)
Waltham Forest	2,418,203	—	—	—	3,747,207	22,488	0·60	0·02	288,433	8,288	2·87	0·72
Regional Health Authority	94,041	31,441	33·43	(25·26)	233,927	41,057	17·55	0·88	9,101	3,402	37·38	(13·10)
Region Total	40,990,054	60,415	0·14	(0·03)	45,157,899	880,719	1·95	(0·29)	5,648,879	732,841	12·97	(0·44)

South East Thames Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
Brighton	1,905,999	—	—	—	2,308,293	26,700	1·16	(0·01)	242,583	27,258	11·24	2·04
Eastbourne	1,405,318	1,352	0·10	0·10	1,768,953	4,877	0·28	(0·04)	358,632	26,252	7·32	4·29
Hastings	1,126,928	—	—	(0·03)	1,211,834	9,244	0·76	0·07	252,908	5,508	2·18	0·06
South East Kent	1,166,173	—	—	—	1,590,299	36,080	2·27	0·47	430,534	5,974	1·39	(0·43)
Canterbury and Thanet	2,230,761	—	—	—	2,724,153	20,162	0·74	0·02	660,535	8,524	1·29	(0·09)
Dartford and Gravesham	1,884,166	—	—	—	2,712,773	16,603	0·61	(0·18)	405,203	7,150	1·76	(0·61)
Maidstone	1,355,603	—	—	—	1,655,191	297,093	17·95	10·25	194,999	88,300	45·28	12·30
Medway	1,092,252	—	—	—	921,632	296,489	32·17	12·58	257,501	5,131	1·99	(0·12)
Tunbridge Wells	1,840,375	—	—	—	2,356,985	14,308	0·61	(0·02)	420,958	80,892	19·22	11·41
Bexley	1,352,677	—	—	—	1,918,658	31,629	1·65	1·03	287,412	9,442	3·29	(0·83)
Greenwich	2,343,143	—	—	—	3,220,852	9,760	0·30	(0·07)	325,607	6,179	1·90	(0·18)
Bromley	2,226,439	115,641	5·19	5·19	2,527,267	245,488	9·71	8·66	505,176	19,059	3·77	(0·31)
West Lambeth	3,199,756	—	—	—	4,273,114	23,497	0·55	(1·72)	345,454	172,845	50·03	(13·45)
Camberwell	2,224,263	—	—	—	2,723,980	19,476	0·71	0·02	361,395	76,010	21·03	8·95
Lewisham and North Southwark	3,460,856	39,627	1·15	0·08	5,063,479	65,330	1·29	0·07	680,772	9,081	1·33	(0·03)
Regional Health Authority	63,576	32,351	50·89	50·89	106,909	36,812	34·43	13·77	7,513	3,253	43·30	(28·75)
Region Total	28,858,305	188,971	0·65	0·53	37,084,372	1,153,548	3·11	1·04	5,737,182	550,858	9·60	(1·03)

South West Thames Regional Health Districts

South West Thames Region Health Districts	Catering: Total expenditure £	Catering: Private contracts £	Catering: Private contracts Percentage of total	Catering: Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Domestic/Cleaning: Total expenditure £	Domestic/Cleaning: Private contracts £	Domestic/Cleaning: Private contracts Percentage of total	Domestic/Cleaning: Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Laundry: Total expenditure £	Laundry: Private contracts £	Laundry: Private contracts Percentage of total	Laundry: Difference in percentage from 1983-84
North West Surrey	1,642,462	—	—	—	1,762,861	22,169	1·26	0·13	346,574	202,304	58·37	41·97
West Surrey and North East Hants	1,820,466	—	—	—	1,925,667	27,398	1·42	0·18	360,826	6,142	1·70	1·26
South West Surrey	1,231,807	28,926	2·35	2·35	1,572,404	51,408	3·27	2·22	259,311	1,898	0·73	0·49
Mid Surrey	2,310,880	—	—	—	2,195,364	25,641	1·17	(0·30)	367,631	1,989	0·54	(0·86)
East Surrey	2,028,080	3,813	0·19	0·16	1,937,693	159,492	8·23	2·35	410,481	165,150	40·23	28·19
Chichester	1,203,620	—	—	—	1,069,117	14,465	1·35	(0·31)	144,539	7,090	4·91	1·15
Mid Downs	1,585,102	1,673	0·11	(0·13)	1,447,711	116,828	8·07	6·18	204,836	20,181	9·85	0·94
Worthing	939,857	2,968	0·32	0·30	1,314,737	19,643	1·49	0·39	163,337	8,663	5·30	0·13
Croydon	2,610,785	—	—	—	2,940,928	27,246	0·93	0·49	607,926	208,842	34·35	31·10
Kingston and Esher	1,836,377	24,472	1·33	(0·15)	2,465,884	42,619	1·73	(0·56)	239,961	155,851	64·95	57·62
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	1,193,079	—	—	—	1,735,786	41,827	2·41	0·25	404,430	323,309	79·94	15·73
Wandsworth	3,274,318	10,145	0·31	(0·13)	4,408,652	23,295	0·53	0·05	485,883	137,909	28·38	6·87
Merton and Sutton	2,544,421	17,527	0·69	0·01	3,513,217	152,946	4·35	2·46	669,316	211,920	31·66	23·65
Regional Health Authority	34,506	24,073	69·76	(9·68)	162,499	162,499	100·00	—	31,718	31,718	100·00	—
Region Total	24,255,760	113,647	0·47	0·05	28,452,520	887,476	3·12	0·89	4,696,769	1,482,966	31·57	18·04

Wessex Region Health Districts

	Catering: Total expenditure £	Catering: Private contracts £	Catering: Private contracts Percentage of total	Catering: Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Domestic/Cleaning: Total expenditure £	Domestic/Cleaning: Private contracts £	Domestic/Cleaning: Private contracts Percentage of total	Domestic/Cleaning: Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Laundry: Total expenditure £	Laundry: Private contracts £	Laundry: Private contracts Percentage of total	Laundry: Difference in percentage from 1983-84
East Dorset	2,508,015	—	—	—	2,732,766	17,277	0·63	(0·86)	322,389	10,637	3·30	(2·80)
West Dorset	1,706,502	—	—	—	1,649,467	15,559	0·94	0·50	275,048	7,680	2·79	0·66
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	3,052,025	—	—	—	3,279,556	15,782	0·48	0·04	396,496	4,807	1·21	(0·77)
Southampton and South West Hampshire	3,274,181	—	—	—	4,384,194	19,887	0·45	0·03	527,372	5,898	1·12	0·54
Winchester	951,474	1,065	0·11	0·11	1,170,661	34,940	2·98	0·30	212,264	175,521	82·69	(7·07)
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	1,738,646	311	0·02	0·01	2,146,729	8,361	0·39	0·10	226,663	10,275	4·53	(0·60)
Salisbury	1,244,215	—	—	—	1,096,945	2,345	0·21	(0·13)	171,577	6,374	3·71	3·20
Swindon	1,334,340	8,863	0·66	0·66	1,326,627	5,971	0·45	(0·15)	215,551	3,431	1·60	1·04
Bath	2,627,845	—	—	—	2,476,423	13,926	0·56	(0·06)	424,094	—	—	(0·05)
Isle of Wight	846,825	—	—	—	843,949	6,294	0·75	—	163,943	33,681	20·54	0·96
Regional Health Authority	c 13,878	—	—	—	49,717	48,882	98·32	1·40	3,141	3,141	100·00	—
Regional Total	19,297,946	10,239	0·05	0·05	21,157,034	189,224	0·89	(0·04)	2,938,538	261,465	8·90	(0·14)

Oxford Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
East Berkshire	1,901,979	—	—	—	2,155,666	9,308	0·43	(0·38)	406,123	57,402	14·13	(0·95)
West Berkshire	2,484,950	3,375	0·14	0·10	3,010,956	60,136	2·00	1·04	301,403	882	0·29	(3·17)
Aylesbury	1,252,871	—	—	—	1,577,348	224,189	14·21	3·36	319,022	256,663	80·45	0·54
Wycombe	804,064	—	—	—	792,842	11,720	1·48	0·50	232,449	217,111	93·40	(1·67)
Milton Keynes	340,408	514	0·15	0·13	383,495	183,198	47·77	41·13	143,403	5	—	(0·03)
Kettering	1,079,659	—	—	—	1,245,888	8,021	0·64	0·42	329,511	802	0·24	0·02
Northampton	1,884,577	—	—	—	2,039,791	9,450	0·46	(0·18)	377,466	3,913	1·04	(0·23)
Oxford	3,232,864	9,827	0·30	0·05	3,879,886	147,896	3·81	(3·30)	799,796	50,638	6·33	(5·29)
Regional Health Authority	13,997	—	—	—	62,873	21,217	33·75	0·02	4,442	4,442	100·0	—
Region Total	12,995,369	13,716	0·11	0·04	15,148,745	675,185	4·46	0·83	2,913,615	591,858	20·31	(2·38)

South Western Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
Bristol and Weston	2,564,021	2,114	0·08	(0·20)	2,916,424	9,925	0·34	0·15	286,729	7,989	2·79	0·24
Frenchay	2,435,780	1,331	0·05	(0·14)	2,345,334	13,567	0·58	0·02	319,084	8,772	2·75	1·61
Southmead	1,687,701	—	—	(0·02)	2,147,527	10,142	0·47	(0·28)	447,139	3,634	0·81	(19·57)
Cornwall	2,995,491	—	—	—	2,892,028	27,516	0·95	0·12	701,767	285,955	40·75	28·10
Exeter	3,489,470	288	0·01	0·01	3,048,706	32,629	1·07	0·14	401,765	5,959	1·48	0·75
North Devon	678,798	—	—	—	795,936	3,401	0·43	(0·02)	172,426	3,271	1·90	0·03
Plymouth	2,024,032	—	—	—	2,652,852	16,468	0·62	(0·19)	532,372	3,903	0·73	0·39
Torbay	1,120,870	—	—	—	1,334,374	5,420	0·41	0·22	214,398	432	0·20	(0·14)
Cheltenham	928,403	—	—	—	1,064,744	3,451	0·32	0·13	215,562	126,336	58·61	(14·36)
Gloucester	2,007,220	—	—	—	2,043,308	6,279	0·31	0·29	248,862	10,941	4·40	0·65
Somerset	3,018,866	5,880	0·19	0·02	3,015,860	31,624	1·05	0·24	436,589	3,280	0·75	(0·02)
Regional Health Authority	16,391	16,391	100·00	68·19	36,729	4,665	12·70	5·21	4,301	—	—	—
Regional Total	22,967,043	26,004	0·11	(0·04)	24,293,822	165,087	0·68	0·07	3,980,994	460,472	11·57	2·32

West Midlands Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
Bromsgrove and Redditch	845,915	—	—	—	670,375	1,645	0·25	0·07	18,223	5,887	32·31	(49·59)
Hereford	1,063,216	—	—	—	696,582	2,513	0·36	(0·06)	202,060	1,521	0·75	(0·07)
Kidderminster	1,143,914	—	—	—	980,333	8,356	0·87	0·24	360,827	2,909	0·81	(0·29)
Worcester	1,483,853	—	—	—	1,621,765	15,672	0·97	0·06	267,878	11,113	4·15	(2·87)
Shropshire	2,314,360	—	—	—	2,188,755	9,655	0·44	(0·02)	471,051	—	—	(0·09)
Mid-Staffordshire	1,373,233	—	—	—	1,251,169	7,598	0·61	(0·72)	214,950	6,487	3·02	0·44
North Staffordshire	3,011,221	—	—	—	3,935,438	20,606	0·52	(0·04)	476,330	15,223	3·20	0·86
South East Staffordshire	1,730,778	—	—	—	1,078,345	25,510	2·37	1·18	260,305	—	—	—
Rugby	314,323	—	—	—	252,183	2,533	1·00	(0·04)	81,058	81,058	100·00	5·57
North Warwickshire	1,254,735	1,118	0·09	(0·05)	1,072,138	7,333	0·68	(0·07)	253,244	151,047	59·65	32·22
South Warwickshire	1,703,892	218	0·01	0·01	1,694,835	11,333	0·67	(0·11)	249,840	7,112	2·85	0·03
Central Birmingham	2,686,250	1,948	0·07	0·05	2,993,375	70,064	2·34	(0·02)	388,112	12,951	3·34	(2·91)
East Birmingham	1,122,345	—	—	—	1,266,330	3,055	0·24	(0·28)	35,020	2,067	5·90	(1·52)
North Birmingham	1,500,855	513	0·03	(0·01)	1,178,886	11,989	1·02	0·04	355,541	—	—	(0·08)
South Birmingham	2,224,772	—	—	(0·01)	2,363,708	38,780	1·64	0·67	287,181	4,666	1·62	1·59
West Birmingham	2,452,949	5,446	0·22	(0·04)	2,788,023	29,738	1·07	(0·32)	383,295	—	—	(1·14)
Coventry	2,478,522	—	—	—	1,706,741	11,841	0·69	(0·31)	280,001	102,252	36·52	(16·00)
Dudley	1,743,890	2,006	0·12	0·12	1,929,879	25,630	1·33	0·15	385,400	3,856	1·00	(0·01)
Sandwell	1,107,010	—	—	—	1,299,729	16,990	1·31	0·31	368,832	7,423	2·01	(0·56)
Solihull	996,395	90	0·01	0·01	952,919	18,777	1·97	0·15	252,026	2,244	0·89	(0·37)
Walsall	1,744,748	8,376	0·48	0·03	1,700,234	43,100	2·53	0·35	414,309	58,277	14·07	13·44
Wolverhampton	2,071,073	—	—	—	1,909,828	12,528	0·66	(0·29)	276,841	7,646	2·76	1·35
Regional Health Authority	178,147	—	—	—	180,470	80,538	44·63	0·11	45,351	37,852	83·46	(3·60)
Regional Total	36,546,396	19,715	0·05	—	35,692,038	475,784	1·33	0·02	6,327,675	521,591	8·24	1·14

Mersey Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
Chester	1,604,968	—	—	—	1,717,460	11,149	0·65	0·01	184,569	15,132	8·20	5·61
Crewe	1,509,930	—	—	—	1,819,682	9,323	0·51	(0·54)	273,990	10,913	3·98	(1·18)
Halton	416,018	—	—	—	451,742	2,490	0·55	(0·78)	109,066	14,009	12·84	(4·17)
Macclesfield	1,420,710	—	—	—	1,549,575	12,894	0·83	0·01	321,724	6,005	1·87	0·19
Warrington	2,160,588	—	—	—	2,076,026	11,450	0·55	0·42	497,681	4,136	0·84	(0·08)
Liverpool	4,196,334	—	—	—	6,525,884	68,670	1·05	0·04	1,216,408	6,146	0·51	(0·17)
St. Helens and Knowsley	2,200,702	—	—	—	2,330,440	51,360	2·20	0·39	452,773	864	0·19	(0·24)
Southport and Formby	889,477	—	—	—	1,258,427	4,498	0·36	(0·04)	239,166	1	—	—
South Sefton	1,692,836	90	0·01	0·01	2,341,759	12,135	0·52	0·11	278,576	8,255	2·96	2·33
Wirral	2,249,215	—	—	—	2,525,124	22,099	0·88	(0·03)	1,009,691	360	0·04	(0·01)
Regional Health Authority	62,940	—	—	—	87,686	45,458	51·84	(0·37)	10,878	1,052	9·67	(10·23)
Regional Total	18,403,718	90	—	—	22,684,005	251,526	1·11	0·06	4,594,522	66,923	1·46	0·14

North Western Region Health Districts

	Catering				Domestic Cleaning				Laundry			
	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84	Total expenditure £	Private contracts £	Private contracts Percentage of total	Difference in percentage from 1983-84
Lancaster	1,979,558	—	—	—	1,979,067	18,159	0·92	0·66	312,555	1,122	0·36	0·10
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	1,841,201	—	—	—	1,870,248	7,518	0·40	(0·15)	291,948	172	0·06	(0·03)
Preston	2,576,324	—	—	—	2,558,433	11,452	0·45	0·31	487,730	12,096	2·48	(7·26)
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	2,712,959	—	—	—	2,760,616	13,486	0·49	(0·36)	514,868	2,873	0·56	(0·10)
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	2,302,966	—	—	—	2,476,981	3,435	0·14	(0·42)	367,284	166	0·05	(0·19)
West Lancashire	881,511	—	—	—	870,233	1,561	0·18	(0·31)	139,186	—	—	(0·82)
Chorley and South Ribble	401,163	—	—	—	511,833	4,680	0·91	(0·43)	83,822	1,125	1·34	(0·62)
Bolton	1,481,865	—	—	—	1,425,853	20,714	1·45	(0·28)	324,280	—	—	(0·06)
Bury	766,518	—	—	—	860,249	12,604	1·47	0·54	270,769	252,010	93·07	1·53
North Manchester	2,492,200	—	—	—	2,740,068	13,971	0·51	(0·63)	189,039	1,319	0·70	(4·65)
Central Manchester	1,688,958	—	—	—	2,082,476	33,575	1·61	0·03	325,315	71,431	21·96	19·95
South Manchester	2,487,801	—	—	—	2,882,580	58,450	2·03	0·33	339,748	594	0·17	0·43
Oldham	846,624	—	—	—	1,219,783	2,013	0·17	0·14	96,144	7,106	7·39	(56·65)
Rochdale	983,509	—	—	—	804,132	15,246	1·90	(0·03)	159,483	2,514	1·58	(0·36)
Salford	2,809,282	—	—	—	3,032,703	116,046	3·83	0·62	501,474	4,683	0·93	—
Stockport	1,741,142	—	—	—	1,798,379	39,753	2·21	(0·02)	363,850	20,241	5·56	(2·99)
Tameside and Glossop	935,635	—	—	—	1,233,282	15,125	1·23	(0·33)	123,356	5,391	4·37	0·02
Trafford	1,074,167	—	—	—	970,379	73,591	7·58	5·88	267,891	14,357	5·36	2·71
Wigan	1,554,327	—	—	—	1,443,083	4,673	0·32	(0·22)	363,217	—	—	—
Regional Health Authority	40,540	—	—	—	243,332	51,913	21·33	(3·50)	22,142	14,589	65,89	(10·62)
Regional Total	31,598,250	—	—	—	33,763,690	517,965	1·53	0·10	5,544,101	411,789	7·43	(2·47)

Notes:

1. All figures are total current expenditure on the relevant service: capital expenditure is excluded.
2. Figures in brackets are reductions in percentage between 1983-84 and 1984-85

EMPLOYMENT

Inner City Areas

Mr. Charles Wardle asked the Paymaster General what research his Department has carried out in relation to employment and unemployment in inner city areas.

Mr. Alan Clark: Since 1980 the Department of Employment has commissioned a number of research projects which provided information relevant to employment and unemployment in inner city areas. I am sending my hon. Friend brief details of these projects, which also contain details of three projects planned to start in 1986, and will place a copy in the Library.

The Manpower Services Commission also conducts research, some of which is related to employment and unemployment in inner city areas.

Graduate Unemployment

Mr. Onslow asked the Paymaster General what statistics on graduate unemployment are available to his Department; and what conclusion he draws from these figures.

Mr. Alan Clark: According to the labour force survey there were 70,000 graduates without jobs and seeking work in Great Britain in the spring of 1984, representing 4·5 per cent. of all economically active graduates. The corresponding rate for those without degrees was 11·5 per cent. The figures show that while unemployment among graduates is significant, they nevertheless have much better employment prospects than those without degrees.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Murphy asked the Paymaster General how many claimants have voluntarily withdrawn their claims to unemployment benefit; and how many cases are being investigated as a result of the recent fraud benefit exercise in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency.

Mr. Alan Clark: Fifty two claimants within the Welwyn Hatfield constituency have voluntarily withdrawn their claims to unemployment benefit as a result of the recent fraud exercise: of these, three claimants are under further investigation for possible fraud proceedings.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Madden asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to alter the arrangements for those signing on for the first time for unemployment benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: There are no plans to alter the basic method of claiming unemployment benefit for the first time. There is, however, a wide variation of practices within the basic scheme which are designed to meet local circumstances and particularly to suit the available premises; for example, some offices operate an appointment system whereas others need not do so. We are continually looking for ways to improve the service to the public.

Community Programme

Mr. Freeman asked the Paymaster General what response there has been from voluntary organisations to the extension of the community programme specifically to cover them.

Mr. Alan Clark: Voluntary organisations have been able to participate in the community programme from its inception and account for some 50 per cent. of the places provided. The response by voluntary orgainsations to the charities initiative launched on 4 November as an experiment in further extending the work done under the community programme has been encouraging. Some 15 bodies are taking part or will shortly do so, and a number of other orgainsations have also asked to be involved and, where possible, will be included in the experiment.

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received advocating an increase in the average weekly allowance paid to those on the community programme.

Mr. Alan Clark: A number of representations have been received from hon. Members and members of the general public. All aspects of the community programme are kept under review.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Adley asked the Paymaster General if he will indicate the percentage of the work force employed in *(a)* manufacturing and *(b)* service in 1955, 1965, 1975 and 1985.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following table gives, for Great Britain, the employed labour force in *(a)* manufacturing, and *(b)* service industries, expressed as a percentage of the employed labour force (that is, employees in employment, the self-employed and Her Majesty's forces) in all industries and services in 1965, 1975 and 1985. Comparable figures are not available for periods prior to 1959. The June 1965 figures are analysed according to the 1968 standard industrial classification (SIC) and those for the later dates according to the 1980 SIC. There are slight differences in the definitions of manufacturing and service industries under the two versions of the SIC.

June each year Percentage

	1965	*1975*	*1985*
Manufacturing	34	31	23
Service industries	49	56	64

Mr. Dubs asked the Paymaster General what is the latest unemployment total for *(a)* London and *(b)* Wandsworth; and what were the comparable figures in May 1979.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following information is in the Library. The number of unemployed claimants in the London borough of Wandsworth on 14 November 1985 was 16,529. Comparable figures for May 1979 are not available because of changes in the way figures are collected. However, the number of registered unemployed in jobcentre areas approximating to the London borough of Wandsworth in May 1979 was 5,698.

Unemployment figures for Greater London are available adjusted for discontinuities. They relate to unemployed claimants excluding school leavers and are

seasonally adjusted. The number on 14 November 1985 was 396,100 and the comparable figure for May 1979 was 121,400.

Self-employment

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General if there is any ethnic analysis of the growth in self-employment.

Mr. Alan Clark: Evidence from the 1982 Policy Studies Institute's survey of racial minorities (which was partly funded by my Department) demonstrates that compared with 1974, when a broadly similar survey was carried out, there has been an above average rise in self-employment amongst Asian men and women, to the extent that self-employment is now more common amongst Asians than the white population. There has been little growth in self-employment amongst West Indian men and women since 1974. Self-employment amongst West Indians is less common than amongst the indigenous white population.

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General how much of the growth in self-employment has been in the building trade.

Mr. Alan Clark: It is estimated that the number of people who are self-employed increased by 717,000 between 1979 and 1985; of these 144,000 were in the construction industry.

Redundant Fishermen

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Paymaster General what special action he is taking to provide retraining for redundant fishermen in Great Grimsby.

Mr. Trippier: Under the Manpower Services Commission's local training grants scheme, a retraining package has recently been negotiated with a Grimsby employer which will result in up to 60 locally redundant fishermen being retrained and offered permanent employment in the offshore oil industry. Redundant fishermen may also be assisted through the commission's programme of enterprise skill and work preparation training for unemployed individuals.

Long-term Unemployed

Mr. Murphy asked the Paymaster General what plans he has to extend to Welwyn Hatfield the pilot schemes which have been initiated by his Department to assist the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Alan Clark: At present we have no plans to extend the pilot schemes announced, but if the measure we are testing in the pilot areas are a success we would certainly hope to apply them more widely.

Political Levy

Mr. Lawrence asked the Paymaster General whether he is satisfied that union members are being made aware of their rights to contract out of paying the political levy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am not satisfied that all trade union members are being made aware of their rights to contract out of paying the political levy.

The TUC issued guidance for affiliated unions on good practice in respect of political fund arrangements in February 1984. This was subsequently followed up by a model information sheet to be given to every member individually after a successful political fund review ballot had been held. The TUC model information sheet reminded members that they were entitled to contract out of paying the levy. It explained that they would do so either by completing a standard form obtainable from their union or by simply giving notice of their objection to the union in writing. In this respect it did no more than restate the obligations imposed on trade unions by the Trade Union Act 1913 and by their own rules.

I have been monitoring the implementation of the TUC guidance through my own contacts with trade unionists. I have to say that I have seen little evidence so far that union members are being notified individually of their rights.

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General if he will list for each area manpower board area the available number of mode A, mode B and mode B2 places for the years 1984, 1985 and 1986, giving the figures for premium and non-premium places where appropriate.

Mr. Trippier [*pursuant to his reply,* 16 December 1985, c. *55*]: The information is not available in the form requested.

The numbers of approved youth training scheme places by mode for the financial years 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 in each area manpower board area are shown in the following tables.

The concept of premium and non-premium places will not apply until the two-year youth training scheme commences in April 1986. The numbers of such places for individual area manpower board areas in 1986-87 have yet to be decided.

Youth Training Scheme—Approved Places 1983-84 by Mode

Area Manpower Board Areas	*Mode A*	*Mode B1*	*Mode B2*	*Total*
Scotland				
Glasgow City	7,365	1,817	590	9,772
Lanarkshire	3,010	1,272	359	4,641
Dunfries and Galloway	749	265	8	1,022
Ayrshire	2,159	825	—	2,984
Lothian and Borders	4,810	1,350	315	6,475
Central and Fife	3,929	1,081	135	5,145
Grampian and Tayside	4,943	879	191	6,013
Highlands and Islands	1,676	361	14	2,051
Renfrew, Dumbarton and Argyll	3,065	2,021	197	5,283
Northern				
Durham	4,163	1,991	359	6,513
Cleveland	3,008	1,791	1,521	6,320
Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle	4,472	1,855	1,081	7,408
Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead	4,328	2,330	1,055	7,713
North West				
Cheshire	5,062	3,102	123	8,287
Cumbria	3,143	543	153	3,839
Lancashire	7,185	2,264	235	9,684
Greater Manchester	18,784	4,837	1,502	25,123
Merseyside	9,062	5,625	2,079	16,766
Yorkshire and Humberside				
Humberside	4,766	1,535	2,132	8,443
North Yorkshire	2,381	240	—	2,621

Area Manpower Board Areas	Mode A	Mode B1	Mode B2	Total
Leeds and Wakefield	6,215	1,422	608	8,245
South Yorkshire	8,214	3,188	1,933	13,335
Midlands				
Birmingham and Solihull	10,938	3,079	237	14,254
Coventry and Warwickshire	5,270	2,440	557	8,267
Derbyshire	6,217	1,367	863	8,447
Dudley and Sandwell	3,873	1,213	1,006	6,092
Leicestershire and Northamptonshire	6,995	2,283	243	9,521
Lincolnshire	3,787	1,285	357	5,429
Nottinghamshire	6,702	1,873	255	8,830
Staffordshire	9,490	2,139	153	11,782
Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester	6,454	1,713	155	8,322
Wolverhampton and Walsall	5,067	2,764	425	8,256
Wales				
Gwent	2,641	1,030	407	4,078
Dyfed and West Glamorgan	3,804	1,424	440	5,668
Mid and South Glamorgan	4,347	2,522	783	7,652
Clwyd and Powys	2,936	825	624	4,385
Gwynedd	1,306	375	206	1,887
South West				
Avon	6,955	1,917	27	8,899
Gloucester and Wiltshire	5,423	1,046	283	6,752
Cornwall and Devon	9,295	1,152	349	10,796
Dorset and Wiltshire	5,615	1,127	241	6,983
South East				
Kent	7,518	2,023	227	9,768
Essex	8,178	1,770	721	10,669
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	9,763	1,362	397	11,522
Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire	5,771	735	514	7,020
Surrey	3,102	500	112	3,714
Norfolk and Suffolk	6,607	1,329	230	8,166
Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire	5,468	994	1,221	7,683
Berkshire and Oxfordshire	5,056	760	1,047	6,863
East and West Sussex	5,348	823	245	6,416
London				
London North East	7,653	1,185	218	9,056
London North	7,391	999	157	8,547
London South East	6,843	1,591	1,420	9,854
London South and West	4,227	880	234	5,341

Youth Training Scheme—Approved Places 1984-85 by Mode

Area Manpower Board Areas	Mode A	Mode B1	Mode B2	Total
Scotland				
Glasgow City	6,739	1,464	235	8,438
Lanarkshire	3,628	1,124	184	4,936
Dunfries and Galloway	749	265	8	1,022
Ayrshire	2,159	825	—	2,984
Lothian and Borders	4,351	903	237	5,491
Central and Fife	5,065	758	213	6,036
Grampian and Tayside	4,202	553	107	4,862
Highlands and Islands	1,506	359	24	1,889
Renfrew, Dumbarton and Argyll	3,830	1,610	111	5,551
Northern				
Durham	4,143	1,904	350	6,397
Cleveland	3,984	1,693	715	6,392
Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle	4,059	1,545	813	6,417
Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead	3,808	1,962	679	6,449
North West				
Cheshire	4,828	1,796	138	6,762
Cumbria	3,090	400	179	3,669
Lancashire	7,503	1,372	168	9,043
Greater Manchester	16,112	3,667	1,090	20,869
Merseyside	8,648	5,048	999	14,695
Yorkshire and Humberside				
Humberside	5,142	1,355	988	7,485
North Yorkshire	2,777	425	—	3,202
Leeds and Wakefield	5,931	1,367	213	7,511
South Yorkshire	9,351	2,354	1,536	13,241
Midlands				
Birmingham and Solihull	10,084	2,403	354	12,841
Coventry and Warwickshire	4,803	2,006	153	6,962
Derbyshire	6,643	960	258	7,861
Dudley and Sandwell	4,826	1,140	503	6,469
Leicestershire and Northamptonshire	7,879	1,899	60	9,838
Lincolnshire	3,930	781	163	4,874
Nottinghamshire	6,814	1,570	96	8,480
Staffordshire	8,922	1,513	71	10,506
Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester	6,611	1,120	117	7,848
Wolverhampton and Walsall	4,677	2,059	186	6,922
Wales				
Gwent	2,551	787	175	3,513
Dyfed and West Glamorgan	3,842	1,154	83	5,079
Mid and South Glamorgan	5,325	2,004	469	7,798
Clwyd and Powys	3,498	785	78	4,361
Gwynedd	1,514	335	30	1,879
South West				
Avon	6,653	1,284	—	7,937
Gloucester and Wiltshire	5,332	1,071	188	6,591
Cornwall and Devon	8,011	1,135	138	9,284
Dorset and Wiltshire	5,392	870	92	6,354
South East				
Kent	7,389	1,481	149	9,019
Essex	8,021	1,240	142	9,403
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	9,100	1,286	124	10,510
Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire	6,928	765	415	8,108
Surrey	5,379	770	65	6,214
Norfolk and Suffolk	7,106	1,221	211	8,538
Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire	5,745	725	404	6,874
Berkshire and Oxfordshire	5,143	670	389	6,202
East and West Sussex	2,261	437	16	2,714
London				
London North East	6,627	1,346	301	8,274
London North	5,662	977	189	6,828
London South East	5,855	1,226	903	7,984
London South and West	7,339	916	120	8,375

Youth Training Scheme—Approved Places 1983-84 by Mode at 31 October 1985

Area Manpower Board Areas	Mode A	Mode B1	Mode B2	Total
Scotland				
Glasgow City	5,446	1,152	253	6,851
Lanarkshire	3,893	984	179	5,056
Dunfries and Galloway	710	225	44	979
Ayrshire	2,318	686	—	3,004
Lothian and Borders	4,153	885	123	5,161
Central and Fife	5,152	683	204	6,039
Grampian and Tayside	4,058	576	178	4,812
Highlands and Islands	1,527	330	22	1,879
Renfrew, Dumbarton and Argyll	3,709	1,350	59	5,118

Area Manpower Board Areas	Mode A	Mode B1	Mode B2	Total
Northern				
Durham	4,893	1,554	442	6,889
Cleveland	4,789	1,165	429	6,383
Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle	4,493	1,353	623	6,469
Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead	4,189	1,791	662	6,642
North West				
Cheshire	4,969	2,119	180	7,268
Cumbria	2,844	372	136	3,352
Lancashire	7,696	1,444	163	9,303
Greater Manchester	14,931	3,405	1,124	19,460
Merseyside	8,734	4,820	1,199	14,753
Yorkshire and Humberside				
Humberside	5,687	1,424	538	7,649
North Yorkshire	2,826	390	—	3,216
Leeds and Wakefield	5,721	1,393	263	7,377
South Yorkshire	9,332	2,410	1,007	12,749
Midlands				
Birmingham and Solihull	10,128	2,366	341	12,835
Coventry and Warwickshire	5,031	1,462	90	6,583
Derbyshire	6,441	913	186	7,540
Dudley and Sandwell	4,598	1,055	398	6,051
Leicestershire and Northamptonshire	7,783	1,988	104	9,875
Lincolnshire	3,837	706	85	4,628
Nottinghamshire	7,724	1,344	128	9,196
Staffordshire	8,576	1,488	8	10,072
Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester	6,747	1,056	114	7,917
Wolverhampton and Walsall	4,157	1,684	164	6,005
Wales				
Gwent	2,646	765	106	3,517
Dyfed and West Glamorgan	3,903	1,180	88	5,171
Mid and South Glamorgan	4,651	1,961	434	7,046
Clwyd and Powys	2,897	785	79	3,761
Gwynedd	1,288	340	30	1,658
South West				
Avon	6,930	1,105	18	8,053
Gloucester and Wiltshire	4,693	893	176	5,762
Cornwall and Devon	7,948	1,026	150	9,124
Dorset and Wiltshire	4,957	840	95	5,892
South East				
Kent	8,046	1,345	155	9,546
Essex	8,108	1,072	146	9,326
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	8,283	1,187	93	9,563
Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire	5,983	669	203	6,855
Surrey	2,788	419	—	3,207
Norfolk and Suffolk	7,146	1,213	179	8,538
Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire	5,254	691	378	6,323
Berkshire and Oxfordshire	4,788	665	253	5,706
East and West Sussex	4,400	544	65	5,009
London				
London North East	6,214	1,343	369	7,926
London North	5,092	905	138	6,135
London South East	5,421	1,117	685	7,223
London South and West	6,347	836	110	7,293

TRANSPORT

Passenger Transport Authorities (Precepts)

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he is to announce limitations on the precept levels he is proposing for the new joint board passenger transport authorities for 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I am today informing the passenger transport authorities of the maximum precept levels I propose to prescribe for 1986-87.

Following my determination of expenditure levels for each PTA on 16 September, all the authorities submitted applications for redetermination under section 3(4) of the Rates Act 1984. My decisions on redetermination have been made in the light of the applications and of further information provided by the PTAs.

In their applications the PTAs have drawn my attention to their view that they may incur expenditure in 1986-87 as a result of staff becoming surplus to requirements. They have also represented to me the problems in estimating such expenditure in advance of the submission of transfer schemes under section 59 of the Transport Act 1985 and the outcome of the registration of bus services during the first half of that year. Accordingly, I have decided that for the year 1986-87 alone these amounts should be included within redetermined expenditure levels. Within each redetermined expenditure level I have distinguished an amount which, on the basis of the information available, including that put forward by the authorities, appears to me to be sufficient in respect of expenditure on severance costs which the PTAs have suggested the Passenger Transport Executive is likely to incur in 1986-87. These amounts are included within redetermined expenditure levels, but I have made clear to the authorities my view that if they prove in the event not to be required, I consider that any excess should be carried forward to reduce the burden on ratepayers in 1987-88.

The relevant amounts for each authority are as follows:

	Determined EL (£m.)	Redetermined EL (£m.)	Proposed Precept Limit (P)
Greater Manchester	74·3	83·5	19·99
Merseyside	75·2	81·3	44·88
South Yorkshire	50·5	59·3	44·07
Tyne & Wear	60·0	63·9	24·27
West Midlands	54·2	58·1	10·30
West Yorkshire	57·8	61·3	26·51
Total	372·0	407·4	—

These amounts are in my view sufficient to enable the authorities, if they so wish, to continue funding existing concessionary fare schemes in their areas provided they reduce levels of revenue support in line with my advice to passenger transport executives under the Transport Act 1983.

I have asked the authorities to inform me by 15 January whether they accept the proposed maximum precept levels.

M1 (Road Signs)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Transport on what date junction 12 route sign southbound on the M1 motorway between London and Wakefield was totally demolished; and on what date it will be replaced.

Mr. Nicholas Ridley: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 4 December 1985 at column *242*.

Space Saver Tyres

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now arrange for a full safety evaluation of the space saver tyres available in the United Kingdom to be undertaken.

Mrs. Chalker: The Transport and Road Research Laboratory has already carried out tests and I am satisfied that temporary use spare tyres now available are safe if used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and at a speed not in excess of 50 mph. Further safeguards will result from regulations which I am proposing to require new vehicles equipped with these tyres to meet the requirements of ECE regulation 64.

Road Humps

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy towards the use of road humps to achieve lower traffic speeds in urban areas.

Mrs. Chalker: Road humps are one of a number of measures available to highway authorities for moderating the speed of traffic. Provisions allowing their installation were inserted into the Highways Act 1980 by schedule 10 to the Transport Act 1981. Regulations governing the form and siting of road humps were subsequently made in 1983. The Department will shortly begin consultation on proposals for amendments to these regulations to introduce greater flexibility.

M25

Mr. Richard Page asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the projected traffic flow figures for the M1-M25 junctions in both east and west directions on the M25 and the dates when these projections were made.

Mrs. Chalker: The complete range of traffic movements between the M25 and M1 motorways will be accommodated by the M25/M1/A405 junctions complex rather than by the M1/M25 interchange alone. The most recent projections, for the year 2001, were made in January 1984 and are shown in the table. Where a range is given it represents low-high economic growth forecasts.

Two-way Traffic Flows	*Vehicles per 16-hour average annual weekday*
M25 west-M1 north	18,000-22,000
M25 east-M1 north	17,000-23,000
M25 west-A405 south	1,000+
M25 east-A405 south	4,000+
M1 traffic through interchange	58,000-71,000
M25 traffic through interchange	32,000-47,000

Not all this traffic will transfer to or from the M1; some will remain on the A405.

Mr. Richard Page asked the Secretary of State for Transport if any studies are being carried out into the possibility of adding further carriageways to the M25; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: No specific studies are being undertaken at present into the provision of additional carriageways on the M25. However, some sections have been designed to take additional lanes should they prove necessary. Traffic levels are being monitored and the situation is being kept under continuous review.

M1/M62

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for Transport what investigations are currently being carried out by his Department into the possibility of constructing a link beteen the M1 in the vicinity of junction 40 and the M62 in the vicinity of junction 25; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: A brief and terms of reference for a study to be undertaken by consulting engineers is currently being prepared, and I hope to invite bids early in the new year.

Blood-alcohol Level

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received and what information he has on a product recently marketed which purports to affect the blood-alcohol level; and if he will make a statement on the implications of the marketing of this product for matters within his responsibility.

Mrs. Chalker: I understand that the product to which my hon. Friend refers is a fructose-based drink which it is claimed reduces the level of alcohol in the body and can thus be used to make people safe to drive after consuming alcohol.

While the rate at which alcohol is absorbed can be affected by a number of factors, I have yet to see any satisfactory evidence that its elimination from the bloodstream can be artificially speeded up. I would therefore strongly advise motorists not to rely on products such as this as a means of avoiding the risks associated with drinking and driving. The only safe policy is never to drink and drive under any circumstances.

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what recent consultations he has had with the London boroughs of Newham and Greenwich about the future of the Woolwich ferry;

(2) what requests he has received from *(a)* the London borough of Newham or *(b)* the London borough of Greenwich for a meeting about the future of the Woolwich ferry; and what was his response.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) on 16 December.

Home Insulation

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will seek to widen the eligibility for noise insulation grants with regard to motorways.

Mrs. Chalker: As I stated in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) on 11 December at column 659, we are considering with other Departments the possibility of selective changes in the present arrangements for providing insulation against increased traffic noise associated with the road schemes of highway authorities.

Asbestos

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Transport if any studies have been made of the possible health hazards from the release of asbestos from vehicle brake linings; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Major studies on the health effects of asbestos have been carried out in the United Kingdom and abroad, but none specifically relating to asbestos released from vehicle brake linings. All have concluded that the levels of asbestos fibre to which the general public is exposed (and to which brake lining debris contributes only a small part) are very low and do not represent a health risk.

Transport and Road Research Laboratory

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Transport why the transport and road research laboratory has declined to furnish the Library with material relating to the research and development programme being conducted by the transport and road research laboratory into driver psychology in tunnels; if he will take steps to place the relevant material in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: A professional opinion has been prepared by a TRRL expert on driver psychology to assist the Department's assessment team in its consideration of specific proposals for a Channel fixed link, which of course at this stage is confidential.

Okehampton Bypass Bill (Departmental Celebration Party)

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent by his Department on the party held on 18 December to celebrate parliament's consideration of the Okehampton Bypass (Confirmation of Order) Bill.

Mr. Ridley: £138.58; about 80 people attended.

Dash 7 STOL Aircraft

Mr. Snape asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to make special financial arrangements available to British-owned prospective purchasers of De Haviland Dash 7 STOL aircraft.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No.

London Docklands

Mr. Snape asked the Secretary of State for Transport what undertakings have been given by British Airways to the Civil Aviation Authority not to involve themselves in the operation of the docklands stolport; whether such involvement is now to be permitted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No undertakings have been given; nor have any been sought.

Mr. Snape asked the Secretary of State for Transport what measures his Department intends to take to seek to ensure competition between Heathrow and the new docklands stolport after the latter is opened for air traffic.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government envisage that, by the time that the docklands stolport is open to traffic, the British Airport Authority will have been privatised. So any questions of this kind will be dealt with under the general competition law.

Brymon Airways

Mr. Snape asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what discussions took place between his Department and the Office of Fair Trading regarding the acquisition by British Airways of a substantial shareholding in Brymon Airways;

(2) if he plans to meet the chairman of British Airways to discuss British Airways' acquisition of a substantial shareholding in Brymon Airways; if he will publish details of the transaction with particular reference to the price paid by British Airways; if the acquisition by British Airways of such a shareholding is in accordance with Her Majesty's Government's aviation policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My officials have informally discussed with the Office of Fair Trading the proposed acquisition by British Airways of a minority shareholding in Brymon Aviation Ltd. The OFT has considered the matter in the light of information supplied to it by Brymon. On the basis that BA's voting shareholding does not exceed 14 per cent., the OFT does not consider that BA will be in a position to exercise material influence over Brymon or that the shareholding will constitute a merger within the meaning of the Fair Trading Act 1973. In these circumstances, the OFT does not intend to pursue the matter further.

My right hon. Friend as shareholder has to approve any significant financial stake BA wishes to acquire in another airline. In view of the OFT's clearance, he has therefore looked at this question purely as a trade investment by BA. He is satisfied that Brymon's capital structure will be such that the return to BA meets the normal financial criteria which he applies in approving its trade investments. My right hon. Friend has consequently approved a trade investment of £1·25 million by BA on the basis that voting

rights will be no more than 14 per cent. and capital rights about 40 per cent. In addition, BA proposes to guarantee certain of Brymon's leasing commitments.

I see no need to discuss this matter with BA's chairman.

British Rail (Mid-Hertfordshire)

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will discuss at his next meeting with the chairman of British Rail the quality of commuter services provided to Mid-Hertfordshire.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is a matter for my hon. Friend to discuss with BR.

Manchester International Airport

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now make his announcement, promised before the end of the year, about the future control and operation of Manchester international airport.

Mr. Ridley: The control and operation of Manchester international airport following the abolition of the Greater Manchester county council is for the districts concerned to decide. The Government have not promised any announcement.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Married Women's Half Test Pension

Sir John Farr asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in view of the fact that official notification about the abolition of the married women's half test pension was only promulgated from his Department on 18 October, to countries overseas such as Canada, where official information about the change was not available until 31 October, he will make arrangements for the backdating of claims without loss of pension for a period of 12 months from that date.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) on 4 December at columns *276-77*. As this makes clear, the great majority of those we estimate to be entitled to a pension following the abolition of the half test have been directly identified from the Department's records, contacted, and their pensions put into payment. This includes many of those living overseas.

The question of backdating any claims arising from the abolition of the married women's half test is a matter for the independent adjudicating authorities. The earliest date to which claims can be backdated is 22 December 1984, the date from which the test was abolished. There is a statutory limit of 12 months on the period for which a claim can be backdated.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many pensioners with capital in excess of £6,000 receive housing benefit.

Mr. Newton: We do not collect specific information about amounts of capital held by households which receive housing benefit. The 1983 family expenditure survey included questions on income from capital and it is possible to use this information to make broad estimates, although these may not be very reliable. On this basis, it is estimated that in 1983-84 somewhat over 250,000 pensioners in receipt of standard housing benefit had capital over £6,000.

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he had made of the level of expenditure by local authorities on payment of extra housing benefit to individual claimants referred to in paragraph 3.63 of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691) how many (i) pensioner and (ii) non-pensioner claimants he expects to receive such benefit; what overall limits on local discretionary powers he proposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We estimate current expenditure on local discretion to be about £35 million. The removal of the power to operate local schemes except for war pensioners should reduce this expenditure, but we do not collect information centrally on the average value of discretionary payments to individuals. The amount which local authorities can spend on local discretion is currently limited by regulations to 10 per cent. of the cost of the standard housing benefit which the authority would have granted under the statutory scheme. We will propose similar limitations in the reformed scheme.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* his Department's estimates of the number of *(a)* pensioner households, *(b)* families with children and *(c)* other households which have (i) suffered a reduction in their housing benefit entitlement and (ii) lost all entitlement to housing benefit, as a result of changes to the tapers, minimum payment rules and high rent area authorisation formula, respectively, at April 1983, April 1984, November 1984, April 1985 and November 1985; and if he will also give his estimate of the cumulative savings made as a result of these changes.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1985, c. *340*]: Information derived from estimates made at the time is shown in the tables. It is not possible to aggregate the effects of the changes because they will overlap and in part be offset by the effects of upratings and other improvements to the scheme.

Table A: Estimated Numbers of Households Affected by Changes to the Housing Benefit Scheme

Great Britain
Thousands

	April 1983 taper changes	April and November 1984 changes to tapers, minima and childs needs allowance*	April 1985 high rent changes	November 1985 taper change†
(i) Households affected by the changes				
(a) pensioners	1,150	1,200		1,470
(b) families with children	610	380		
or			90	
(c) working households				270
(d) others	500	480		330
(ii) Households losing all entitlement (included in the above):				
(a) pensioners	120	210		270
(b) families with children				
or			not available	
(c) working households	280	210		100
(d) others		80		80

* The figures for those losing all entitlement include those affected by the non-dependent deduction changes.
† The figures for those losing all entitlement refer to rate rebates only; some households may still be receiving assistance with rents.

Table B: Estimated Cash Savings Resulting from the Changes

		£ million
1983-84		50 approx
1984-85		120 *
1985-86	April	6
	November	20 †

* This was the estimated full-year cost in November 1984 of restoring the November 1983 tapers and minima.
† Part-year saving only; the estimated full year saving is £57 million.

Visual Handicap

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish the report on services for the visually handicapped.

Mr. Newton: The results of the Department's fact-finding exercise on services for visually handicapped people are under consideration. I shall make an announcement about this as soon as possible.

Advertising

Mr. Jim Spicer asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what advertising agents have been appointed by his Department, or by the Central Office of Information on behalf of his Department, to handle campaigns involving the communication of information on subjects for which his Department is responsible to Parliament over each of the last 10 years, respectively; what was the subject of each campaign; and how much was spent on each campaign.

Mr. Fowler: Only five years, figures are given in the table. Disproportionate cost would have been incurred if the figures had been collected for 10 years.

Subject	*Expenditure* £
1980-81	
Doyle Dane Bernbach Ltd.	
NHS prescriptions	37,466
Studentships in environmental engineering	756
Nursing recruitment	459,412
Blood donor recruitment	72,337
Hospital careers	19,586
Family Income Supplement	314,985
NI Uprating	64,788
1981-82	
Doyle Dane Bernbach Ltd.	
Help for the handicapped	528
Blood donor recruitment	95,056
Nursing recruitment	702,491
Hospital careers	26,989
National Insurance uprating	92,755
Kingsway Media Ltd.	
Benefits	27,321
Child benefit	18,782
Doyle Dane Bernbach Ltd.	
Family Income Supplement	501,918
National Insurance contributions	20,211
Civil Service Industrial Action	174,455
1982-83	
Doyle Dane Bernbach Ltd.	
Blood donor recruitment	36,272
Nursing recruitment	284,242
TBWA	
Whooping cough	240,128
Blood donor recruitment	38,264
Doyle Dane Bernbach Ltd.	
Housing benefit	293,024
Family Income Supplement	539,782
Company Directors N. Insurance	9,981
Form E111	76,775
Employers' Statutory Sick Pay	471,250
Kingsway Media	

Subject	Expenditure £
Emergency pay	65,206
Register of manufacturers	969
1985-84	
TBWA	
Blood donor recruitment	100,322
Organ donation	391,392
Nursing recruitment	675,077
Dorlands Advertising Ltd.	
Portable pensions	26,081
Doyle Dane Bernbach Ltd.	
One-Parent benefit	64,779
Voluntary Unemployment Deductions	98,784
Benefits in work	12,434
National Insurance uprating	171,897
National Insurance numbercards	162,697
Employers' Statutory Sick Pay	495,895
1984-85	
Dorlands Advertising Ltd.	
Laser surgery	6,157
TBWA	
Nurse recruitment	688,991
Blood donor recruitment	63,401
Adverse reactions	25,000
Organ donation	330,000
Yellowhammer	
Misuse of drugs	298,274
Doyle Dane Bernbach Ltd.	
National Insurance numbercard	253,801
National Insurance contributions	176,738
Severe Disablement Allowance	402,583
Computer Strike Emergency	482,216
£10 Christmas Bonus	97,961

Subject	Expenditure £
Dorlands Advertising Ltd.	
Help for the handicapped	701
Computer Strike Emergency	715,151
Social Security Reviews	20,056
Child benefit	76,509
Pensioners living abroad	56,402

Benefits (Upratings)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost between November 1986 and April 1987 of uprating existing social security benefit levels in November 1986 by 4 per cent.

Mr. Newton: The cost up to 1 April 1987 of uprating existing social security benefit levels in the last week of November 1986 by 4 per cent. would be £530 million.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the responsibilities of each of the deputy secretaries in his Department and the numbers and ranks of staff reporting to each.

Mr. Fowler: The responsibilities of grade 2 (deputy secretary level) officers in my Department and the number and grades of staff reporting to them are given in the following table. In addition, 3,366 staff work in the special hospitals and youth treatment centres and a further 825 staff (mainly professional and support staff in headquarters) do not report through lines of command to grade 2 officers.

Title	Responsibilities	Staff reporting to each						
		Grade 3	*Grade 4*	*Grade 5*	*Grade 6*	*Principals and equivalent*	*Executive clerical and other grades*	*Total*
Principal Establishments Officer	DHSS Establishments and Personnel, Social Security computing, Central Management Support. Operations in: —Social security regional organisation; —Newcastle Central Office; —North Fylde Central Office.	5	1	26	65	420	62,276	62,789
Principal Finance Officer	Departmental Finance, Economic and statistical advice, Operational research	5	1	20	13	114	1,579	1,732
Deputy Secretary: Social Security Policy	Social Security Policy	4	—	17	1	37	809	884
Deputy Secretary: Family Practitioner Services and Medicines Policy	Family Practitioner Services, Policy relating to Medicines	3	—	9	2	35	259	306
Deputy Secretary: Health and Personal Social Services Policy	Policy on health and Personal Social Services, Management of Special Hospitals, and Youth Treatment Centres	5	—	16	3	31	287	342
Director of Operations, NHS Management Board	Liaison with health authorities on administrative policy, accountability and planning; NHS building policy; NHS equipment and supplies; Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres	6	1	6	23	95	1,495	1,626
Director of Personnel: NHS Management Board	NHS Personnel Policy	1	—	6	—	13	103	123
Solicitor	Legal aspects of DHSS Responsibilities	3	—	11	41	8	82	145
Chief Inspector of Social Services	Social Services Inspectorate and certain aspects of personal social services	—	2	16	—	83	78	179
Deputy Chief Medical Officer	Health issues related to: —children, disablement, prevention and nutrition; —primary care; —toxicology; —Environmental health.	3	3	29	47	7	225	313
Deputy Chief Medical Officer	Health issues related to:	4	3	23	4	4	37	75

Title	Responsibilities	Staff reporting to each						
		Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Principals and equivalent	Executive clerical and other grades	Total
	—hospital policy and services; —management, planning and organisation of the NHS, RAWP; —medical manpower and education; —community medicine; —mentally ill and mentally handicapped.							
Deputy Chief Medical Officer	Health issues related to: —Medicines Act; —international health; —scientific services, equipment, building and supplies; —cancer; —artificial limb and appliance service; —research.	3	6	35	39	5	56	144

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what criteria is adopted by his Department for visiting claimants of benefits at home;

(2) how claimants are selected for interview at home by his Department.

Mr. Major: Details to support a claim to supplementary benefit made by a pensioner or someone not required to sign on at the unemployment benefit office, may be taken at an interview in the claimant's home if the claimant prefers this to filling in a postal claim form. At present most claimants who make a claim by post are visited within six months of their claim to check that benefit entitlement has been correctly assessed; thereafter most claimants are visited every three years for the same purpose.

Smoking-related Diseases

Mr. Bellingham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people died of smoking-related diseases in the Wisbech and West Norfolk health authority area in each of the last five years.

Mr. Whitney: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on 16 December at column *73*. The tables show the corresponding figures for the West Norfolk and Wisbech district health authority for 1981-84, and the King's Lynn health district for 1980.

West Norfolk and Wisbech health area

Year	Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (ICD* 162)	Bronchitis and Emphysema, Chronic airways obstruction, not elsewhere classified (ICD* 490-492.496)
1980	129	63
1981†	138	84
1982	115	88
1983	117	97
†1984	125	105

* International Classification of Diseases 9th Revision.
† Figures for 1984 are not comparable with earlier years because of a change in coding rules.

West Norfolk and Wisbech health area

Year	Ischaemic Heart Disease (ICD* 410-414)
1980	605
1981	593
1982	561
1983	545
†1984	583

* International Classification of Diseases 9th Revision.
† Figures for 1984 are not comparable with earlier years because of a change in coding rules.

Blood (Factor VIII)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services for each year since 1981-82 *(a)* how much factor VIII was used in England and Wales, *(b)* what proportion of this was supplied by Central Blood Laboratories Authority institutions and *(c)* what proportion was supplied by the Elstree blood products laboratory.

Mr. Whitney: The estimated total consumption of factor VIII of all types in England and Wales has been as follows:

Millions of Units

Calendar Year	Total Used*	BPL Production†	Proportion‡ per cent.
1981	57·6	20·8	36·1
1982	65·3	22·0	33·6
1983	62·3	30·8	49·4
1984	69·6	27·9	40·0

Notes
* Most of this factor VIII was in the form of factor VIII concentrate, but the total includes some units used in the form of cryoprecipitate and plasma produced by regional transfusion centres.
† The blood products laboratory (BPL) is a constituent part of the Central Blood Laboratories Authority (CBLA). It is the BPL which produces blood products at its Elstree and Oxford sites. The CBLA has a management function only. BPL supplies factor VIII concentrate only.
‡ Production and consumption figures are not strictly comparable since output in any one year may not be consumed that same year.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Servies why, between 1983-84 and 1984-85, the output of factor VIII from central blood laboratories institutions fell by 2 million units.

Mr. Whitney: Production of non heat-treated factor VIII stopped during the course of the first quarter of 1985 whilst rapid preparations were made to introduce a safer heat-treated product.

Health Authorities (Capital Programmes)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out a table showing the over-commitment against resource assumptions of each regional health authority forward capital programme for the year 1987-88 to 1993-94.

Mr. Hayhoe: Regional health authorities need to take account of their planned capital allocations, expected income from the sale of surplus land and property, and any planned transfers between their revenue and capital budgets, in determining whether their projected capital programmes are affordable. Regions' strategic plans, which have been submitted to the Department for approval, contain information on capital spending plans, but some regions have indicated that those plans are subject to revision. In addition, regions are required to submit reports by the end of December on their proposals for selling surplus residential accommodation, which will further increase the total amount of capital available. It is not therefore possible to give a comprehensive account of available resources and planned expenditure.

Board and Lodging Payments

Mr. Irving asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total annual cost to his Department in board and lodging payments and personal expenses of the following types of non-elderly households receiving supplementary benefit in board and lodging accommodation for one year *(a)* a couple with one child under 11 years and one child aged between 11 and 16 years, *(b)* a couple with one child aged between 11 and 16 years, *(c)* a single parent with one child under 11 years and one child aged between 11 and 16 years, *(d)* a single parent with one child aged between 11 and 16 years, *(e)* a couple where the woman is pregnant, *(f)* a single pregnant woman, *(g)* a couple with no children and *(h)* a single person, in (i) Cheltenham and (ii) Greater London for board and lodging at local limit and in (iii) England and (iv) Great Britain at average board and lodging costs; and what would be the supplementary benefit costs at ordinary scale rate for these household types if they were living in council rented accommodation for one year.

Mr. Newton: The information is set out in the order requested. The table shows the annual cost of supplementary benefit payments for board and lodging calculated at a maximum weekly payment of (i) £55·00 —the limit that applies in Cheltenham—and (ii) £70·00 —the limit for Greater London. The average board and lodging limits for England and for Great Britain are estimated at approximately £55 and therefore the sums shown for Cheltenham will broadly equate. The third column shows supplementary benefit at ordinary scale rates including average water rates and housing benefit for average local authority rent and general rates. No increases for additional requirements are included and no deductions have been made for other income such as child benefit.

	Cheltenham board and lodging—£55 limit £	Greater London board and lodging —£70 limit £	Ordinary scale rate and average rent and rates £
(a)	10,810	13,150	5,060
(b)	9,130	11,280	4,480
(c)	7,440	9,000	4,110
(d)	6,480	8,040	3,520
(e)	6,010	7,380	3,560
(f)	3,360	4,140	2,600
(g)	6,010	7,380	3,560
(h)	3,360	4,140	2,600

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state the numbers of young people affected by the board and lodgings regulations *(a)* prior to the judgment in the Cotton case in July and *(b)* since this judgment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 29 October at columns *439-42* for information on the numbers of claims from boarders aged 16 to 25 which were assessed between 29 April and 29 July 1985. Available information for the period following the High Court ruling on 31 July relates to claims by all ordinary boarders and does not distinguish between those made by people aged 26 and under. This information suggests about 50,000 ordinary boarder claims, including repeat and change of address cases, were made from the end of July to mid-November 1985.

As I indicated in the statement to the House on 17 December, at column 166, we are taking steps to identify from our records those cases in which arrears may be due following the Court of Appeal ruling on 13 December, and to pay arrears as soon as possible. I should emphasise that both claims made before and after the High Court ruling on 31 July will be checked for the possibility of arrears.

Family Spending Power

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will estimate the net weekly spending power of a man with a wife and two children aged eight and 11 years, whose gross earnings are *(a)* £120, *(b)* £130, *(c)* £140 and *(d)* £150 per week and whose rent and rates are £30 and £10, respectively (i) when he is working and (ii) if he was unemployed assuming that he and his wife were both earning £4 per week disregarded income and in each case were receiving all benefits to which they were entitled;

(2) if he will estimate the net weekly spending power of a man with a wife and two children aged eight and 11 years, whose gross earnings are *(a)* £80, *(b)* £90, *(c)* £100 and *(d)* £110 per week and whose rent and rates are £20 and £7, respectively (i) when he is working and (ii) if he is unemployed, assuming that he and his wife were both earning £4 per week disregarded income and in each case were receiving all benefits to which they were entitled.

Mr. Newton: Where the man's gross earnings are *(a)* £80, *(b)* £90, *(c)* £100 and *(d)* £110 and where rent and rates were £20 and £7 a week, net weekly spending power would be *(a)* £88·19 *(b)* £86·04 *(c)* £85·25 and *(d)* £85·05. Where the man's gross earnings were *(e)* £120, *(f)* £130, *(g)* £140 and *(h)* £150 and rent and rates were £30 and £10 a week, net weekly spending power would be *(e)* £80·95, *(f)* £82·95, *(g)* £84·62 and *(h)* £87·82.

If the family's only income, apart from benefits, was from part-time earnings and both the man and his wife had

£4 of their part-time earnings disregarded for supplementary benefit purposes, the net weekly spending power would be £85·17.

Water rates of £1·65 are assumed to be included in the rates figures of £7 and £10. It is assumed that current benefit and national insurance contribution rates are in force and that fares to work are £5·95 a week. All other assumptions are as in the April 1985 tax/benefit model tables; a copy of which is in the Library.

It should be noted that the combinations of assumptions outlined in the questions are not typical. For example, among couples with children earning £110 or less a week less than 2 per cent. (about 30,000 families) pay rent and rates totalling £27 or more a week. The numbers of couples with children earning between £120 and £150 gross a week and living in rented accommodation and paying £40 a week or more in rent and rates is too small to estimate or quantify. Furthermore, the latest estimates show that only about 1·8 per cent. of married unemployed supplementary benefit claimants have part-time earnings. The proportion where both the claimant and spouse work is not known but must be less than 1·8 per cent.

National No Smoking Day 1985

Mr. Hayward asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what discussions officials from his Department have had with the Health Education Council on the National Opinion Poll survey on the effectiveness of National No Smoking Day 1985.

Mr. Whitney: The survey was considered in assessing the Health Education Council's programme on smoking during 1985 and its plans for next year.

Mr. Hayward asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the cost of the National Opinion Poll survey by the Health Education Council on the effectiveness of National No Smoking Day 1985.

Mr. Whitney: £2,760.

Nurses

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses have been appointed for the 190 district general posts that have now been filled.

Mr. Hayhoe: Five.

Hip Replacement (West Midlands)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hip replacement operations were performed in the west midlands region in 1984-85; and what change occurred in the waiting list in the region for such operations during the same period.

Mr. Whitney: In 1983, the latest year for which information is available centrally, there were an estimated number of 3,600 hip replacement operations performed in National Health Service hospitals in West Midlands regional health authority. Information on the numbers of people awaiting admission to National Health Service hospitals for particular operations is not available centrally and the hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of West Midlands regional health authority.

Form F.ID

Mr. Weetch asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the proportion of those who apply for exemption from dental charges using a form F.ID who obtain *(a)* full exemption from charges, *(b)* partial exemption from charges and *(c)* no exemption from such charges.

Mr. Hayhoe: Of those cases in which the result of the application is known, in 1984 81·4 per cent. obtained full and 14·2 per cent. partial remission of charges and 4·4 per cent. obtained no remission.

Local Dental Committees

Mr. Weetch asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether local dental committees are intended to be representative of general dental practitioners as a whole; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what information he has as to how many dentists serve on local dental committees; what proportion of these are general dental practitioners on the dental list of family practitioner committees; how many are elected and how many co-opted; and how many contested elections took place in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Hayhoe: It is a requirement that a local dental committee for a family practitioner committee area can only be officially recognised if it is representative of practitioners providing general dental services in that area.

My Department holds copies of the constitutions of local dental committees. No detailed information is available, however, on individual members of committees or the number of contested elections.

Government Circulars

Mrs. Roe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he is satisfied with the progress made in the implementation of Government circulars HC84(12) and HC84(13).

Mr. Hayhoe: The purpose of circular HC(84)12 was to inform various authorities and institutions about the enactment of the Marriage Act 1983 and its implications. The only action required was for authorities to convey the information to those with an interest. No specific check has been made but there is no reason to doubt that health and local authorities will have passed on this information as requested.

Circular HC(84)13 instructed health authorities to establish the general management function in the National Health Service. It was originally hoped that all general managers would be in post by January 1986. So far all regional, district and nearly 300 unit appointments have been made. This is the largest management recruitment exercise ever mounted in this country, and I am pleased with the progress being made.

Taxes and Benefits

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the combined total of income tax and national insurance contribution a man with a wife and two children would pay per week if his income were £109 per week and his rent and rates were £15.60 and £7.35, respectively; what are the combined totals of child benefit,

housing benefit and free school milk to which such a man would be entitled; and what the effect would be if tax and national insurance thresholds were raised to £110 per week and all state benefits were eliminated for persons who earned more than £100 per week.

Mr. Newton: On the basis of the assumptions quoted and other assumptions as listed in the following note, the combined weekly total of income tax and national insurance contribution payable would be £22.58. The combined total value of child benefit, housing benefit and free school meals available in such circumstances would be £26·21 a week.

If income tax and national insurance contribution thresholds were raised and state benefits eliminated as outlined, a man in the particular circumstances quoted would be £3.63 a week worse off. The example, however, has no general application: such thresholds and benefit limitations would produce varying gains or losses for people in different circumstances.

Note Other assumptions
(i) £7·35 figure includes £1·50 water rate
(ii) current benefit rates apply
(iii) fares to work are £5·95 a week
(iv) other assumptions are as in the April 1985 tax/benefit model tables.

Limited List Prescribing

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will ask the General Medical Services Committee to reconsider its decision not to co-operate with the implementation of an appeals procedure for use with the limited list of drugs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: No, but if the British Medical Association or the medical profession changes its mind about an appeals procedure, I will, of course, look at the matter again.

Supplementary Benefits

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the total estimated amounts defrauded from supplementary benefits for each year from 1979.

Mr. Major: No reliable estimate is available of the extent of supplementary benefit fraud.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all the changes in social security law since May 1979 which have affected the entitlement of *(a)* 16 to 17-year-olds, *(b)* 18 to 20-year-olds and *(c)* 21 to 25-year-olds to supplementary benefit or any other benefit or which have affected the entitlement to any benefit of their parents.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. *130*]: The main changes in social security law specifically affecting the entitlement of young people and their parents have been identified as set out, showing who was affected by the change and the relevant legislation. Normal uprating increases and regulations made in 1980 reflecting the previous policy of the Supplementary Benefits Commission are not included.

Date	*Change*	*Persons affected*	*Legislation*
Supplementary Benefit			
November 1980	Entitlement to benefit for school leavers deferred to a fixed date.	School leavers aged 16-18.	Supplementary Benefit (Conditions of Entitlement) Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1586).
November 1980	Position of unemployed young people studying part-time clarified by allowing such study up to 21 hours a week without affecting entitlement to benefit.	Claimants aged 16-25.	Supplementary Benefit (Conditions of Entitlement) Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1586).
November 1980	Married or unmarried parents still at school enabled to claim benefit for themselves whereas they could previously claim for their child only.	Claimants aged 16-19 and their parents.	Supplementary Benefit (Conditions of Entitlement) Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1586).
November 1980	Blind persons aged 16-17 entitled to the same special addition (£1·25) as blind persons aged 18 and over—previously entitled to 90p only.	Claimants aged 16-17 and parents of dependent children aged 16-17.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1299).
November 1980	Receipt of non-contributory invalidity pension by person aged 16-17 to count as qualifying benefit for the supplementary benefit long-term scale rate.	Claimants aged 16-17.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1299).
November 1980	Benefit payable to young people in the care of the local authority whether in local authority or other accommodation.	Claimants aged 16-17.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1299).
November 1980	Fixed rates of deduction in respect of non-dependants instead of deduction calculated according to housing costs and number of persons in the household: £2·15 for non-dependants aged 16-17 or in receipt of supplementary benefit. £4·60 for all others.	Parents in receipt of supplementary benefit with non-dependent children living with them.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1299).
August 1982	Disregard of that part of any education grant or award which is specifically intended for additional expenses of living away from home.	Adult students and parents of dependent young people aged 16-19.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1982 (S.I. 1982 No. 1125).

Date	Change	Persons affected	Legislation
August 1982	Entitlement to supplementary benefit whilst studying up to 21 hours a week made dependent upon receipt of benefit for 3 months.	All young people but school leavers in particular.	Supplementary Benefit (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1982 (S.I. 1982 No. 907).
April 1983	Rent addition withdrawn from non-householder claimants aged 16-17; no deduction from householders' supplementary benefit in respect of non-dependants in receipt of supplementary benefit.	Non-householder claimants aged 16-17 and parents of such claimants if the parents receive supplementary benefit.	Supplementary Benefit (Housing Benefit) (Requirements and Resources) Consequential Amendments Regula-tions 1982 (S.I. 1982 No. 1126).
August 1983	The 3-month qualifying period for entitlement to supplementary benefit whilst studying up to 21 hours a week to include periods spent on the Youth Opportunities Programme or Youth Training Scheme.	Claimants aged 16-17.	Supplementary Benefit (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1983 (S.I. 1983 No. 1000).
November 1983	Three fixed rates of deduction in respect of non-dependants aged over 18 in the claimant's household (£2·20, £3·95 or £4·70) according to age and whether or not in receipt of benefit.	Parents with non-dependent children aged 18 and over living with them.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Regulations 1983 (S.I. 1983 No. 1399).
April 1984	Rent addition withdrawn from non-householder claimants aged 18-20; no deduction from householders' supplementary benefit in respect of non-dependants aged 18-20 in receipt of supplementary benefit. Deductions in respect of other non-dependants £2·20 or £6·15 dependent upon age and whether or not in receipt of benefit.	Non-householder claimants aged 18-20 and parents with non-dependent children in their household.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Amendment Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 282).
August 1984	Persons over 16 entitled to benefit whilst undergoing education of a type normally given in schools if education no more than 12 hours a week.	Claimants aged 16-19.	Supplementary Benefit (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 984).
November 1984	Rates of deduction in respect of non-dependent members of claimant's household revised according to age and whether or not in receipt of benefit.	Parents with non-dependent children in their household.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 1102).
November 1984	Full-time earnings of a child who has left school taken into account up to the level of the child's requirements during the period he is treated as dependent.	Parents with dependent children aged 16-18.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 1102).
April to July 1985 and from November 1985	Payment as a bourder restricted to limited periods (2, 4, or 8 weeks) in any one area in any period of 26 weeks.	Certain unemployed able-bodied claimants aged 16-25 without dependent children.	Supplementary Benefit (Requirements and Resources) Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations 1985 (S.I. 1985 No. 613) and (No. 2) Regulations (S.I. 1985 No. 1835).
Housing Benefit			
April 1983 (Partial start November 1982)	Introduction of Housing Benefit Scheme. Needs allowance set at £11·40 for each dependent child. Deductions for non-dependants set at three rates (£3·10, £5·55 and £6·55) dependent upon age and whether or not in receipt of benefit or training allowance. No deduction in respect of 16-17 year olds.	Parents with dependent or non-dependent children.	Housing Benefits Regulations 1982 (S.I. 1982 No. 1124).
April 1984	Non-dependant deduction discontinued in respect of 18-20 year olds in receipt of supplementary benefit or on Youth Training Scheme. Deduction in respect of other persons aged 18 and over £3·10 or £8·20 dependent upon age and whether or not in receipt of benefit.	Parents with non-dependent children.	Housing Benefits Amendment Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 103).
November 1984	Real increase of 50p in the needs allowance for dependent children (ie 50p more than required by normal uprating formula).	Parents with dependent children	Housing Benefits (Increase in Needs Allowances) Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 1105).

Date	Change	Persons affected	Legislation
November 1984	Non-dependant deduction of £3·30 in respect of 16-17 year old not in receipt of supplementary benefit, severe disablement benefit or on Youth Training Scheme. Deduction of £8·20 reduced to £3·30 in respect of persons over 18 in receipt of certain benefits for 8 weeks. Deductions in respect of other non-dependants increased to £3·30 or £8·80 dependent upon age and whether or not in receipt of benefit.	Parents with non-dependent children.	Housing Benefits Amendment (No. 3) Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 940).
November 1985	Real increase of 95p in the needs allowance for dependent children (ie 95p more than required by the normal uprating formula).	Parents with dependent children.	Housing Benefits (Increase in Needs Allowances) Regulations 1985 (S.I. 1985 No. 1244).
Severe Disablement Allowance			
November 1984	Non-contributory invalidity pension replaced.		Health and Social Security Act 1984, Section 11. Social Security (Severe Disablement Allowance) Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 1303).
	(i) Abolition of household duties test. Entitlement on grounds of incapacity for work alone.	Claimants whose incapacity for work begins on or before 20th birthday.	
	(ii) Abolition of household duties test. Entitlement conditional on incapacity for work and on assessment of at least 80 per cent. disablement.	Claimants whose incapacity for work begins after age 20.	
Family Income Supplement			
November 1985	Higher prescribed amounts in respect of older children.	Parents with dependent children aged 16-18.	Family Income Supplements (Computation) Regulations 1985 (S.I. 1985 No. 1188).
Child and One-Parent Benefits			
February 1980	One-parent benefit extended to persons receiving the lower rate dependant's addition of industrial death benefit or industrial injuries disablement benefit.	Parents with dependent children.	Child Benefit and Social Security (Fixing and Adjustment of Rates) Amendment Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 110).
November 1980	Benefit in respect of school leaver to remain in payment until a specified date at the end of the school holiday following the final term; to continue in payment in respect of child on Youth Training Scheme or sponsored training course; to cease in respect of child awarded supplementary benefit.	Parents with dependent children aged 16-18.	Child Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1980 (S.I. 1980 No. 1045).
May 1982	Benefit in respect of school leaver withdrawn if child starts work or Youth Training Scheme or sponsored training course.	Parents with dependent children aged 16-18	Child Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1982 (S.I. 1982 No. 470).
February 1983	Benefit in respect of child in local authority care payable to persons with whom the child resides for 7 consecutive days.	Parents with dependent children.	Child Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1983 (S.I. 1983 No. 3).
April 1984	In respect of new claims, benefit not payable where claimant or spouse has income exempt from United Kingdom income tax.	Parents with dependent children.	Child Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 337).
August 1984	Benefit payable in respect of child attending school or college provided the course exceeds 12 hours a week.	Parents with dependent children aged 16-18.	Child Benefit (General) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 939).
August 1984	The number of weeks a person may continue to receive benefit while that person or the child is outside Great Britain reduced from 26 to 8.	Parents with dependent children.	Child Benefit (Residence and Persons Abroad) Amendment Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 875).
Child Dependency Additions to Social Security Benefits			
November 1984	Lower rate of child dependency addition abolished and an earnings condition for the higher rate introduced.	Parents with dependent children aged 16-19.	Health and Social Security Act 1984 (Section 13 and Schedule 5); Commencement No. 1 Order 1984 (S.I. 1984 No. 1302).

Private Cleaning Contractors

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will establish within his Department an inspectorate to monitor private cleaning contractors by making spot checks on their standards of cleanliness, hygiene and pest control; what checks at present operate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: No. It is the responsibility of health authorities to monitor the performance of cleaning contractors. Officials in the Department are available to advise health authorities on these matters.

AIDS

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the maximum incubation period for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Hayhoe: Medical experts have suggested that the maximum incubation period for full clinical AIDS could be seven years or longer.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he has taken to satisfy himself as to the adequacy of the level of resources currently devoted to combating the threat posed by acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: My officials are in close touch with the three Thames regional health authorities which are treating the majority of United Kingdom acquired immune deficiency syndrome cases. The information they have provided has helped the Department assess the resource implications of the AIDS infection. I refer my hon. Friend to my right hon. Friend's reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) on 2 December 1985 at columns *1-2* which outlined the new government money being provided this year and next year. This included allocations for the three Thames regions and haemophilia reference centres which are carrying an exceptional AIDS workload.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what level of resources his Department plans to devote to combating acquired immune deficiency syndrome in each year till 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: My right hon. Friend has already announced on 2 December at columns *1-2* that the Government are allocating some £6·3 million in 1986-87 for spending on public education on, and prevention and treatment of, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). As the number of cases of AIDS will increase at least for some years, the Government will keep under close review the levels of expenditure needed in succeeding years. It is too soon, however, to make reliable estimates of the sums that would be involved.

Retirement Pensions

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what would be the cost of providing a retirement pension equal to that currently payable to British citizens in the United Kingdom *(a)* to all British retirement pensioners resident in the Republic of South Africa, and *(b)* to those aged 75 years and over;

(2) what would be the cost of providing a widow's pension equal to that currently payable to British citizens in the United Kingdom *(a)* to all British widows resident in the Republic of South Africa, and *(b)* to those aged 75 years and over.

Mr. Major: The cost of paying full retirement and widows' pensions to pensioners resident in the Republic of South Africa is estimated as £9·5 million a year at current rates of benefit. Separate estimates for the cost of each benefit, for the costs in relation to British citizens only, or for pensions payable to those aged 75 and over are not available.

Heart Disease

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will order an investigation into the reasons why there are 30 per cent. more deaths than the national average from heart disease in the St. Helens and Knowsley area.

Mr. Hayhoe: Both the Mersey region and St. Helens and Knowsley health authority are aware of the incidence of deaths from heart disease in the district, caused mainly by cigarette smoking and unhealthy diet. The district's health education unit is actively promoting campaigns in schools and places of employment, as well as through health visitors, midwives and community staff, alerting the public to the harmful effects of smoking on health as well as promoting healthy eating and the benefits of exercise.

Hospitals (Diets)

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, in the light of the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food Policy recommendation to increase the ratio of polyunsaturated fat in the diet, how many National Health Service hospitals in England and Wales now make available to patients on a regular basis margarine which is high in polyunsaturates.

Mr. Whitney: I regret that this information is not collected centrally.

Chemists (Prescriptions)

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer on 9 December, *Official Report*, column *496*, giving the number of National Health Service prescriptions dispensed by chemists in England in 1984, what was the aggregate cost to the National Health Service, including all special payments and subsidies, of payments made to chemists in England for filling those prescriptions.

Mr. Hayhoe: Payments to chemist contractors in England for dispensing National Health Service prescriptions totalled £1,408 million of which £1,078 million represented payment to contractors of the ingredient cost of the dispensed drugs and £330 million represented remuneration payments to contractors.

Action on Smoking and Health

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what criteria he uses for deciding the level of funding to Action on Smoking and Health.

Mr. Whitney: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) on 27 November 1985 at columns *599-600*.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many officials in his Department liaise with *(a)* the Health Education Council and *(b)* Action on Smoking and Health; and what is the cost per annum.

Mr. Whitney: The Department routinely liaises with relevant outside bodies, and this work is not separately costed. Varying numbers of officials may be involved at any time.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to receive a grant application for funds for 1986-87 from Action on Smoking and Health; and if he will place a copy of the application in the Library.

Mr. Whitney: We expect to receive an application from Action on Smoking and Health shortly. Applications from bodies seeking Government funding are treated in confidence.

NHS (Management Arrangements)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received recently about the implementation of management arrangements in respect of medical and nursing appointments at unit manager level; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: None directly about unit general manager appointments. My colleagues and I have, of course, discussed issues arising from the Griffiths report with professional and other bodies. The implementation of general management at unit level is a matter for health authorities, but I have made it clear to regional health authority chairmen that the new management arrangements should command the confidence and commitment of medical and nursing interests locally.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice he has given to health authorities concerning taking into account the compensation element of early retirement expenditure and the net costs of redundancy payments when assessing competitive tenders.

Mr. Hayhoe: Advice on this matter is contained in the circular on competitive tendering HC(83)18, a copy of which is in the Library. I am considering whether further advice is necessary.

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number by authority of *(a)* early retirements and *(b)* redundancies resulting from competitive tendering; and what are the numbers by health authorities and boards in the regional control totals.

Mr. Hayhoe: Information held centrally about redundancies is limited to those aged 50 or over who also attract early payment of superannuation benefits. The information set out in the table relates to *(a)* those voluntarily retiring for the avoidance of their own or another's redundancy, and *(b)* those compulsorily redundant who are also entitled to superannuation benefits, resulting from competitive tendering. The figures are for the period 1 April 1985 to 30 November 1985 and the provisional regional control totals are for the year ending 31 March 1986. The control totals are subject to revision in January in the light of later information about redundancies.

Region and District	*Premature retirement*	*Redundancy*	*Control total*
Northern			
North Tees	0	1	—
South Cumbria	0	4	—
Northumberland	5	0	—
Newcastle	0	2	—
South Tyneside	4	0	—
	9	7	230
Yorkshire			
Regional Employees	0	2	—
East Yorkshire	5	5	—
Hull	0	19	—
Scunthorpe	5	0	—
York	1	4	—
Scarborough	5	0	—
Harrogate	0	8	—
Bradford	10	6	—
Calderdale	28	7	—
Huddersfield	0	3	—
Leeds Eastern	0	1	—
Leeds Western	0	13	—
	54	68	260
Trent			
North Derbyshire	1	2	—
North Lincolnshire	2	0	—
South Lincolnshire	0	2	—
Nottingham	1	0	—
Barnsley	0	1	—
	4	5	270
East Anglian			
Norwich	0	42	—
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	3	0	—
West Suffolk	0	8	—
	3	50	120
North West Thames			
South Bedfordshire	0	2	—
Hounslow and Spelthorne	0	29	—
Ealing	0	12	—
Paddington	0	42	—
Victoria	0	64	—
	0	149	570
North East Thames			
Regional Employees	0	2	—
Mid Essex	6	4	—
North East Essex	1	0	—
Southend	1	0	—
Waltham Forest	22	0	—
Tower Hamlets	1	0	—
	31	6	260
South East Thames			
South East Kent	1	0	—
Canterbury and Thanet	30	33	—
Bromley	0	25	—
	31	58	280
South West Thames			
North West Surrey	0	9	—
Kingston and Esher	13	0	—
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	0	29	—

Region and District	Premature retirement	Redundancy	Control total
Merton and Sutton	0	6	—
Wandsworth	19	0	—
Chichester	0	9	—
Worthing	0	9	—
Croydon	0	2	—
East Surrey	5	5	—
	37	69	400
Wessex			
Regional Employees	0	1	—
East Dorset	0	3	—
Southampton and South West Hampshire	0	1	—
Winchester	0	1	—
Isle of Wight	0	1	—
	0	7	130
Oxford			
Kettering	3	0	—
Oxfordshire	0	36	—
Milton Keynes	0	2	—
	3	38	100
South Western			
North Devon	0	2	—
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	10	7	—
Bristol and Western	0	1	—
Frenchay	0	13	—
Southmead	0	2	—
Somerset	0	10	—
	10	35	150
West Midlands			
Dudley	0	1	—
Herefordshire	0	1	—
Bromsgrove and Redditch	1	0	—
North Warwickshire	0	2	—
South Warwickshire	7	0	—
Rugby	3	0	—
South East Staffordshire	4	3	—
Solihull	0	3	—
East Birmingham	0	15	—
Central Birmingham	0	1	—
	15	26	350
Mersey			
Chester	0	3	—
Crewe	7	0	—
Macclesfield	6	0	—
Warrington	4	1	—
North Sefton	0	1	—
South Sefton	0	2	—
	17	7	310
North Western			
Rochdale	0	1	—
Bury	0	3	—
	0	4	150
Special Health Authorities			
National Heart and Chest Hospital	4	0	—
Royal Marsden Hospital	0	8	—
	4	8	47

Breast Cancer (Screening)

Mr. Viggers asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the clinics which operate breast screening for cancer in women within the National Health Service and state the number of patients screened in the last year.

Mr. Hayhoe: Since there is currently no national breast cancer screening programme, this information is not collected centrally. The Government have established an expert working group to consider the information now available on breast cancer screening by mammography and to advise them on whether there should be a change in policy on this subject.

Skoal Bandits

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from the British Medical Association and the Health Education Council regarding the sale of tobacco products of the type known as Skoal Bandits; and what response he has made.

Mr. Whitney: The British Medical Association and the Health Education Council have expressed concern to the Department about the health risks associated with Skoal Bandits. A meeting with the association took place in July. In writing to the chairman of the Council in August, we drew attention to the letter from the Chief Medical Officer to doctors warning of the health hazards arising from the use of tobacco in the mouth, and to the voluntary agreement we had concluded with the manufacturers of Skoal Bandits restricting the marketing of the product in ways designed specifically to protect young people.

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what efforts his Department has made to locate the application form for dependency benefit in respect of the wife of Mr. A., a constituent of the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton, who name and address is contained in the Minister of State's letter of 1 April (ref. PO (5) 4374/55), which Mr. A. delivered by hand to the Burley's Way, Leicester, office of his Department on 6 February 1981, but which was never received at the Yeoman street office when the case papers were transferred; whether he will now authorise back payment of this benefit, following the correspondence with the hon. Member on this matter, and the administrative errors accepted by the Minister in that correspondence.

Mr. Newton: My hon. Friend will be aware from our earlier correspondence that the Department has made intensive efforts to trace the claim for dependency benefit made in respect of Mrs. A. which was alleged to have been made on 6 February 1981. Searches of records at Burley's Way, Leicester, office and the Yeoman street office produced no evidence of such a claim made earlier than February 1983.

In March 1984 the late claim for the period 9 February 1981 to 1 July 1981 was referred to the adjudication officer

who disallowed the claims for dependency benefit. In reaching that decision the adjudication officer would have considered the evidence of a claim having been made in 1981. The claimant was interviewed following the adjudication officer's decision and advised of his right of appeal to the social security appeal tribunal which he chose not to exercise. It is, of course, still open to the claimant to make a late appeal to the social security appeal tribunal which the chairman may decide should be heard if good cause has been shown for the delay. In these circumstances, I do not consider it would be appropriate to make an extra-statutory payment.

Spectacles

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many prescriptions were issued for prism segment bifocal spectacles in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: Statistics are not collected on the number of prescriptions issued for specific lens types but it is estimated that some 1,100 prism segment bifocals were dispensed under the general ophthalmic services in England in 1984.

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is *(a)* the number and *(b)* the proportion of the total represented by prescriptions for spectacles issued to people over pension age in the latest period up to April 1985, for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what estimate he has of numbers of people over pensionable age obtaining prescriptions for spectacles since 1 April compared with a similar period before that date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: Separate information is not collected for prescriptions given to those of pensionable age.

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what the cost saving has been to the Department of Health and Social Security since the changes introduced on 1 April to the availability of National Health Service spectacles; what is the expected saving in a full year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: The expected savings in a full year in England are some £14 million. Present information indicates that these will be achieved.

Speech Therapy Teachers

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many National Health Service staff in England and Wales are covered by the six Whitley Council grades for speech therapy teachers; ST 61, student teachers, ST 66, teacher, ST 71, senior teacher, ST 76, principal 2, ST 81, principal 1 and ST 86, principal 24 plus, both in total and by each grade.

Mr. Whitney: The information requested is as follows:

	Numbers
ST 61—speech therapy student teacher	Nil
ST 66—speech therapy teacher	10
ST 71—speech therapy senior teacher	2
ST 76—speech therapy Principal II	1
ST 81—speech therapy Principal 1	1
ST 86—speech therapy Principal 24+	Nil
Total	14

Tobacco Industry (Advertising)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to conclude his discussions with the tobacco industry on voluntary restrictions on advertising and promotion.

Mr. Whitney: We hope the discussions will be concluded in good time to allow a new agreement to come into effect when the present one expires on 31 March 1986.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical appendix to the White Paper—"Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), how many claimants who now receive family income supplement will not be entitled to family credit.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the White Paper proposals on the reform of social security exclude 16 and 17-year-olds from receipt of a personal allowance in their own right and allow for their parents only to claim a child allowance for them if they are unemployed.

Mr. Newton: Sixteen and 17-year-old non-dependants will be entitled to income support at the same rate of personal allowance as 16 and 17-year-old dependent children.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many, nationally and for each social security region, of *(a)* 16-year-olds and *(b)* 17-year-olds are in receipt of supplementary benefit for the latest available year; and how many (i) live in their parents' household and (ii) live independently; and how many of them have (1) claimant parents and (2) non-claimant parents.

Mr. Newton: In December 1983 — the latest available figures—there were 56,000 16-year-olds and 119,000 17-year-olds in receipt of supplementary benefit nationally. Of these, an estimated 1,000 16-year-olds and 7,000 17-year-olds were householders. No further information about the status of the remaining claimants or their parents is available.

Estimates of the number of 16 and 17-year-old claimants can be provided for each social security region but this information is not immediately available.

I will let the hon. Member have a further reply when these figures are to hand.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, out of all the responses to the Green Paper, "Reform of Social Security", how many gave positive support to the proposal for a lower rate of supplementary benefit for under-25s; and which they were.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1985, c. *84*]: The responses are not generally in a form

which can sensibly be used to provide a simple breakdown of numbers for or against this proposal. However, paragraphs 3.10 to 3.14 in the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), published on Monday, gives the important points made about it and the Government's conclusions, including the proposal that all couples aged 18 or over should receive the same personal allowance.

Blood-alcohol Level

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what representations he has received, what information he has and what action he proposes to take on a product recently marketed which purports to affect the blood-alcohol level;

(2) what representations he has received, what information he has and what action he proposes to take on a product recently marketed which purports to affect the blood-alcohol level; and if he will make a statement on the implications of the marketing of this product for health and safety matters.

Mr. Whitney: I have received no representations about this product to which my hon. Friend refers. I understand that it is a fructose-based carbonated drink which claims to reduce blood-alcohol levels. While the rate at which alcohol is eliminated from the blood can be affected by a variety of factors, I have yet to see any reliable evidence that its elimination from the blood can be artificially speeded. It would seem most unwise for an individual to place reliance on any such product.

Family Credit

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on what take-up rate his figures for beneficiaries from family credit are based.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 2.10 of the technical annex to the White Paper "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691).

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will estimate, on the basis of a 50 per cent. take-up of family credit, the numbers of families who will gain and who will lose as a result of his new proposals for family credit;

(2) if he will recalculate and publish in the form of table 16B of the technical appendix of his White Paper the numbers of gainers and losers from changes in income-related benefits after making allowance for future child benefit payments *(a)* at their present rate, *(b)* rising in line with inflation and *(c)* rising by only 1 per cent. a year;

(3) if he will publish a table showing the total number of gainers and losers from his social security reviews after taking account of both his proposed changes in supplementary benefit, housing benefit and family income supplement and a policy for raising child benefit at a rate lower than price rises.

Mr. Newton: The technical annex to the White Paper gives a very substantial amount of information to illustrate the proposed changes in income-related benefits. In the Government's view it would not be a sensible use of the considerable computer and manpower resources involved to produce comparable information in respect of every possible variation of the assumptions on which they are based.

Child Benefit

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on his policy for the uprating of child benefit in the light of the decisions of his review of social security.

Mr. Newton: The future level of child benefit will be determined, uprating by uprating, according to all the circumstances at the appropriate time, including, in particular, the pattern of family support as a whole and the needs of families on low incomes.

Social Fund

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the number of persons who each year will receive *(a)* help with funeral expenses and *(b)* help with maternity expenses from the proposed social fund.

Mr. Newton: Precise estimates cannot be made since the number of those receiving help will depend on factors such as the level of claimants' savings and, in the case of funerals, the proportion on income-related benefits responsible for funerals. But the new arrangements will mean a significant increase in the number of low income families eligible for substantial help with these expenses.

NHS (Services)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for 1984-85 for each region the figures for payments to outside contractors for support services and for contractual arrangements for patient care indicating the services provided; if he will also give each figure a percentage of the total expenditure on the relevant service in each region; and if he will also give the 1983-84 figures for comparison.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 25 November 1985, c. *498*]: Following is the information requested derived from the annual accounts of regional and district health authorities for 1984-85. For 1983-84, I refer the hon. Member to my predecessor's reply to him on 14 February 1985 at columns *281-82*. Figures for the two years are not entirely comparable as value added tax on contracted-out services became reclaimable by health authorities on 1 September 1983. The annual accounts do not give a detailed analysis of expenditure on contractual arrangements for patient care.

Region	Medical & surgical equipment maintenance		X-ray equipment maintenance		Laboratory equipment maintenance		Catering		Laundry		Domestic Cleaning	
	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.
Northern	473	2·44	538	50·42	493	11·48	7	0·03	208	5·25	239	0·85
Yorkshire	815	3·76	354	21·38	260	5·27	20	0·08	220	4·72	780	2·60
Trent	1,006	3·71	736	43·51	551	9·19	93	0·30	95	1·86	467	1·22
East Anglian	287	2·45	325	52·38	257	10·92	Nil	Nil	94	3·70	1,074	7·04
North West Thames	1,254	5·84	685	40·18	403	6·82	48	0·18	944	20·34	666	1·87
North East Thames	1,262	4·42	876	47·31	885	11·24	60	0·19	733	12·97	881	1·95
South East Thames	1,256	4·41	906	52·31	550	11·27	189	0·65	551	9·60	1,154	3·11
South West Thames	742	4·28	812	61·20	341	10·57	114	0·47	1,483	31·57	887	3·12
Wessex	1,068	6·61	561	53·71	275	10·05	10	0·05	261	8·90	189	0·89
Oxford	930	7·49	192	43·23	208	6·71	14	0·11	592	20·31	675	4·46
South Western	757	4·20	562	42·78	572	13·13	26	0·11	460	11·57	165	0·68
West Midlands	1,529	4·87	740	44·28	648	9·47	20	0·05	522	8·24	476	1·33
Mersey	771	5·11	630	55·92	442	11·73	—	—	67	1·46	252	1·11
North Western	1,088	4·03	641	40·96	913	14·98	Nil	Nil	412	7·43	518	1·53

Region	Engineering maintenance		Building maintenance		Grounds, etc. maintenance		Vehicle maintenance		Computers—contract services		Contractual arrangements for patient care	
	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.	£'000	per cent.
Northern	3,041	16·73	3,680	32·78	102	6·64	517	20·20	76	5·80	1,406	0·29
Yorkshire	3,542	19·75	5,164	43·58	140	8·10	252	8·11	81	4·97	1,878	0·35
Trent	4,291	18·78	6,930	45·59	180	7·55	675	19·13	493	60·79	720	0·11
East Anglian	1,349	14·28	1,487	29·81	49	5·60	312	13·75	99	10·12	457	0·17
North West Thames	5,243	26·98	5,273	42·97	278	19·87	398	11·45	1,001	85·92	3,489	0·62
North East Thames	6,115	23·71	6,210	41·31	299	17·97	527	12·78	830	23·93	5,685	0·78
South East Thames	5,193	22·23	5,301	41·57	246	17·71	409	10·31	550	48·12	2,650	0·43
South West Thames	4,390	24·99	4,929	45·53	471	32·82	536	16·61	247	11·59	6,023	1·28
Wessex	2,480	20·26	2,404	29·48	86	6·81	409	18·47	194	31·39	1,942	0·50
Oxford	1,967	19·86	2,398	40·20	180	24·10	380	19·29	141	20·70	1,149	0·38
South Western	3,414	21·41	3,558	34·41	51	2·99	871	25·22	196	28·57	2,421	0·53
West Midlands	4,926	16·29	7,251	39·60	349	13·29	444	9·79	474	17·45	2,425	0·33
Mersey	3,353	22·84	6,164	53·25	185	14·74	275	12·19	50	4·73	2,354	0·60
North Western	4,637	22·89	5,382	33·90	236	11·22	287	7·64	211	20·87	6,919	1·07

Notes:

1. All figures are for current expenditure: capital is excluded.
2. For contractual arrangements for patient care, "total expenditure on the relevant service" is taken as total current expenditure on hospital services.
3. Payments to doctors, pharmacists, dentists, opticians and others contracted to the NHS to provide family practitioner services are excluded.
4. Minimal expenditure and percentages (ie less than £500 or 0·01 per cent.) as indicated by the use of a dash (—).
5. Information in the table has been prepared on as consistent a basis as practicable but comparisons of percentages between services may in some cases be misleading as the basis of the total relevant expenditure figures for different services are not completely uniform.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will classify refusals of severe disablement allowance to *(a)* men, *(b)* single women and *(c)* married women according to the following reasons (i) over pension age, (ii) not incapable of work, (iii) failed the 80 per cent. test, (iv) failed residence and presence conditions and (v) other.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 November 1985, c. *658*]: I regret that, due to a typographical error, the figure of 530 was incorrectly given as 503 in the fourth row of the third column.

Child Abuse Officers

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many local authorities have child abuse officers.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *765*]: Information about numbers of local authorities with child abuse co-ordinators is not held centrally.

Hospital Fires

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many fires have occurred in National Health Service hospitals in each year since 1979.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1985, c. *234*]: The readily available information relates to fires in hospitals (including nursing homes and non-NHS hospitals) in 1980-83. The information is published by the Home Office in "Fire Statistics United Kingdom". Figures for such fires during this period are:

	Number
1980	2,106
1981	2,081
1982	2,213
1983	2,243

The figure for 1984 is not yet available.

Information on National Health Service hospitals alone could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department's questionnaire about cervical cancer provision was sent to each health authority; by what date they were asked to reply and whether he intends to publish the outcome.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1985, c. 239]: A checklist intended to enable health authorities to review their cervical screening programmes was issued on 29 April and responses were asked for by 14 June. The checklist was not designed to elicit replies for summary and publication but to assist the Department's consideration of these issues.

Benefits

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the combined cost of single payments, death grant and maternity grant in *(a)* 1985-86, *(b)* 1986-87 and *(c)* 1987-88, respectively.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985]: Expenditure on death and maternity grants is estimated at £35 million in 1985-86 and £36 million in 1986-87. The White Paper, "Reform of Social Security", proposes that both grants will be replaced in April 1987. It is not possible to make comparably reliable projections of expenditure on single payments; expenditure in 1984-85 was £241 million.

Post-operative Infection

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the sample information on post-operative infection held by his Department.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985]: The available information is given in the table. The sample numbers are too small for reliable estimates to be made below regional level.

National Health Service hospitals, 1983*

Regional and special health authorities	*Estimated number of inpatient cases with a diagnosis of post-operative infection*
Northern	890
Yorkshire	1,150
Trent	1,800
East Anglian	740
North West Thames	1,050
North East Thames	1,590
South East Thames	1,160
South West Thames	910
Wessex	700
Oxford	460
South Western	2,090
West Midlands	1,260
Mersey	780
North Western	1,730
Special Health Authorities	†70
England	16,380

* Excluding psychiatric and maternity units.

† This estimate was based on a small sample number and should be treated with caution.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 13 January 1986

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Lord Privy Seal what is the current allowance payable to hon. Members successful in the ballot for private Members' Bills to assist with drafting costs; when the allowance was last increased; what is the current value of the allowance expressed in prices prevailing at the date it was last increased; and if he has any plans to increase it.

Mr. Biffen: Pursuant to a resolution of the House of 29 November 1971, hon. Members who have secured one of the first 10 places in the ballot are entitled to claim not more than £200 towards the cost of drafting assistance for their Bill. This allowance has not been increased since it was introduced. The current value of the allowance expressed in prices prevailing at the date of its introduction is £43·35.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Campaigners (Grant)

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the amount of grant his Department will provide to the Campaigners for 1986-87; and how that compares with 1985-86.

Mr. Dunn: An allocation of £10,800 for headquarters grant was made to the Campaigners for 1985-86. Decisions about 1986-87 headquarters grant for national voluntary youth organisations will not be announced until spring 1986.

Teachers (Merit Payments)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, in preparing his plans for merit awards for teachers, what estimate he made of the percentage of teachers who would expect to receive merit awards within the first two years.

Mr. Chris Patten: My right hon. Friend has no such plans. He continues to look for a pay structure providing substantially more promotion opportunities for the better teachers to higher scales than are at present available combined with promotion arrangements and differentials designed to recruit, retain and motivate teachers of the right quality. The pay offer which the management panel made, with the Government's endorsement, on 12 September would have generated an extra 74,000 promotions, equal to one in five of all classroom teachers.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to ensure that all pupils receive at least a specified number of hours of instruction during their school career from teachers in receipt of the proposed merit payments.

Mr. Chris Patten: No.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to issue guidelines to examining boards on the consequences for the assessment of examination papers of the proposed introduction of merit payments for teachers and the implicit grading of the abilities of the teachers of each examinee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: No.

Private Education

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the total number of schoolchildren taking full-time private education.

Mr. Dunn: In January 1985, the latest date for which information is available, there were 501,422 full-time pupils in independent schools in England.

Examination Results

Dr. Glyn asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will initiate discussions with examining boards about the implications for the evaluation of performance at recent and forthcoming O and A level examinations of the number of children whose schooling has been disrupted by strike action by teaching staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: My right hon. Friend and I share the deep concern which pupils and parents have about the current action being taken by teachers. We deplore any such action which harms children's education and which might damage their performance in public examinations and their future prospects.

The effect of the action so far is inevitably difficult to quantify and will have varied from school to school. It is open to schools to draw to the attention of the GCE and CSE examinations boards any relevant factors affecting pupils' examination performance, and the boards have indicated that they will consider any such details provided in accordance with their normal practice. My right hon. Friend therefore at present has no plans to hold discussions with the boards.

University Grants Committee

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the percentage change in real terms, measured by the gross domestic product deflator, in the funding of each university by the University Grants Committee between 1980-81 and 1983-84, excluding those amounts representing compensation for changes in home student fees, compensation for redundancy and early retirement, changes to take account of minor capital works from the recurrent grant and changes in the level of local authority rates *(a)* including and *(b)* excluding additions made for the information technology and new blood programmes.

Mr. Walden [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1985, c. *161*]: The percentage changes in the funding of each university between 1980-81 and 1983-84 in real terms measured by the gross domestic product deflator, excluding those amounts representing compensation for changes in the level of home student fees, compensation for redundancy and early retirement, provision for capital

in recurrent expenditure and local authority rates *(a)* including and *(b)* excluding additions made for the information technology and new blood programmes are as follows. The percentage changes shown will be in part the consequence of the withdrawal of the overseas student subsidy and to the extent that these losses have been made up by the increased fee income will not accurately reflect the changes in the universities financial position.

University	Percentage change in UGC funding (Academic Years) Real terms 1980-81 to 1983-84 (a) including IT and new blood programmes	(b) excluding IT and new blood programmes
Aston	−30·9	−31·0
Bath	−4·0	−4·5
Birmingham	−14·0	−14·4
Bradford	−31·1	−31·2
Bristol	−12·7	−13·4
Brunel	−16·3	−16·6
Cambridge	−7·5	−8·2
City	−19·7	−19·8
Durham	−5·5	−5·7
East Anglia	−7·6	−8·0
Essex	−19·6	−20·0
Exeter	−14·9	−15·1
Hull	−16·6	−17·0
Keele	−32·0	−32·1
Kent	−19·3	−19·8
Lancaster	−12·1	−12·3
Leeds	−13·2	−13·4
Leicester	−6·0	−6·5
Liverpool	−15·0	−15·2
London Graduate School of Business Studies	+33·6	+33·6
London University	−13·6	−13·9
Loughborough	−7·4	−7·7
Manchester Business School	−25·2	−25·2
Manchester	−14·9	−15·2
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology	−27·9	−29·2
Newcastle	−8·3	−8·7
Nottingham	−11·2	−11·8
Oxford	−8·8	−9·5
Reading	−13·2	−13·3
Salford	−42·2	−42·3
Sheffield	−11·0	−11·2
Southampton	−9·8	−10·3
Surrey	−21·7	−21·8
Sussex	−18·1	−18·9
Warwick	−11·5	−12·1
York	−0·3	−1·7
Aberystwyth U.C.	−16·3	−16·6
Bangor U.C.	−13·6	−13·8
Cardiff U.C.	−12·9	−13·0
St. David's Lampeter	+0·7	+0·7
Swansea U.C.	−16·0	−16·3
University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology	−15·7	−16·1
Welsh National School of Medicine	−7·0	−7·1
Aberdeen	−19·0	−19·2
Dundee	−15·2	−15·3
Edinburgh	−8·0	−8·6
Glasgow	−6·3	−6·7
Heriot-Watt	−9·0	−9·6
St. Andrews	−16·6	−16·9
Stirling	−20·7	−21·4
Strathclyde	−14·7	−14·6

Speech Science

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what information he has on the numbers of staff engaged in full or part-time teaching on courses leading to degrees in speech science, speech pathology or speech therapy and their places of employment;

(2) what information he has as to the number of students, and their place of study, sitting for examinations for degrees in speech science, speech pathology or speech therapy in 1983, 1984 and 1985 and the classification of honours awarded where appropriate;

(3) what information he has as to the numbers and location of courses at universities, polytechnics or other institution leading to degrees in speech science, speech pathology or speech therapy.

Mr. Walden [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 November 1985, c. *177-78*]: The table published with my reply was misleading. Revised information on the numbers of speech science, speech pathology and speech therapy graduates is as follows:

Speech science, speech pathology and speech therapy courses and numbers of graduates

Institution	Course	All first degree graduates 1983	1984	1985	Good honours graduates 1983	1984	1985
(a) Great Britain universities							
University College London	Speech sciences	43	46	42	18	16	14
Manchester	Speech pathology and therapy	22	18	19	16	10	13
Newcastle	Speech, Speech and psychology	16	11	19	4	7	8
Reading	Linguistics and Language pathology	10	13	11	9	4	8
Sheffield	Speech science	19	14	14	7	5	5
(b) England polytechnics							
City of Birmingham	Speech pathology and therapy	—	20	—	—	7	—
Leicester	Speech pathology and therapy	—	—	—	—	—	—
Leeds	Speech therapy	—	—	—	—	—	—
Manchester	Remedial speech therapy	—	—	—	—	—	—
(c) England other institutions							
The Central School of Speech and Drama	Speech therapy	—	—	—	—	—	—

— No graduates.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Priests (Retirements and Resignations)

Mr. Frank Field asked the hon. Member for Wokingham as representing the Church Commissioners if he will detail for the last five years the number of priests who have voluntarily retired or resigned early; and if these data can be suitably classified according to reason for the early retirement or resignation.

Sir William van Straubenzee: The commissioners do not keep the information necessary to answer this question precisely. However, the information they do keep indicates that the number of priests who left the commissioners' payroll, other than for normal retirement or death, were:

	Number
1980-81	208
1981-82	195
1982	190
1983	214
1984	237

A number of these will have taken up appointments in other forms of ministry: for example, forces chaplaincy, prison chaplaincy, school or hospital chaplaincy work.

Notes

1. The figures for 1980-81 and 1981-82 refer to the period 1 July to 30 June: the remaining columns refer to calendar years.
2. Clergymen who move directly from an appointment in one diocese to an appointment in another are not included in these figures.
3. The figures relate only to losses from full-time diocesan appointments.

ENERGY

Coal Industry

Mr. Mason asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what discussions he has had with the Opencast Executive and the chairman of the National Coal Board regarding privatisation of opencast coalmining operations; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what discussions he has had with the chairman and members of the National Coal Board regarding privatisation of some deep mined coal production units; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The Government have no plans for privatising the National Coal Board's mining activities.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Peremptory Challenges

34. **Mr. Jessel** asked the Attorney-General whether any guidance is given by Her Majesty's Government to counsel appearing in Crown courts on the use of peremptory challenges.

The Attorney-General: It is not open to the Government to give guidance to counsel appearing in Crown courts on matters such as these. In 1977 the number of peremptory challenges available to each defendant was reduced from seven to three. As the Solicitor-General said in November, while the law so recently approved by Parliament remains as it is, counsel has a right and a duty to use the peremptory challenge, together with all other lawful means, to the extent that he conscientiously thinks it will further his client's interest.

Law Centres

35. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Attorney-General what recent discussions he has had about the future of law centres.

The Solicitor-General: The Lord Chancellor's officials continue to be in touch, as appropriate, with the seven centres funded by the Lord Chancellor's Department and with the Law Centres Federation. Other law centres are not the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor's Department.

Confidentiality

36. **Mr. John Morris** asked the Attorney-General whether he is satisfied with the arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of advice given by him to other Government Departments.

The Attorney-General: I an satisfied that the arrangements in my Department are adequate and that other Departments are aware of their duty to maintain the confidentiality of any advice which I may give them.

Family Courts

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Attorney-General when the report of the family court review being undertaken by the Lord Chancellor's Department will be published.

The Solicitor-General: It is hoped that a consultation paper will be published shortly and that a final report on the feasibility of the main options for a unified family court will be published by the end of this year or early in 1987.

Legal Aid

Mr. Best asked the Attorney-General whether there are any plans to review the operation of the legal aid scheme.

The Solicitor-General: The Government are concerned that legal aid should be provided in the most cost effective way. It has therefore been decided to carry out a scrutiny with the following terms of reference:

"Given the necessary judicial independence of the courts and existing reviews of court procedure, to consider the determinants of expenditure on the legal aid scheme by looking at its operation and administration in practice, and to make recommendations."

The scrutiny will be undertaken by officials from the Lord Chancellor's Department, the Treasury and the efficiency unit. It is intended that it will begin at the end of January 1986 and will be completed in about four and a half months.

Duty Solicitors

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Attorney-General what procedures have been established for the monitoring of the introduction of the duty solicitor scheme in London.

The Solicitor-General: The Law Society is receiving reports on the progress of implementation from its

committees responsible for the administration of the 24-hour duty solicitor scheme. In addition, the society has made arrangements for the collection of detailed statistics on work done under the scheme.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Overseas Aid

42. **Mr. Jessel** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what amounts of overseas aid provided by British taxpayers are bilateral, are through the European Economic Community and are through other international agencies such as those of the United Nations.

Mr. Raison: In 1984-85 aid programme expenditure was £1,165 million. Of this £664 million was provided as bilateral aid, £231 million was channelled through the European Community and £270 million was provided to other multilateral development agencies.

43. **Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what will be the levels of British bilateral and multilateral aid, respectively, in 1986-87 in real terms compared with the levels of 1978-79.

Mr. Raison: In 1978-79 bilateral aid was £563 million and multilateral aid £201 million. The aid programme breakdown in 1986-87 is still subject to some uncertainty but in broad terms the level of bilateral aid will be lower in real terms than in 1978-79 and that of multilateral aid greater.

Ethiopia and Sudan

44. **Dame Judith Hart** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on further emergency assistance to Ethiopia and the Sudan.

Mr. Raison: We shall continue to provide emergency assistance towards relief needs, and help for rehabilitation, in Ethiopia and the Sudan during 1986, both bilaterally and through the European Community. I have announced already a further £5·2 million relief assistance to the Sudan.

45. **Mr. Wood** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is satisfied that there will be sufficient food supplies in the Sudan in 1986.

Mr. Raison: Current assessments are that there will be an overall grain surplus in Sudan this year. However, some areas, particularly Darfur and Kordofan, will be in deficit and a substantial relief effort will be needed. We are ready to play a full part in this. I have already announced today the provision for a further £5·2 million relief assistance to the Sudan.

Yemen Arab Republic

46. **Mr. Hind** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will increase the present British aid programme to the Yemen Arab Republic.

Mr. Raison: I have no plans at present to do so. My visit last week to the Yemen Arab Republic confirmed the useful work being carried out under our technical co-operation programme. I made clear that there might be scope in the future for funds from the aid and trade provision if suitable project proposals were put forward.

Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what aid projects in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador have been funded by Her Majesty's Government for each year since 1979.

Mr. Raison: Bilateral aid projects financed were as follows:

Project	*Aid category**	*Duration*
HONDURAS		
Forestry Development	T.C.	1979-85
Artisanal Fisheries	T.C.	1979-84
Coffee Diversification and Development	Capital and T.C.	1981-85
Natural Resources study of the Mosquitia Region	T.C.	1981
Water Exploration, Development and Supplies	Capital and T.C.	1982-85
Provision and Commissioning of Hospital Equipment	Capital and T.C.	1982-85
Provision of Bailey Bridging	Capital	1982-85
Agricultural Economist for the National Institute of Agriculture	T.C.	1983-85
Provision and Commissioning of Land Rovers for the National Institute of Agriculture	Capital and T.C.	1983-85
Construction of Prefabricated Wooden Bridges	T.C.	1984-85
Hydraulic Modelling Work for the Aguan River Basin Study	A.T.P./T.C.	1984
Agricultural Engineer for Ministry of Natural Resources, Unit of Development and Adaptation	T.C.	1985
GUATEMALA		
None	—	—
EL SALVADOR		
Self-Help Housing	T.C. (Accountable grant)	1979-84
Acelhuate River Management	T.C.	1979-80
Assistance to Central American Technological Institute	T.C.	1979
Economics Lecturer for Jose Simeon Caras University, San Salvador	T.C.	1979
Assistance to Veterinary Laboratories at Soyapango, San Miguel and Sonsonate	T.C.	1979
Provision of Equipment for Social Development	T.C. (Grant)	1985

* TC—Technical Co-operation.
ATP—Aid and Trade Provision.

Central America (Aid)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the present total annual volume of European Economic Community aid to all central American countries; and how has this been allocated for each year since 1979.

Mr. Raison: European Community aid disbursements to Central America were £9·1 million in 1983, the latest year for which complete figures are available.

The annual average level of aid commitments in 1979-84 (inclusive) was £22·8 million (38·6 mecu) allocated as follows:

	Financial and technical	Food aid	Emergency aid	Trade promotion	Training	Voluntary organisations	Total
Guatemala	—	2·468	0·882	0·289	—	0·188	3·827
El Salvador	—	9·883	0·825	0·130	—	0·294	11·132
Honduras	22·000	16·150	0·088	0·389	0·004	0·082	38·713
Nicaragua	15·909	27·824	0·707	0·424	—	2·792	47·656
Costa Rica	10·602	0·271	0·030	0·518	—	0·300	11·721
Panama	—	—	—	0·259	—	0·018	0·277
Total	48·511	56·596	2·532	2·009	0·004	3·674	113·326
Regional programmes							23·879
Total							137·205

Source: Commission of the European Communities.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans there are for further European Economic Community aid to Central American countries; and what restrictions thereon are planned.

Mr. Raison: The position remains as stated in the reply given to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 12 November 1985, at column *147*. Individual proposals will be brought forward by the Commission in due course. These will be designed to support projects of regional importance on the basis of priorities and objectives identified by common agreement.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

BSC Chairman (Salary)

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will provide details of the salary of the Chairman of the British Steel Corporation at each increase date since 1974.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The information is as follows:

Salary £	Effective From
28,100	1 January 1974
28,330	1 January 1975
28,538	1 January 1977
31,390	1 January 1978
41,695	1 April 1979
48,500	1 April 1980
55,000*	1 September 1983
60,000*	1 January 1985

* Part-time

Ultraleisure

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will make a statement on the extent and nature of the Export Credits Guarantee Department's involvement in the circumstances which led to the failure of Ultraleisure and to the current imprisonment of one of the directors of that company;

(2) if, in offering cover for the export orders for sports facilities, secured by Ultraleisure in 1981, the Export Credits Guarantee Department's insistence that Ultraleisure should enter into a corporate association with its Danish clients was a normal feature of Export Credits Guarantee Department's policy at that time; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if the Export Credits Guarantee Department's advice in 1985 that a lower rate of interest than that permitted by European Economic Community rules could be offered to Ultraleisure if a Swiss company were set up to act as a front organisation was a feature of the advice the Export Credits Guarantee Department offered to exporters generally at that time; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if the advice tendered by the Export Credits Guarantee Department to Ultraleisure in 1981 has ever been the subject of any inquiry; if the 8½ per cent. interest rate offered at that time to Ultraleisure was a commercial rate in accordance with European Economic Community rules; if the Export Credits Guarantee Department's action in registering charges on the assets of Ultraleisure's Danish client companies without Ultraleisure's knowledge represented normal Export Credits Guarantee Department's policy at that time; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: I understand that the police are investigating certain aspects of the affairs of this company, which is in liquidation. The Export Credits Guarantee Department is co-operating with this investigation as necessary. I would not be right for me to comment further on the matter in these circumstances.

Post Office (Financial Return)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has issued any directive to the Post Office Corporation requiring it to achieve a break-even financial return on counter services; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: As I announced on 24 July, at columns *63-64*, the Post Office counters business is required to secure a 4·5 per cent. return on turnover on the current cost accounting convention, before tax but after interest, for the financial year 1985-86.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what rate of return he has required the Post Office Corporation to achieve in *(a)* 1985-86 and *(b)* 1986-87; and what effect this is expected to have on the income and trading prospects of sub-postmasters or sub-postmistresses.

Mr. Pattie: As I announced on 24 July, at columns *63-64*, each of the Post Office mails and counters businesses are required to secure a 4·5 per cent. return on turnover, on the current cost accounting convention,

before tax, but after interest, for the financial year 1985-86. Financial targets for mails and counters for 1986 remain to be set. National Girobank is targeted separately.

The effect of financial targets set for parts of the Post Office Corporation on the income and trading prospects of sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses depends on the success of the counters business in providing an efficient and cost-effective service that meets the needs of its agency customers at a price they are prepared to pay.

Westland Helicopters

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria he proposes to use in determining the extent to which *(a)* the proposed United Technologies holding in Westland and *(b)* the increased holding on which an option exists are consistent with Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the existence of dominant or controlling foreign interests in strategically important United Kingdom companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brittan: The Government have always made it clear that it is for Westland as a private sector company, to decide the best route to follow to secure its future and that of its employees. The board of Westland's proposals to shareholders no longer involve an option for United Technologies to acquire additional shares beyond the 29·9 per cent. that would be held by United Technologies and Fiat.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government will make it its policy to guarantee Westland shareholders against losses incurred if the Sikorsky-Fiat bid is rejected in favour of that of the European consortium.

Mr. Brittan: No.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether, in considering the future of Westland, the Government had regard to the profitability of the companies which want to acquire its shares; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the return on capital employed for each of the past five years of Westland and the other firms in question;

(2) whether, in considering the Westland case, the Government had regard to previous examples of collaboration with European firms in the aircraft field;

(3) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the numbers employed in the aircraft industry in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy, respectively, in 1970, 1979 and at the latest available date.

Mr. Brittan: The Government have always made it clear that it is for Westland, as a private sector company, to decide the best route to follow to secure its future and that of its employees.

The information requested about numbers employed in the aircraft industry is as follows:

	1972	*1979*	*Latest available*
United Kingdom	207,500	204,381	217,891 (1983)
France	108,525	106,297	127,269 (1983)
Germany	52,455	60,886	65,677 (1983)
Italy	28,500	36,570	40,920 (1981)

Source: "The European Aerospace Industry Trading Position and Figures"—European Commission Staff Working Paper. 11 January 1984. Figures for 1970 are not available.

It is not possible to provide the information requested about companies return on capital employed on a consistent basis without excessive cost.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, if he was consulted by Lloyds Merchant Bank before it offered 300,000 man hours of work to the Westland company in its document dated 27 December in respect of the ordering of six additional Sea King helicopters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brittan: No.

Company Liquidations (Cardiff, West)

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many retail businesses employing 10 or fewer people went into liquidation in the area of the Cardiff, West constituency from 1965 to date.

Mr. Howard: I regret that this information is not available. The main reason is that no records are kept of the number of employees of insolvent businesses.

Airbus

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the Airbus is produced in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Pattie: The United Kingdom content of the Airbus A300-600 and A310 programmes, as a proportion of the total aircraft, including airframe, engines and equipment, was initially about 12 per cent. for both the General Electric and the Pratt and Whitney engined versions of these aircraft. As a result of the collaborative agreement between General Electric of the United States and Rolls-Royce on the manufacture of the GE CF6-80C2 engines, the United Kingdom content of Airbus A300-600 and A310 aircraft equipped with these engines has now risen to about 16 per cent.

On figures currently available, the United Kingdom content of the Airbus A320 will be in the order of 16 per cent. for the CFM engined version and of 26 per cent. for the V2500 engined version.

United States (Trade Deficit)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the deficit or surplus in manufacturing trade with the United States of America, France, Germany and Italy, respectively, in the most recent annual period for which figures are available.

Mr. Channon: The information is in the following table.

*United Kingdom crude balance of trade in manufactures**
12 months ending November 1985

	£ billion
United States of America	−0·6
France	−1·2
Federal Republic of Germany	−5·7
Italy	−1·3

* Standard International Trade Classification Sections 5 to 8.
Source: United Kingdom Overseas Trade Statistics.

Trade Statistics

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish a table showing the total value of exports and imports of manufactured goods and the consequent surplus or deficit with the United States of America, the Commonwealth and the EEC, respectively, in the most recent annual period for which figures are available.

Mr. Channon: The information is in the following table.

*United Kingdom trade in manufactures**
12 months ending November 1985
£ billion
OTS basis

	Exports (fob)	*Imports (cif)*	*Crude balance*
With:			
United States of America	8·0	8·6	−0·6
The Commonwealth	7·3	3·5	+3·8
European Community†	20·6	29·5	−8·9

* Standard International Trade Classification, Section 5 to 8.
† The members in 1985. Including Spain and Portugal, who became members on 1 January 1986, exports during the above period were £21·8 billion and imports £31·2 billion.
Source: United Kingdom Overseas Trade Statistics.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the market for manufactured goods of the original six members of the EEC was secured by the United Kingdom in the most recent calendar year for which figures are available; and what was the comparable percentage in the calendar year 1982.

Mr. Channon: In 1984, 7·2 per cent. of the imports of manufactures by the original six members of the European Community came from the United Kingdom, the same proportion as in 1982.

Patent Office

Mr. Hirst asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government intend to make the Patent Office a separate statutory body as proposed by the Chief Scientific Advisor, Cabinet Office, in the Green Paper, "Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation" Cmnd. 9117; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brittan: The Green Paper, "Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation" (Cmnd. 9117) by Sir Robin Nicholson, the former chief scientific adviser at the Cabinet Office, proposed that the Patent Office should be allowed to be more responsive to the needs of innovation and that it should, therefore, be given a new look, freed from the traditional Civil Service framework and given broader terms of reference. The Green Paper added that the Patent Office should be self-supporting from fees and free to finance investment programmes.

The Government have decided that the Patent Office should become a statutory non-departmental public body for broadly these reasons. Legislation will be introduced in due course to give effect to this decision and work on its implementation will begin immediately.

Under the new arrangements it is intended that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will retain the power to appoint a management board and advisory committees and to set targets.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Labour Statistics

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the level of unemployment in the construction industry in the Belfast travel-to-work area at the latest date both in numbers and on a percentage basis.

Dr. Boyson: At 12 December 1985 there were 8,778 unemployed construction workers in the Belfast travel-to-work area. This represents an estimated 40 per cent. of all construction employees in that area.

WALES

Water and Sewerage Grants

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications for grants have been made to his Department under the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Acts, how many of these were up to the maximum payable; and when the maximum payable figure under this grant was last reviewed by his Department.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: During the period 1 April 1979 to date the Department has received 87 applications for grant aid under the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Acts 1944-71. The number of grants that were awarded up to the maximum payable is not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

The maximum current cost limits for grant calculation purposes, which have operated since October 1978 are: for water supply £1,200 per property; for sewerage services £1,650 per property.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Mr. Bruce Lee

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce his decision as to whether he intends to refer the case of Mr. Bruce Lee under section 17 of the Criminal Appeals Act to ask the Court of Appeal to review Mr. Lee's conviction and sentence.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. Friend hopes to be able to reach a decision shortly.

Crown Courts (Procedure)

Mr. Jessel asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration Her Majesty's Government are giving to changes in court procedure in Crown courts.

Mr. Hurd: The Lord Chancellor and I are considering the proposals made by Lord Roskill's committee on fraud trials concerning aspects of Crown court procedure. My noble and learned Friend and I keep Crown court procedure generally under review and some of the possible changes will be discussed in a White Paper I intend to issue on proposals for criminal justice legislation.

Official Secrets Acts ("Daily Telegraph")

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will refer to the Director of Public Prosecutions the publication of matters covered by the Official Secrets Acts relating to immigration procedures in the *Daily Telegraph* on 3 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: An investigation is in progress but it has not so far produced information of a kind which would justify asking the Director of Public Prosecutions to look into the matter.

Leicestershire Constabulary

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current approved manpower of the Leicestershire constabulary; and how this compares with the national average on officers per thousand population.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The authorised establishment of the Leicestershire constabulary is 1,733. On 31 December 1984 the ratio of police officers to population in Leicestershire was 1:499, compared with the average of 1:458 for police forces outside London in England and Wales, and 1:411 for all forces in England and Wales.

Police Forces (Establishments)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces have applied for an increase in establishment over the last 12 months; and on what criteria he reaches his decisions on such applications.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Fifteen police authorities in England and Wales have applied for increases totalling 595 in their authorised establishments for the financial year 1985-86 or later. One hundred and eleven additional posts have so far been approved for seven forces, and decisions will be made shortly on the outstanding applications.

Police authority/force	*Increase applied for*	*Increase approved*
City of London	*6 (for 1985-86)	—
Cumbria	*14 (for 1985-86)	—
Devon and Cornwall	5 (for 1985-86) *18 (for 1986-87)	5 —
Dorset	20	20
Essex	10	10
Hertfordshire	*33 (for October 1986)	—
Northamptonshire	6 (for 1985-86) *23 (for 1986-87)	6 —
Staffordshire	*52	—
Suffolk	*50 (from April 1986)	—
Surrey	22	10
Sussex	*66 (for January 1987)	—
Thames Valley	†167 *200 (for 1986-87 onwards)	30 —
Warwickshire	*29	—
West Mercia	30	30
Wiltshire	*11	—

* These applications are under consideration.

† Thames Valley applied in November 1984 for 174 additional police posts without specifying when they would be needed. An increase of 20 posts was subsequently approved for 1984-85, and 30 for 1985-86. The current application for an increase of 200 posts supersedes the previous application.

Fifty additional police posts have been approved for the Metropolitan police for 1985-86 and 50 for 1986-87. In addition, as my right hon. Friend indicated to the House on 21 October 1985 at column 31, he has set urgent work in hand to assess where there are demonstrated needs for increases in the Metropolitan police establishment.

We consider applications for increases in police establishments on the basis of the demonstrated needs of police forces, and in the light of advice from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary, who have been requested by my right hon. Friend to assess the position.

Correspondence

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the letter sent on 30 May on behalf of a Leamington Spa constituent, Mr. Ian Tyres, in connection with the policy of immigration of Sri Lankans into the United kingdom.

Mr. Waddington: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 2 January.

Local Authorities (Emergency Planning Staff Levels and Salaries)

Mr. Brandon-Bravo asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he hopes to advise local authorities on recommended emergency planning staff levels and salaries.

Mr. Giles Shaw: A decision will be taken later this year on whether and what advice on manpower levels would be appropriate when the assessment of progress made on implementation of the 1983 regulations is complete. Staff salaries are a matter for local authorities to determine.

Law and Order Policy

Mr. Haynes asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what statistical or other material he assesses the outcome of his law and order policy.

Mr. Mellor: Relevant information comes from a variety of sources. Statistics are collected centrally on recorded crime, cautioning, court proceedings, the treatment of offenders, and the work of the police, the courts, the probation service and the prison service. These regular central statistics are supplemented by information held locally and by a wide-ranging programme of research which is carried out into particular aspects of the criminal justice system. All the main statistical series and research results are published. A wide range of advice is also available to us from those working in the field of law and order.

Alcohol-related Offences

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department has any estimate of the number of offences in which alcohol was a contributory factor, in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Comprehensive estimates are not available of the number of offences in which alcohol was a contributory factor. Results from the "British Crime Survey" suggest that in 1983 approximately 45 per cent. of offences of wounding or assault were committed by people who were thought by their victims to have been drinking. Statistics of convictions for offences of driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs are published annually in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Offences Relating to Motor Vehicles" (Table 5.1 of the latest Issue number 28/85). Statistics of convictions and cautions for offences of drunkenness are published annually in the Statistical Bulletin "Offences of Drunkenness" (Issue No. 33/85).

10 Downing Street (Security)

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his reply of 19 December, when he expects the inquiry into the security breach at No. 10 Downing street on 13 December to be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: The review was completed before Christmas. It made recommendations for improving the security of No. 10 itself, and the co-ordination of security arrangements between 10 Downing street and adjacent buildings. These are being implemented. It would not be right, on security grounds, to go into detail about the new arrangements.

Immigration

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will arrange for discussions to take place with relevant immigrant welfare organisations regarding the position of sponsors waiting for passengers at Heathrow airport who are undergoing lengthy and non-continuous interviewing;

(2) if he is satisfied with the arrangements at Heathrow airport for sponsors of passengers subject to lengthy and non-continuous interviewing to be kept informed of the up-to-date position; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will arrange for the immigration authorities at Heathrow airport to set up an inquiry desk where sponsors of passengers subject to lengthy interviewing can be given the fullest up-to-date position.

Mr. Waddington: Representatives of a number of organisations representing immigrants or concerned with immigration and community relations matters have visited Heathrow in recent months and have observed the immigration control in operation. Some have discussed with officials the position of sponsors waiting for passengers and their comments have been carefully noted. Our officials are prepared to make similar arrangements for representatives of other interested organisations.

There are a number of reasons, including the pressures on immigration officers at Heathrow, which contribute to difficulties in providing prompt and adequate information to sponsors. The main difficulty arises where the sponsor knows that a flight on which a particular passenger is expected has landed but his inquiries cannot be answered because the passenger has not yet reached the initial control, is being examined on that control or, having passed through it, is awaiting his or her baggage in the Customs Hall. If it is decided that a passenger has to be questioned at greater length than is possible on the initial control, inquiries can generally be answered promptly, but there are occasions when the large number of passengers requiring further examination causes delay.

Communications at terminal 3 should shortly be improved by the installation of an immigration booth and courtesy telephone giving direct access to the Immigration Office. The situation will be kept under review.

Brixton Prison (Strip Searches)

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many strip searches have taken place in Brixton prison in the last 12 months.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not available.

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department to what extent reasonable suspicion is a pre-condition of the carrying out of strip searches in Brixton prison.

Mr. Mellor: Strip searches as a routine security measure, for example, before and after court appearances, after visits, at the time of cell changes and during wing and cell searches, are not restricted to occasions when an officer has a reasonable suspicion that the particular prisoner has an unauthorised article concealed about his (or her) person. Where an officer has such reasonable suspicion, a special search may be carried out on the authority of the governor, deputy governor or chief officer.

Townley Gardens, Birmingham

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long the houses owned by his Department in Townley gardens, Birmingham, have been empty; when he expects disposal to take place; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The seventeen houses became empty on various dates since June 1981 but mainly in 1983. It was decided in July 1984 to dispose of 13 of the houses; later it was decided to dispose of the other four. Contracts in

respect of all the houses have been exchanged with a prospective purchaser. Purchase of one of them has now been completed and the prospective purchaser is legally committed to completion of purchase of the remaining sixteen by 31 January. Negotiations with two previous prospective purchasers were unsuccessful.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if it is the practice of the community relations branch of the Metropolitan police to maintain lists of the party political affiliations of London borough councillors.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will explain the functions of the Metropolitan police's docklands policing secretariat.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The docklands policing secretariat is a small unit established by the Chief Superintendent in charge of the Metropolitan police "HH" Division. Its purpose is to help him and his officers to liaise effectively with all the agencies involved in the re-development of docklands, and to assist in the assessment of the long term policing needs of the area.

Drug Dealers

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are locally deployed against drug dealers in each of the London boroughs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: As at 1 January 1986, of 91 officers were employed full-time on drugs work in the London boroughs as follows:

Borough	*Officers*
Barking and Dagenham Havering and Newham	8
Brent	2
Camden	8
Chelsea	5
Croydon and Sutton	3
Hammersmith and Fulham	2
Harrow	2
Hounslow and Richmond	2
Kensington	10
Lambeth	9
Lewisham and Bromley	13
Marylebone	6
Paddington	10
Wandsworth	6
Westminster	5
Total	91

In addition all district and divisional crime squad officers may undertake drug investigations as part of their general duties. The central drug squad, which has an establishment of 57 officers, operates throughout the Metropolitan police district against drug traffickers and dealers.

Prevention of Terrorism Act

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been held in custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in Newham, in 1984 and in 1985.

Mr. Mellor: The information requested is not held centrally. The readily available information relates to the Metropolitan police district as a whole and is of those detained under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Acts 1976 and 1984. Sixty-three persons were so detained in 1984 and 34 in the first nine months of 1985. To provide information about individual police districts would involve disproportionate cost.

Metropolitan Police (Skills Training)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of the Metropolitan police training expenditure is spent on police skills training; and if there are any plans to increase this percentage.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Commisioner of Police of the Metropolis tells me that information about the proportion of all Metropolitan police training expenditure which is devoted specifically to police skills training is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Some 22 per cent. of the initial 20-week recruit training course is spent on the study of community relations, race relations, interpersonal skills and the role of the force. There are no plans to increase the proportion of Metropolitan police training devoted to work in this area.

Public Order White Paper

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all organisations which have made submissions on the public order White Paper; and if he will place copies of the submissions in the Library.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Comments on the White Paper were received from the following organisations:

Guild of British Newspaper Editors
Football Trust
Law Society
Commission for Racial Equality
London Borough of Croydon
London Borough of Camden
National Union of Public Employees
Engineering Employers' Federation
Association of County Councils
Legal Action Group
Liverpool 8 Law Centre
Magistrates' Association
City of London Police Committee
Community/Police Consultative Group for Lambeth
London Borough of Southwark
Prosecuting Solicitors' Society of England and Wales
Association of Liberal Lawyers
Council for Country Sports
Justices' Clerks Society
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Working Group of the Faculty of Law, Aberdeen University
Association of Scottish Police Superintendents
Association of Chief Police Officers' (Scotland)
Scottish Police Federation
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Newham
Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE)
Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers
JUSTICE
London Borough of Islington
West Yorks County Council
Police Federation (England and Wales)
National Council for Civil Liberties
Association of District Councils
City of Coventry

Society of Civil and Public Servants
Cardiff City Council
National Association of Probation Officers
Greater Manchester Council
Organisation of Private Tenants
Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Association of British Insurers
Criminal Bar Association
Howard League
Board of Deputies of British Jews
Metropolitan Police
Merseyside County Council
National Farmers' Union
London Borough of Ealing
Association of London Authorities
National and Local Government Officers' Association
Law Society (Local Government Group)
Association of Chief Police Officers
Association of British Chambers of Commerce
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
National Association of Community Relations Councils
Campaign for Homosexual Equality
Trades Union Congress
Police Superintendents' Association (England and Wales)
Society of Conservative Lawyers
Central Electricity Generating Board
Conservative Group for Homosexual Equality
Scottish Council for Civil Liberties
Anti-Apartheid Movement
Greater London Council
Council on Tribunals
Country Landowners' Association

Not all these submissions were made in the expectation that they would be published, and I do not think it would be right for me to place them in the Library.

Hostile Attacks (Monitoring)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 19 December 1985, *Official Report*, column *274*, by what means, in what form and by whom the studies into ways of detecting and monitoring the effects of chemical attack and issuing appropriate public warnings are being conducted.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This work is an analytical review of the requirements for and the availability of detection, warning and monitoring equipment. It is being undertaken by the United Kingdom warning and monitoring organisation and the scientific research and development branch of the Home Office.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners convicted for murder in each year from 1970 to 1977 have since been released from prison; and what was the length of sentence served for each prisoner released.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 11 December 1985, c. *646*]: The readily available information is given in the following table, which also shows the numbers received in each year who were still in custody in December 1985.

Persons received into Prison Department establishments in the years 1970 to 1977 under sentence for murder by year of reception under sentence, type of discharge and time spent under sentence in Prison Department establishments

Number of persons

Year of reception, under sentence and type of discharge	*Number discharged by years under sentence†*																*Population in custody December 1985*
	Up to 1	*Over 1 up to 2*	*Over 2 up to 3*	*Over 3 up to 4*	*Over 4 up to 5*	*Over 5 up to 6*	*Over 6 up to 7*	*Over 7 up to 8*	*Over 8 up to 9*	*Over 9 up to 10*	*Over 10 up to 11*	*Over 11 up to 12*	*Over 12 up to 13*	*Over 13 up to 14*	*Over 14 up to 15*	*Total discharged*	
1970																	
On licence	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	14	16	5	10	13	8	2	1	71	16
Other‡	3	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	9	
1971																	
On licence	—	—	—	—	1	3	4	10	11	9	5	5	6	1	1	55	22
Other‡	4	2	1	—	2	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	14	
1972																	
On licence	—	—	1	—	—	—	5	5	7	9	14	6	—	1	*	48	19
Other‡	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	1	1	1	2	—	1	1	*	10	
1973																	
On licence	—	—	—	—	1	1	4	2	8	13	9	6	2	*	*	46	38
Other‡	—	—	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	*	*	4	
1974																	
On licence	—	—	—	—	2	3	3	11	16	9	5	2	*	*	*	51	60
Other‡	1	—	1	—	1	—	2	1	2	—	1	—	*	*	*	9	
1975																	
On licence	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	3	10	8	2	*	*	*	*	28	66
Other‡	4	1	2	2	1	—	1	1	2	—	—	*	*	*	*	14	
1976																	
On licence	—	—	1	—	—	2	4	7	7	3	*	*	*	*	*	24	77
Other‡	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	*	*	*	*	*	5	
1977																	
On licence	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	7	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	14	93
Other‡	3	—	2	2	—	2	1	2	—	*	*	*	*	*	*	12	

* Not applicable.
† Excluding any time spent either on remand in custody, in non-Prison Department establishments or following any subsequent re-call.
‡ Including successful appeals, deaths and transfers to psychiatric hospitals or to outside England and Wales.
‖ Based on central records which are approximate.

ENVIRONMENT

Watts Report

Mr. Freeman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what response he has had to the Watts report on water metering.

Mr. John Patten: I have invited bodies representing consumer and other interests to comment upon the report by 10 March. About 25 letters have been received to date, expressing a variety of views.

Council House Sales

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the answer of 19 December to the hon. Member for Welwyn Hatfield about local authority housing stock, what steps he is taking to collect information on the claims received and houses sold in Welwyn Hatfield between 3 October 1980 and 30 September 1985.

Sir George Young: Figures of right to buy progress from Welwyn Hatfield district council's September quarter statistical return were not available in time for inclusion in the table to which my hon. Friend refers. The authority has reported a total of 5,428 right to buy claims, of which 5,231 had been admitted and 2,822 sales completed in the period 3 October 1980 to 30 September 1985.

Nature Conservation

Sir Richard Body asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether the Nature Conservancy Council will consult the Anglian water authority about the practicalities of enclosing an area of the marshes of the Wash before agreeing to compensate any owners under the Wildlife and Countryside Act;

(2) whether any negotiations are taking place between the Nature Conservancy Council and any owners of the marshes of the Wash for compensation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is the Nature Conservancy Council's normal practice to consult both the Anglian water authority and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food about all proposals involving land reclamation in the Wash.

The NCC is currently negotiating with two landowners concerning the future management of one area of some 600 acres, and is discussing inter alia the details of compensation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

EC (Council Building)

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the cost and the tendering procedure for the new Council building of the European Economic Community in Brussels.

Sir George Young: No reliable estimates of cost are yet available. Preliminary sketch plans are due to be submitted by the Belgian authorities to the Council of Ministers later this year.

The tendering arrangements provide for site preparation and site infrastructure to be handled by the Belgian authorities at no cost to the European Community. The substructure work will be handled by a general contractor already selected by the Belgian authorities. The superstructure, services and finishes will be the subject of competitive tendering by the Belgian authorities, under normal EC rules.

Private Rented Accommodation

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to monitor the effect of the House of Lords decision in the Street *v* Mountford case on the supply of private rented accommodation.

Sir George Young: We shall take account of this matter when considering the need for future research on the private rented sector as a whole.

Industrial Development (Hampshire)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many areas in Hampshire are available for industrial development, by district, indicating the number of hectares in each case.

Mr. Tracey: I do not have this information about land available for industrial development in Hampshire. The county council, with the agreement of the districts, produces an annual schedule of industrial land supply.

Glory Hole, Portsmouth

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if an application has been received by his Department for a derelict land grant for the Glory Hole, Portsmouth; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young: My Department received an application for derelict land grant from Portsmouth city council on 29 March 1985 for part of the site to be developed for housing and gave a pre-tender approval on 18 September 1985. Following a site investigation for chemical contamination, which identified various potentially hazardous materials including asbestos, my Department has received a request from the council for additional grant to dispose of the contaminated soil to a controlled site. My Department is presently awaiting further information from the council.

Coal Industry

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by site and county all opencast coalmining applications received since 1 January 1984, stating in each case whether authorisation has been granted, refused or is still pending; and if he will list separately for each approved case, and for each refused or as yet unauthorised case, the tonnage per year to be mined and the time period requested or authorised.

Mr. Tracey: Under section 1 of the Opencast Coal Act 1958 the National Coal Board requires an authorisation, issued by the appropriate Secretary of State, in respect of each opencast coal site before work at the site may commence. Since 1 March 1984 the responsibility for issuing authorisations has rested with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

The following table gives the information requested.

Applications for authorisation since 1 January 1984—in chronological order

Site	*County*	*Total tonnage '000 tonnes*	*Status*
1. Kingswood	Staffordshire	227	Authorised
2. Flagstaff	Leicestershire	280	Authorised
3. Dog Lane	Shropshire	200	Pending
4. Amberswood	Lancashire	190	Authorised
5. Kirk	Derbyshire	2,500	Pending
6. Potatopot	Cumbria	2,000	Authorised
7. Chester House	Northumberland	3,000	Authorised
8. Barnabas	Derbyshire	210	Pending
9. Bilston	West Midlands	364	Pending
10. Plenmeller	Northumberland	1,900	Pending
11. High Lane	Staffordshire	2,400	Pending
12. Ryefield	Derbyshire	27	Authorised
13. Moira Pottery	Leicestershire	100	Pending
14. Streets Lane	Staffordshire	2,300	Pending

Note: No information is available about annual extraction rates and the authorisation by the Secretary of State does not relate to a specific time period.

Basildon District Council

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether Basildon district council has appealed against its rate being capped.

Mrs. Rumbold: The council did not seek redetermination of the expenditure level notified to it in July. The council has been asked to indicate by 22 January whether it accepts the proposed rate limit of 52·75p which my right hon. Friend notified to it on 18 December.

Housing

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the waiting list for housing in Liverpool at the latest available date;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the housing waiting list for London boroughs at the latest available date;

(3) if he will publish the waiting lists for housing for Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham and Leeds at the latest available date.

Sir George Young: Information on local authority waiting lists for housing is not collected centrally.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) why he approved an urban development grant for the Spencerbeck estate in Langbaurgh which involves the loss of the second water closet in the three-bedroomed houses;

(2) if he will publish details of the updated returns which he requested by the end of December 1985 from local authorities in respect of additional resources required to operate the Housing Defects Act 1984;

(3) what is the most recent estimate of the cost to local authorities of providing bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families;

(4) if he will list the totals for England of each aspect of housing needs appraisal listed on the numerical statement sent by housing authorities to his Department on form DOE 16314;

(5) how the net provisions for the total housing programme in 1986-87 compare with the expected outturn for 1985-86; and if he will show the difference in *(a)* cost and *(b)* real terms.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each of the designated houses in the Housing Defects Act the progress in obtaining an approval and warranty scheme for repair methods and show how many reinstatement grants have been offered for each type of house.

Mr. John Patten: PRC Homes Ltd has now approved repair systems for Airey, Cornish Unit and Unity houses. These types account for more than half of the PRC houses in private ownership. Details from the company of progress on the approval of repair systems for all designated types are as follows:

House type	*Number notified but not yet submitted*	*Number submitted but not yet approved*	*Number approved*
Airey	5	7	1
Boot	1	—	—
Butterley	—	—	—
Cornish Unit	2	4	2
Dorran	—	—	—
Dyke	—	—	—
Gregory	—	—	—
Hawkesley SGS	—	—	—
Myton	—	—	—
Newland	—	—	—
Orlit	3	1	—
Parkinson	2	—	—
Reema Hollow Panel	—	1	—
Schindler	—	—	—
Stent	1	1	—
Stonecrete	—	—	—
Tarran	1	—	—
Underdown	—	—	—
Unity	3	2	1
Waller	—	—	—
Wates	2	—	—
Wessex	—	—	—
Winget	—	—	—
Woolaway	2	2	—
Totals	22	18	4

Information on the number of reinstatement grants offered for each type is not available. But my Department

will be asking local authorities, at the end of this financial year, to provide information on the number of reinstatement grants given for each type.

Urban Deprivation

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* his assessment of the level of urban deprivation in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle and Leeds; and if he will make a statement on the basis on which the level of urban deprivation was assessed in each case.

Sir George Young: There is no single authoritative measure for the level of deprivation in an urban area. However, my Department's census information note No. 2, copies of which are in the Library of the House, shows how the areas of individual local authorities score on various indicators which were taken into account in deciding their urban programme status.

Water Authorities

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will tabulate in the *Official Report* at 1985 prices the percentage return on national capital required or obtained by each regional water authority in England together with the sum in each case for the financial year 1978-79, the latest year for which figures are available and his estimates for 1985-86, respectively.

Mr. John Patten: Financial targets in the form of a rate of return on net current cost assets were first set for water authorities in respect of 1981-82. The rates of return required of regional water authorities in England for the years 1984-85 and 1985-86 are set out in the following table. When account is taken of the carry forward of any under or over achievement of the target set for the preceding year, all English authorities met their financial targets in 1984-85.

Regional Water Authority	*Required return (per cent.)*	
	1984-85	*1985-86*
North West	0·95	1·43
Northumbrian	1·25	1·48
Severn Trent	1·25	1·47
Yorkshire	1·00	1·43
Anglian	1·36	1·62
Thames	0·50	1·37
Southern	0·91	1·41
Wessex	0·61	1·40
South West	1·26	1·54

London Docklands

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the source and basis of the statement he made on 11 December, *Official Report*, column 944, that 4,700 permanent jobs have been created in the London docklands.

Sir George Young: The figure of 4,700 permanent jobs created in London docklands quoted is derived from two sources: (1) LDDC's record of firms that have moved into the area since July 1981 (3,772 jobs created); and (2) the number of jobs created through IUAA funding (928 jobs created).

Local Authorities (Capital Receipts)

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest forecast of local authority capital receipts for 1985-86; and how this compares with the forecast and assumptions made in December 1984.

Mr. John Patten: The latest forecast of local authority capital receipts against the five service blocks of the DOE/LA1 cash limit for 1985-86 is £2,071 million. This is based on projection of returns from local authorities covering capital expenditure and receipts in the first six months of the year. It compares with an assumption of £2,120 million made in December 1984. These figures both exclude receipts from area health authorities for jointly funded schemes.

Water Supplies

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of homes in England are connected to the public water supply; and how this compares with other member states of the European Community.

Mr. John Patten: The percentage of the population in England whose homes are connected to the public water supply is 99 per cent. Comparable percentages for other member states of the European Community as quoted in the WHO and International Water Supply Association publication "Statistical Survey of Water and Sanitation Services in Europe 1983" are:

	Per cent.
Belgium	98
Denmark	92
France	98
Greece	n/a
Ireland	n/a
Italy	90
Luxembourg	99
Netherlands	100
Portugal	n/a
Spain	82
West Germany	98

n/a=Not available.

Homelessness

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment to what factors he attributes the rise in homeless households housed as secure tenants as a percentage of all new secure tenancies in England as set out in his answer of 18 November 1985, *Official Report*, column *58*.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer this question shortly.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will state his Department's latest available information on the savings or costs arising from abolition of the Greater London council and each of the metropolitan county councils; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will state his Department's latest available information on the likely number of redundancies arising from abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The explanatory and financial memorandum to the Local Government Act 1985 provided estimates for these matters. My right hon. Friend has consistently made it clear that the outcome will depend on the decisions made by successor bodies.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the number of bodies, existing or proposed, due to inherit services currently administered by the Greater London council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The destination of GLC functions and responsibilities was set out in my Department's guidance note of 16 July 1985, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what cost will be involved in his Department's distribution of the leaflet describing the new structures for London and metropolitan local government; when it will be issued; and how many copies will be produced.

Mr. Tracey: The Government will be arranging for leaflets describing the new structure of local government in Greater London and the metropolitan areas, to be sent to households and business premises in March, as was done in 1974. It is not yet possible to say what the cost will be.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, in view of the decision taken by the London Co-ordinating Committee about the disability resource team, if he will make a statement on the future of the team after abolition of the Greater London council.

Mr. Tracey: This is primarily a matter for boroughs, but I understand that a decision has been taken to set up a London-wide disability unit after abolition of the GLC.

Rates

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has responded to the request from the London Co-ordinating Committee that the 2p rate allowable under section 137 to London boroughs be doubled to 4p following abolition of the Greater London council; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My Department replied to the London Co-ordinating Committee on 10 December 1985.

GLC Research Library

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what plans exist to safeguard the Greater London council research library's ACOMPLINE databases;

(2) if he will make a statement on the future of the Greater London council research library.

Mr. Tracey: These are matters for the boroughs, together with the London Residuary Body which will be taking on the GLC's central computing services.

Local Authorities (Staff)

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing the total numbers of staff employed (full-time, part-time, and full-time equivalent) by *(a)* all local authorities in England, and *(b)* by local authorities by their party of control since 1979 to date.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall answer this question shortly.

Grants

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why he has not yet given his consent to a grant to Tower Hamlets for anti-racist activity for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985.

Mr. Tracey: Additional information on this application was received from the GLC on 24 December. A decision will be reached as soon as possible.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant for Lambeth homelessness initiatives for 16 to 18-year-olds, for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985;

(2) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant to Lambeth Vietnamese project for which the Greater London council applied on 27 Septmeber 1985;

(3) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant to Tower Hamlets, George Green centre, for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985;

(4) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant to Tower Hamlets, Langdon Park, for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985;

(5) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant to the Tower Hamlets and Wapping sports centre for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985;

(6) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant to Tower Hamlets for homeless families for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985;

(7) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant for a neighbourhood gypsy worker in Hammersmith and Fulham for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985;

(8) why he has not yet given his consent to a grant to the Tower Hamlets museum service for a mobile museum for which the Greater London council applied on 27 September 1985.

Mr. Tracey: Consent under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1985 was given in all these cases on 18 December 1985. I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) on 18 December 1985, at column *219*, which announced this decision.

GLC Welfare Benefits Project

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why he has not yet given his consent to a contract for publicity information and translated materials for the Greater London council welfare benefits project, for which the Greater London council applied on 28 August 1985.

Mr. Tracey: This application is receiving very careful consideration in the light of the significant expenditure involved.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment with reference to housing land transfers of London Docklands Development Corporation-owned land, what are the names of the schemes and the developers and the total numbers of transfers so far undertaken in each scheme.

Sir George Young [*pursuant to his answer*, 15 November 1985, c. *312*]: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Site Name	*Units Sold before 30 September 1985*
London borough of Newham	
Mariners Reach (Wimpey)	158
Parkside (Barratt)	184
Riverside Park (Comben)	114
Birch Trees (Broseley)	148
The Parks (Barratt)	212
Meadow Vale (Wimpey)	162
Linton Gardens (Comben)	194
Tollgate Park (Broseley)	167
Oakleigh Park (Barratt)	59
Alestan Beck (Countryside)	158
Beddalls Reach (Hey and Croft)	40
Tollgate Square (Golding)	15
The beacons (Bennett)	14
The Rodings (Jerram)	12
Tollgate C1 (Abbey National *HA*	17
Tollgate D2 (EAst London *HA*	31
Newham total	1,685
London borough of Southwark	
Acorn Yard (Poger Malcolm)	61
Lavender Green (WPHT *HA*)	111
Reveley Lock (Countryside)	116
Nelsons Reach(Broseley)	118
Lady Dock (Lovell Farrow)	136
Lavender Quay (Wimpey)	51
Ronald Buckingham Court (RBL *HA*)	28
Elephant Lane (Regan)	76
Brunswick Quay (Daniel Homes)	9
Gullivers Place (Costain)	54
Southwark total	760
London borough of Tower Hamlets	
South Quay (Broseley)	182
Waterman Quay (Central Ideal Homes)	17
Quayside (Barratt)	73
Riverside Mansions (Regalian)	160
Friars Mead (Combex Central Ideal)	74
London Yard (LY Development Co)	10
Caledonian Wharf (Bates)	100
Tower Hamlets total	616
LDDC total	3,061

1. Housing Association Schemes represent trafisfers of land for the provision of the stated number of units.
2. Total includes reserved plots on sites which are still under construction.

Docklands Light Railway

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the environment what existing developments will be displaced in relation to the construction of the Docklands light railway, and with what employment consquences.

Sir George Young [*pursuant to his answer*, 19 November 1985, c. *148*]: the construction of the Docklands light railway has resulted in the displacement of a number of firms, as set out in the following table. No further displacement of business is envisaged.

	Number of firms	*Jobs lost*
Businesses relocated	31	0
Businesses closed for a temporary period only	5	0
Businesses that may have to close due to access problems	2	6
Businesses voluntarily closed down	4	9
Businesses extinguished	8	13

Some 440 people are currently employed on the construction of the railway which, when complete, will provide local firms with rapid and reliable communications both within docklands and with the rest of London.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, with reference to appendix 1 of the London docklands Development Corporation's five-year operational plan published in January, whether the projections shown were made within the constraints imposed by the Government's external financing limit; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young [*pursuant to his answer*, 6 December 1985, c. *375*]: London Docklands Development Corporation's corporate plan (which includes the operational plan) is in part a bid for resources for future years. The external financing limit, which is notified to the corporation following the previous year's public expenditure survey, applies only to the current year. The corporate plan submission takes account of resource levels set in the public expenditure survey for future years as well as bidding for more. The programme at appendix 1 of the LDDC's five-year operational plan, to which the hon. Member refers, illustrates the levels of activity which would occur if the bid was met in full.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Namibia

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what is his policy towards moves by the internal Namibian political parties of the multi-party conference to represent the views of Namibians in the United Nations General Assembly on the same basis as the South West Africa People's Organisation; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on South West Africa People's Organisation representatives being allowed to address the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. Renton: We have always been prepared to support requests from the representatives of political parties in Namibia to have their views heard in United Nations fora. However, we consider that only free and fair elections, as provided for in the United Nations plan, will determine who has the right to represent the views of the Namibian people in the United Nations General Assembly, as elsewhere.

British Citizens Abroad (Detention)

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of British citizens now held in custody pending trial in countries which are members of the Council of Europe at the latest available date; what is the longest time for which any individual has been so held; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The longest time any individual currently in detention pending trial has been so held is 16 months: the charge is murder and neither the individual nor his legal representative is pressing for a trial date to be finalised. All cases of detention of which we are notified are monitored by our posts overseas. In accordance with generally accepted international practice, we cannot intervene in the due process of law in another sovereign country any more than we would accept intervention in our own judicial process. The latest available figures are as follows:

British Citizens in detention and awaiting trial in Council of Europe countries

	Number
France	45
Federal Republic of Germany	78
Netherlands	13
Belgium	15
Luxembourg	0
Denmark	11
Greece	45
Italy	7
Spain	94
Portugal	6
Malta	3
Cyprus	3
Norway	12
Sweden	14
Switzerland	19
Turkey	0
Austria	5
Iceland	0
Ireland	Not known
Liechtenstein	0
Total	370

Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government on providing regular advice on defence matters to the Governments of (i) Honduras, (ii) Guatemala and (iii) El Salvador through the defence attaché based at Her Majesty's embassy in Mexico.

Mr. Renton: It is not our policy to provided advice on defence matters to the Governments of Honduras, Guatemala or El Salvador. The role of the defence attaché based in Mexico City, who is also accredited to Honduras and El Salvador, is to advise Her Majesty's ambassador on defence related matters.

We have no diplomatic relations with Guatemala.

Chile

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have made any representations to the special United Nations rapporteur on human rights in Chile.

Mr. Renton: We have not made any direct representations to the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in Chile. However, as a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights we supported in March 1985 a resolution which extended his mandate and requested him to report again on the human rights situation in Chile.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many formal meetings have been held since November 1984 between Her Majesty's embassy in Santiago and representatives of the Government of Chile; and how many of these have been concerning human rights.

Mr. Renton: We make regular and frequent representations on human rights and other issues to the Government of Chile both in Santiago and London.

Pedro Fernandez Lembach

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the latest information that Her Majesty's Government have concerning the imprisonment of Pedro Fernandez Lembach.

Mr. Renton: There has been no change in the policy of the Chilean Government concerning the imprisonment of Pedro Fernandez Lembach.

EC (Defence)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement of the policy of Her Majesty's Government regarding the extent to which the treaty of Rome permits the EEC to participate in defence issues.

Mr. Renton: Defence issues as such do not fall within the scope of the treaty of Rome. Political and economic aspects of European security are discussed among the EC member states in the political co-operation framework. Such discussions are also covered in the treaty on European co-operation in the sphere of foreign policy, which was agreed in principle at the Luxembourg European Council (2-3 December 1985). But European defence co-operation is handled in other fora, including NATO, Eurogroup, Western European Union, the Independent European Programme Group, as well as directly between national Governments.

Westland Helicopters

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether he has been informed by the Italian Government that they are opposed to any collaboration between European and United States firms on defence projects and in particular between Westland and Sikorski-Fiat;

(2) whether he has been informed by the Government of the French Republic that they are opposed to collaboration between European and United States firms on defence projects and, in particular, to any collaboration between Westland and Sikorski-Fiat;

(3) whether he has been informed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany that they re opposed to collaboration between Westland and Sikorski-Fiat and to the purchase by European Governments of helicopters for defence which incorporate United States technology or United States components.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister earlier today.

TRANSPORT

Channel Fixed Link

6. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the effect on the size of the United Kingdom merchant fleet of building the Channel fixed link.

Mr. Ridley: This matter will be dealt with in the White Paper on the Channel fixed link which the government intend to issue as soon as possible after the decision.

19. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the latest position in relation to a decision on the Channel fixed link.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister plans to meet the French President on 20 January to take a decision on which scheme, if any, should go ahead.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) in his forthcoming White Paper on a Channel fixed link, what conditions he expects to seek to impose on any chosen operator in respect of differential tariff structures between through rail, ferry rail, and road traffic, respectively;

(2) if, in his forthcoming White Paper on all aspects of the Channel fixed link, he will indicate for each scheme a comparison with the general level of current charges on ferries for each main category of traffic on current and projected volumes of traffic, respectively;

(3) if, in his forthcoming White Paper on the Channel fixed link, he will indicate for each option the range of expected reduction in transport costs for road freight travelling by the proposed Channel fixed links between Birmingham and Frankfurt;

(4) if, in his forthcoming White Paper on the Channel fixed link, he will estimate for each option the range of expected saving in time occasioned by the construction of a Channel fixed link, over use of Hovercraft, for travellers by road from London to Paris;

(5) if, in his forthcoming White Paper on the Channel fixed link, he will indicate the approximate expected reduction, in per cent. of the cost of rail passenger travel between London and Brussels occasioned by each applicable option.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend will bear these suggestions in mind for the content of the White Paper that the Government will issue if it is decided to proceed with a fixed link.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received about the Channel fixed link.

Mr. David Mitchell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) earlier today.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in his forthcoming White Paper on all aspects of a Channel fixed link, he will list the principal causes of delay and hazard in the existing road traffic tunnels in the world and the Blackwall tunnel and summarise in that paper the plans for their avoidance in any proposed road tunnel.

Mr. David Mitchell: The safe and efficient flow of traffic through a fixed link is of considerable concern to the Government and, if the project goes ahead, the Government will ensure that the concession agreement with the successful promoter imposes appropriate obligations upon the promoter in this regard, and enables the Government to approve and monitor the promoter's arrangements.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if, in his White Paper on the Channel fixed link, he will indicate the expected ratio of cost to freight forwarders, arising through rail facilities, of the rail cost per mile of all costs arising from the link, to the cost per mile by rail in the United Kingdom;

(2) if, in his White Paper on the Channel fixed link, he will examine the merits and demerits of a common tariff for through rail freight from the continental ports to any one of six or more centres in Scotland, the north-west, the north-east, south Wales, the midlands and the south-west, respectively.

Mr. David Mitchell: No.

Disabled People (Taxi-card Scheme)

16. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has had about the future of the taxi-card scheme for disabled people.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend has received letters from hon. Members, interested organisations, and members of the public urging that the scheme be continued. I understand that an agreement has now been reached on the funding for 1986-87 through the London Co-ordinating Committee of Boroughs.

Rear Seat Belts

17. **Mr. Hubbard-Miles** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what response he has had to his consultation paper on the compulsory fitting of rear seat belts; and what conclusions he has reached.

Mr. David Mitchell: The response was generally favourable and my right hon. Friend has made the regulations. They will make rear seat belts or child restraints a legal requirement for all new cars manufactured from 1 October 1986.

Coaches (Speed Governors)

18. **Mr. Jackson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what action he intends to take to ensure that foreign coaches travelling in the United Kingdom are fitted with speed governors of the sort intended to be mandatory for British coaches; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: We agree that it is essential that foreign coaches observe our speed limits. But coaches and other vehicles in international traffic are not subject to the detailed construction standards of the countries they visit provided they meet the more basic standards set out in the international traffic conventions. We shall look into what reciprocal arrangements for speed governors could be agreed with other European countries.

New Roads

20. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of new motorway and trunk roads have been built since 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Since April 1979, 218 miles of new motorway and 320 miles of new and improved trunk road have been constructed. During this period also 13 miles of existing motorway have been widened with additional lanes.

British Rail Inter-City Services

21. **Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average speed of British Rail inter-city services; and what was the figure in 1979.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is a matter for BR.

Air Transport (Competition)

22. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with foreign Governments to open more opportunities for international competition in air transport.

Mr. Michael Spicer: We have agreed more competitive arrangements for air services with five European Governments in the last 18 months. Discussions are under way with the Scandinavians, Finns and Spanish and will shortly start with the Republic of Ireland. We continue to press hard for a liberal EC air transport policy, most recently at an informal Council of Transport Ministers on 9 January.

Bourne End and Hemel Hempstead Bypass

23. **Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the reasons for delay in publishing the side road orders for the A41 Bourne End and Hemel Hempstead bypass.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The detailed provisions of the orders cannot be finalised until after the review of traffic predictions for the scheme. This is taking longer than we had hoped, but should be completed early this year.

M1 (Lighting)

24. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to be able to announce the full lighting of the M1 motorway in Leicestershire; and if he will estimate the total cost.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have no proposals to provide additional motorway lighting on the M1 in Leicestershire. I estimate the total cost of completing lighting through Leicestershire to be about £3·25 million.

National Freight Company

25. **Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department has monitored the value of shares in the National Freight Company since that company was sold to its managers and employees in 1982.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The National Freight Company is an unquoted public limited company with share value established by independent valuers, I understand that since its sale to the management and employees, the value of shareholdings has increased substantially, reflecting improved performance and prospects.

Disabled People (London Boroughs)

26. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with progess being made by the London boroughs to safeguard concessionary fare schemes and transport for people with disabilities.

Mr. Ridley: Yes.

Dial-a-ride Service (London)

27. **Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about the future funding by Government for the dial-a-ride service covering the Greater London council area since 11 November.

Mr. Ridley: I have received a letter from the GLC-funded Federation of London Dial-a-Rides welcoming the Government's decision to take powers for LRT to fund Dial-a-Ride as an important advance in securing transport for people with disabilities.

Airports (Privatisation)

28. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether airlines will be allowed to purchase shares in airports under proposed legislation to privatise airports in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am not contemplating any prohibition on airlines purchasing shares in airports in the legislation I will be introducing shortly.

A1-M1 Link

29. **Mr. William Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he now expects to receive the report of the inspector who conducted the inquiry into the A1-M1 link road.

Mr. Ridley: I understand that the inspector does not expect to complete his report on these long and complex inquiries before June or July of this year.

Driving Test (Dyslexia)

30. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many dyslexic people have passed the standard driving test in the past year.

Mr. Ridley: I regret that this information is not available.

Cross-Channel Traffic

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will tabulate the approximate number of railway wagons, heavy commercial vehicles, containers, road passenger coaches, light motor vehicles and passengers, respectively, arriving at, or departing for, the continent from or to each port on the east and south coasts of the United Kingdom between Hull and Plymouth in the current year.

Mr. David Mitchell: The information given is based on commercial data supplied to the Department by port authorities and operators. Entries in the table marked with an asterisk denote cases where information is omitted to protect confidentiality.

1984 Port Traffic with Mainland Europe (thousands)

Port	Railway Wagons	Roads Goods Vehicles	Containers	Coaches	Cars etc.	Passengers
Hull	—	45	107	*	85	
Goole	—	—	*	—	—	
Grimsby/Immingham	—	120	62	—	—	
Boston	—	—	*	—	—	
Kings Lynn	—	—	*	—	—	456
Great Yarmouth	—	69	—	—	—	
Lowestoft	—	—	*	—	—	
Felixstowe	—	159	154	*	105	
Ipswich	—	61	100	—	—	683
Harwich	21	131	93	*	213	1,924
London	—	3	172	—	—	
Medway	—	58	*	*	93	
Ramsgate	—	62	—	*	83	3,020
Folkestone	—	46	—	*	79	
Dover	43	672	13	121	1,278	13,861
Newhaven	—	48	—	*	72	
Shoreham	—	*	*	—	—	
Portsmouth	—	†63	*	*	†282	
Southampton	—	36	*	*	54	3,121
Poole	—	63	—	—	—	
Portland/Weymouth	—	—	—	—	*	
Plymouth	—	*	—	—	*	
Total	64	*	757	156	*	23,065

* Denote cases where information is omitted to protect confidentiality.
† Includes Channel Islands traffic.

Blackwall Tunnel

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will schedule the principal delays, over half an hour, to traffic flows through the Blackwall tunnel in 1985 and give the dates, direction, length of delay and cause in each case.

Mr. Ridley: I do not collect this information. The Blackwall tunnel is a GLC responsibility.

Fishing Vessels (Safety)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Transport what action he proposes to take regarding the recommendations contained in the report of the loss of MFV Mhari L in relation to the Coastguard to be alerted rapidly when contact is lost with fishing vessels, fishing vessels being fitted with hydrostatic life rafts and the action recommended when fishing gear fouls underwater cables.

Mr. Ridley: I shall answer this question shortly.

Lighthouses

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what is the annual cost to the taxpayer of the administration of lighthouses under the control of the Northern Lighthouse Board; how much of this relates to lighthouses in the Isle of Man; and what contribution is made by the Isle of Man Government towards the cost;

(2) how much was spent on the improvement carried out on the lighthouse keepers' houses on Davaar island; what has been recovered of this cost by subsequent sale or letting of the houses; and what charges have been made on public funds to cover the costs involved.

Mr. Ridley: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Manchester International Airport

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe of 19 December, *Official Report*, column 297, if he will itemise the representations he has received about the future ownership and control of Manchester international airport, indicating in each case the source of the representation and whether it expressed a view for or against the proposals of Manchester city council for an airport company.

Mr. Ridley: It is not the practice to publish the source or nature of individual representations from the public. But apart from correspondence with the town clerk of Manchester city council written representations have been received from a total of 15 parties—hon. Members, local councillors, members of the public and institutions. All save two expressed outright opposition to the city council's proposals.

Talgarth Road Traffic Scheme

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to abandon the present Talgarth road traffic scheme after abolition of the Greater London council on 31 March.

Mr. Ridley: As and when this stretch of road becomes my responsibility, I shall keep under review how it is operating as with all other parts of the trunk road network.

Blackwall and Rotherhithe Tunnels

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made with the London boroughs of Newham, Greenwich, Tower Hamlets and Southwark on the maintenance of the Blackwall and Rotherhithe tunnels and the foot tunnels.

Mr. Ridley: We are discussing maintenance arrangements for the Blackwall tunnel which will become my

Department's responsibility. I understand that the boroughs are currently considering how best to discharge their future responsibility for maintaining the others.

Road Accidents (Statistics)

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many road accidents involving a motor car and resulting in *(a)* death or *(b)* serious injury to (i) motor car drivers, (ii) motor car front seat passengers, (iii) motor car rear seat passengers, (iv) motor cyclists, (v) pedal cyclists and (vi) pedestrians there have been in each of the past five years.

Mr. David Mitchell: The information is as follows:

Accidents, involving a motor car, resulting in death and serious injuries

Type of road user injured	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Car drivers	17,954	14,261	15,158
Car front seat passengers	9,023	6,427	6,798
Car rear seat passengers	3,594	3,543	3,913
Motor cyclists	12,965	12,040	12,076
Pedal cyclists	3,829	4,340	4,495
Pedestrians	13,811	14,085	14,890

Data for further years and a breakdown between deaths and serious injuries could be supplied only at disproportionate cost. Since more than one person can be injured in a single accident, some accidents are represented in more than one row of the table.

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many motor car drivers involved in car accidents resulting in death or serious injury have been over the legal alcohol limit in each of the past five years; and what proportion of the total number of drivers involved in such road accidents this has represented in each year.

Mr. David Mitchell: The information is as follows:

Car drivers involved in fatal or serious accidents: Great Britain

	(a) Positively breath tested or failed/ refused to provide breath specimen	*(b) Expressed as a percentage of all car drivers involved in fatal or serious accidents*
1980	3,806	5·5
1981	3,547	5·1
1982	3,806	5·3
1983	3,294	5·1
1984	3,371	5·0

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the reduction in the numbers of motorists and passengers killed and seriously injured attributable to the introduction of automatic and evidential breath-testing devices in 1983.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department has not yet concluded an evaluation of the full effects of the introduction of evidential breath testing on 6 May 1983. Other factors will have affected the number of casualties in that year and subsequently, notably compulsory seat belt wearing, the learner motor cyclist regulations and the number of police patrols.

SCOTLAND

Islands (Development Support)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has now considered the recent proposals of the European Commission for support for agriculture and rural development in some Scottish islands; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The European Commission's proposals for a programme of special measures for the Scottish islands and two other proposals were published on 14 December 1985. They require very careful examination and evaluation both in terms of the probable levels of benefit to the areas concerned and the likely cost. These assessments are under way. Consideration of these proposals by the Council of Ministers has yet to commence.

Housing

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what were the housing waiting lists for Glasgow and Edinburgh at the latest available date.

Mr. Ancram: The information available centrally is neither complete nor compiled on a uniform basis. I must therefore refer the hon. Member directly to the local authorities in which he is interested.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the level of unemployment in the construction industry in *(a)* the Glasgow travel-to-work area and *(b)* the Strathclyde region at the latest available date.

Mr. Allan Stewart: The information is not available.

Private Contractors (Approved List)

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if it is his policy to accept a declaration of global interests as meeting the requirements of the National Health Service (Health Boards: Membership, Procedure and Payment of Subscriptions) (Scotland) Regulations 1975 for health board chairmen and health board members when discussing and approving companies for inclusion on the approved list of contractors to tender for hospital services.

Mr. John MacKay: The 1975 regulations require chairmen and members of health boards to declare their interest in individual contracts being considered by the boards and to take no part in the discussions on the matter. This requirement is reflected in health boards' standing orders.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is satisfied that the chairman of Tayside health board met the requirements of the National Health Service (Health Boards: Membership, Procedure and Payment of Subscriptions) (Scotland) Regulations 1975 when Tayside health board discussed and agreed the list of approved contractors for domestic services.

Mr. John MacKay: Yes.

Civil Defence

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 19 December 1985, *Official Report*, column 292, what grants were made under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations in each of the years 1978-79 to 1984-85 inclusive to each individual *(a)* joint police committee, *(b)* joint fire board, *(c)* regional council and *(d)* district council.

Mr. John MacKay: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible with the required information, and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Agriculture and Horticulture (Grants)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a table showing for each year since 1967-68, together with as many future years for which estimates currently exist, the amount of money expended or to be expended by the Central Council for Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operation, and since 1983-84, the co-operative development division of Food From Britain on *(a)* grants to co-operatives and *(b)* administrative expenses.

Mr. Gummer: The co-operative development division of Food From Britain, formerly the Central Council for Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operation, makes recommendations to Agriculture Ministers on a number of grant schemes. Government expenditure (in cash terms) on schemes and on the co-operative division's administrative expenses have been as follows:

Year	*Agriculture and Horticulture Co-operative Scheme*	*EC Regulation 1035/72 Launching Aids to Producer Groups in Fruit and Vegetable Sectors*	*Grants to Forage Groups in LFA's EC Directive 75/268*	*Administrative Expenses*
	£'000	*£'000*	*£'000*	*£'000*
1967-68	*367	—	—	28
1968-69	*457	—	—	94
1969-70	*810	—	—	124
1970-71	*935	—	—	155
1971-72	*783	—	—	193
1972-73	*747	—	—	214
1973-74	*890	—	—	229
1974-75	908	19	—	394
1975-76	1,098	37	—	399
1976-77	764	52	26	430
1977-78	813	64	50	464
1978-79	1,052	12	44	524
1979-80	1,152	16	49	640
1980-81	1,431	19	49	1,102
1981-82	2,082	36	20	1,226
1982-83	2,357	198	254	1,276
1983-84	3,789	601	42	1,344
1984-85	4,526	884	39	1,303
1985-86 (estimated)	4,481	1,200	218	1,377

Source: Appropriation Accounts FFB Annual Report.
* Great Britain only.

Surplus Butter

Mr. Mudd asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what is the percentage change in the amount of surplus butter that has been held by intervention boards within the EEC for the years 1983, 1984 and 1985, respectively; and what the estimated percentage change is for 1986;

(2) how much surplus butter was held by intervention boards within the EEC in 1983 and 1984, respectively;

(3) what the estimate is for the amount of surplus butter that will be held by intervention boards within the EEC for 1986.

Mr. Gummer: Stocks of butter held in intervention stores in the European Community vary during the course of the year. The stock figures given below are average end-of-month quantities. For 1985, the figure is the average end-of-month stock level up to the latest month (October) for which figures are available. There is no Community estimate for likely stock levels in 1986.

	Average end of month stock of intervention butter held in EC stores	*Percentage change over previous year per cent.*
1983	634,604	+182
1984	1,062,307	+67
1985	1,047,818	−1

Fenvalerate

Sir Richard Body asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether fenvalerate as sold and distributed by H.L. Chemicals, has been approved under the pesticides safety precaution scheme.

Mrs. Fenner: Fenvalerate is a synthetic pyrethroid. One formulation containing fenvalerate, known as sumicidin, has provisional commercial clearance under the pesticides safety precautions scheme for a number of uses.

I have no evidence that the firm in question is selling or distributing fenvalerate formulations other than that listed above. If such evidence exists, it should be passed to the Health and Safety Executive so that they can ensure the relevant provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 are being observed.

The new regulations which we propose to make under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, will make it an offence to sell, supply, store, use or advertise an unapproved pesticide.

Live Animals (Exports)

Sir Richard Body asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is satisfied that no live horses or ponies are being exported for slaughter.

Mrs. Fenner: My Department has powers to control the exports of horses under legislation consolidated under the Animal Health Act 1981. Among other things, these controls require exporters to make declarations as to the purpose for which horses and ponies are being exported and impose a system of minimum values at levels which would make export for slaughter uneconomic.

We have seen no evidence that would suggest that there is currently a trade in live equines for slaughter.

Antibiotics (Swann Report)

Sir Richard Body asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will list the recommendations made in the Swann report on the use of antibiotics which have not been acted upon.

Mrs. Fenner: The report of the joint committee on the use of antibiotics in animal husbandry and veterinary medicine (the Swann committee) was published in November 1969. The committee made a number of recommendations, relating both to general principles and to matters of detail, which were designed to avoid hazards to human and animal health which might result from the administration of antibiotics to farm livestock.

The Government's policy on the use of antibiotics in animal husbandry and veterinary medicine continues to be based on the Swann committee's principal recommendation that antibiotics available for administration to livestock should be classified as either "feed" or "therapeutic" and that only the former should be available without prescription for use in feedingstuffs. "Feed" antibiotics have little or no application as therapeutic agents in man or animals and will not impair the efficacy of prescribed therapeutic drugs through the development of resistant strains of organisms. The committee made a number of detailed recommendations relating to the control of feed antibiotics and to specific antibiotic substances consequent upon the principal recommendation; these recommendations too have been implemented with only very limited exceptions. Of the Swann Committee's remaining recommendations, which covered a wide variety of topics related to the use of antibiotics in farming, the majority have been implemented. In particular, the Ministry's central veterinary laboratories, together with the veterinary investigation centres, monitors the development of antibiotic resistance. An epidemiology department has been set up at the central veterinary laboratory since the committee reported. However, resource constraints have had a bearing on the extent to which the committee's recommendations on research and investigation have been followed up by universities and other organisations.

The committee's recommendation that the advertisement and promotion of therapeutic antibiotics to laymen should be prohibited has no been acted upon.

A joint sub-committee on antimicrobial substances was established in 1973 and reported jointly to the Committee on Safety of Medicines and the Veterinary Products Committee, the statutory committees of independent experts who advise the Health and Agriculture Ministers on matters relating to the safety, quality and efficacy of licensed medicinal products. However, the sub-committee was disbanded at the end of 1980 in the light of resource constraints. The Veterinary Products Committee continues to bear in mind the problem of resistance when considering applications for product licences for antibiotic medicines and feed additives. Licences are not granted if the Committee considers that there is a risk of resistant strains developing which might pose a hazard to human health.

Food Additives and Colourings

Sir Bernard Braine asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to ensure full publicity of the controls his Department operate to prevent harm to health from food additives and colourings; what research is being currently undertaken into the possible ill-effects of such substances; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Fenner: The safety of food is protected by provisions in the Food Act 1984, the Food Act (Scotland) 1956 or the Food Act (Northern Ireland) 1958 and by regulations made under those Acts. No additive to food is specifically permitted by regulation until the results of thorough research have been carefully assessed by independent committees of experts and a proposal to permit an additive by law has been the subject of consultation with all interested parties which includes representatives of manufacturers, traders and consumers. I am conscious that these procedures, and particularly the work of the expert committees, may not be fully understood by members of the public and I am therefore considering what steps might be taken to ensure greater publicity for this work and the careful way in which it is done.

These approvals of additives are of necessity based on the needs and safety of the general public at large. I am aware that a small number of consumers may react to some additives, as others react to some foods or food ingredients. My Department is currently funding research into such reactions and I hope that some results will be available next year. This is part of a wider programme of research into food additives carried out by my Department.

Crayfish Plague Fungus

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the spread of crayfish plague fungus in British rivers since 1981.

Mr. Gummer: Since 1981, outbreaks of crayfish plague have been confirmed in the following river systems:

Bristol Avon
River Lee (Hertfordshire)
River Wey (Hampshire and Surrey)
Hampshire Avon

Intervention Storage (Butter)

Mr. Hicks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what is the overall cost of storing the surplus butter currently held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community; and what the figure is for storing the surplus butter held within the United Kingdom;

(2) what was the overall cost of storing the surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic community for 1983 and 1984, respectively;

(3) what is the estimate for the overall cost of storing the surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community for 1986;

(4) what is the percentage change in the overall cost of storing the surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community for the years 1983, 1984 and 1985, respectively; and what is the estimated percentage change for 1986;

(5) what is the overall cost of storing the surplus butter currently held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community; what was the overall cost for 1983 and 1984, respectively; what is the estimated cost for 1986; and what is the percentage change for each year from 1983 to 1986, respectively;

(6) what is the overall cost of storing one tonne of surplus butter held by intervention boards within the European Economic Community for one year.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *351*]: The current cost to the Community of storing 1 tonne of butter in public intervention for one year is approximately 403 ecu (£230). There may be additional costs which fall to be met by the member state in which the butter is stored.

Community expenditure on the technical and financing costs of public intervention storage of butter for the years 1983 to 1986, and the percentage changes between these years, are as follows:

	mecu	*Percentage change*
1983	176	
1984	368	+109
1985 (Budget and transfers)	394	+7
1986 (Draft budget)	299	−24

NOTE: These figures include the handling charges for butter bought and sold during the year.

Details of expenditure by the intervention board for agricultural produce on public intervention storage of butter in the United Kingdom in 1985-86 are given in the Winter Supplementary Estimates (HC9 1985-86) for Class III Vote 1. The Community expenditure figure given above for 1984 includes 66 mecu (£38 million) for storage in the United Kingdom.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Harris asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Fisheries Ministers' meeting in Brussels on 16 and 17 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to the reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *282*]: The Council of Fisheries Ministers resumed discussion on 20 December to consider the further decisions necessary on total allowable catches and quotas for 1986 as a consequence of the accession of Spain and Portugal. I represented the United Kingdom.

After lengthy discussions involving Spain, Portugal and France, mainly on the arrangements to apply in the waters of Spain and Portugal, the Council was able to reach agreement on the allocations to Spain and Portugal of stocks already subject to TAC, the introduction of TACs and quotas for the enlarged Community for pollack and Norway lobster in Western waters as well as for a number of other species in Spanish and Portuguese waters, and certain additional controls on vessels of other member states fishing in Spanish and Portuguese waters as well as on Portuguese vessels fishing for limited quantities of horse mackerel and blue whiting in the waters of the existing Member States. The quotas allocated to the United Kingdom for pollack and Norway lobster in ICES areas Vb, VI and VII for 1986 were very satisfactory and reflected existing patterns of fishing. I am glad to report that Ireland lifted its waiting reserve on the package of TACs and quotas agreed at the previous meeting on 16 and 17 December which will now enter into force on an interim basis to 25 January only, pending the debate in the House on 16 January.

The Council accordingly completed the work done at the previous meeting and ensured that for the second year in succession the full range of TACs and quotas has been agreed before the end of the previous year and that the arrangements for Spanish and Portuguese accession in the fisheries sector have been completed on a basis which fully preserves the principles of the common fisheries policy as well as the opportunities of United Kingdom fishermen.

EMPLOYMENT

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General (1) what representations he has received about the need for a national agreement on inter-authority payments for youth training scheme trainees;

(2) what representations he has received about the problems caused by the anomalies in the youth training scheme mode A extra district permit grants; and what steps he is taking to resolve them.

Mr. Trippier: A number of representations have been received about the question of inter-authority payments for young people on the youth training scheme and the related issue of extra district fees. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science hopes to introduce a Bill later this Session providing, inter alia, for an amendment to the existing law on inter-authority recoupment in respect of non-advanced further education. I understand that he is discussing with the local authority associations whether youth training scheme provision should be included within the scope of the Bill; and that the associations are themselves giving consideration to providing national advice for local education authorities on this matter.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received about the problems for youth training scheme trainees who are forced to travel to study certain specialist fields.

Mr. Trippier: I am not aware of any specific representations that have been made to Department of Employment Ministers on this matter. There is no evidence to suggest that the arrangements for the youth training scheme make it difficult for those trainees who have to attend colleges or work placements at a distance from their homes. The scheme aims to provide, wherever possible, suitable local opportunities for all eligible young people. I am satisfied that where these are not available the provision for the payment of travel and lodging costs is adequate.

Mr. Sheerman asked the Paymaster General what steps are being taken to ease the current problems of youth training scheme trainees studying outside their own regions.

Mr. Trippier: I am not aware of any significant problems affecting trainees who spend all or part of their training period outside their own region. The provision for payment of travel and lodging costs in such cases is kept under regular review.

Wages Inspectorate

Mr. McNamara asked the Paymaster General what was, for the years 1970, 1974, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982 and 1983 in respect of Humberside *(a)* the total number of establishments on the wages inspectorate register and the total number of workers covered by the register; *(b)* the number of establishments covered by each wages council and *(c)* the number of workers covered by each wages council.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The numbers of workers covered by wages councils are available only for Great Britain as a whole. Numbers of establishments covered by wages councils are not collected for areas smaller than wages inspectorate divisions. For the Yorkshire and Humberside division the figures requested are as follows:

Establishments on the wages inspectorate's register

	1970	*1974*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*
Current Wages Councils								
Aerated waters	109	82	62	62	60	61	55	54
Clothing manufacture	1,339	1,174	1,174	934	778	784	718	713
Boot and shoe repairing	349	282	240	230	228	226	204	196
Button manufacturing	10	11	9	8	7	7	9	9
Coffin furniture & cerement making	5	8	8	7	7	7	5	5
Cotton waste reclamation	5	3	1	3	3	3	3	3
Flax & hemp	4	3	1	1	—	—	—	—
Fur	39	34	36	29	27	27	28	27
General waste materials reclamation	467	412	366	359	353	357	321	308
Hairdressing undertakings	3,846	4,208	3,557	3,397	3,425	3,488	3,264	3,339
Hat, cap & millinery	29	22	18	12	11	11	11	9
Lace finishing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Laundry	139	114	89	79	75	74	63	62
Linen & cotton handkerchiefs	12	10	8	9	8	9	11	8
Made up textiles	36	44	42	44	43	42	41	40
Ostrich & fancy feather	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Perambulator and invalid carriage	3	4	5	3	3	3	4	4
Retail bespoke tailoring	180	168	122	98	95	95	56	49
Rope, twine & net	37	34	30	28	26	23	20	20
Sack & bag	25	25	23	17	14	14	16	16
Toy manufacturing	24	26	39	37	39	43	45	44
Retail trades (non food)	9,082	9,166	9,275	9,100	9,378	9,603	9,262	9,246
Retail food & allied trades	14,666	13,553	12,722	12,339	12,337	12,542	11,648	11,685
Licensed non residential establishment	6,452	6,541	6,581	6,705	6,797	6,898	7,008	7,030
Licensed residential establishment & licensed restaurant	1,055	1,414	1,482	1,674	1,750	1,845	1,882	1,898
Unlicensed place of refreshment	1,889	1,824	1,651	1,576	1,564	1,605	1,360	1,367
Wages Councils abolished since 1970								
Road haulage	3,444	3,273	3,132	—	—	—	—	—
Industrial staff canteens	3,012	3,033	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hollow ware	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Keg & drum	12	13	—	—	—	—	—	—
Milk distribution	399	367	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paper box	54	51	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stamped or pressed metal wares	12	12	—	—	—	—	—	—
Baking	1,030	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Boot & floor polish	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brush & broom	38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hair, bass & fibre	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total establishments	47,813	45,914	40,673	36,751	37,028	37,767	36,034	36,132

Mr. McNamara asked the Paymaster General what were the number of times in the years 1970, 1974, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985 when members of the wages inspectorate had checked employees' pay giving the number of establishments checked, the number of establishments underpaying, the percentages of establishments underpaying, the establishments visited, the percentage of the register visited, the

number of establishments visited underpaying, the percentage of establishments visited, the workers whose pay was checked by visits and other methods, the workers underpaid, the percentage underpaid of all workers checked, the percentage of underpaid workers checked by visits, the arrears paid, the arrears raised by workers, the arrears not pursued and the total arrears assessed for Humberside.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Statistics about compliance with wages orders are not collected for areas smaller than wages inspectorate divisions. For the Yorkshire and Humberside division, the information requested is given in the following tables. Final figures for 1985 are not yet available.

Table 1 Establishments—Yorkshire and Humberside division of the wages inspectorate

Year	All checks of pay (visited and not visited)				Inspections by visit			
	Establishments checked	Percentage of establishments checked	Establishments underpaying	Percentage of establishments underpaying	Establishments visited	Percentage of register visited	Establishments visited underpaying	Percentage of establishments visited underpaying
		per cent.		per cent.		per cent.		per cent.
1970*	5,022	10·5	912	18·2	5,022	10·5	912	18·2
1974*	4,457	9·7	1,059	23·8	4,457	9·7	1,059	23·8
1978	4,056	10·0	1,213	30·0	4,056	10·0	1,213	30·0
1979	6,026	16·4	1,156	19·2	4,132	11·2	1,156	28·0
1980	5,820	15·7	1,119	19·2	3,732	10·1	1,119	30·0
1981	4,083	10·8	871	21·3	2,737	7·2	871	31·8
1982	4,844	13·4	964	19·9	2,680	7·8	964	36·0
1983	3,835	10·6	941	24·5	2,584	7·2	941	36·4
1984	4,025	11·1	1,026	25·5	2,652	7·3	1,026	38·7
1985	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Table 2 Workers

Year	All checks of pay (visited and not visited)				Inspections by visit			
	Workers whose pay was checked by visit and other methods	Workers underpaid	Percentage underpaid of all workers checked	Percentage underpaid of workers checked by visit	Arrears paid	Arrears waived by workers	Arrears not pursued	Total arrears assessed
			per cent.	per cent.	£	£	£	£
1970*	22,635	1,491	6·6	6·6	17,582	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1974*	21,564	2,058	9·5	9·5	36,334	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1978†	21,324	2,795	13·1	13·1	145,561	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1979†	28,699	2,396	8·3	10·9	133,955	n.a.	27,705	161,660
1980†	25,420	2,513	9·9	12·6	140,211	n.a.	25,037	165,248
1981†	18,377	2,060	11·2	15·2	136,244	n.a.	52,784	189,028
1982	39,234	2,077	5·3	13·4	145,066	45,589	15,155	205,810
1983	29,306	2,227	7·6	14·2	161,753	75,198	13,685	250,636
1984	29,370	2,252	7·7	13·4	159,068	44,657	27,516	231,241
1985	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Pay checks by methods not involving visits include figures for multiple firms whose head office is located in the division whose branches are located, and workers employed, in other areas. This needs to be taken into account when considering the level of compliance.

* In 1970 and 1974, only inspections by visit were recorded.

† Information about the amount of arrears waived by workers and arrears not pursued was collected only from 1982.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General what was the level of unemployment in *(a)* the Liverpool travel-to-work area and *(b)* the Merseyside special development area in the construction industry both numerically and as a percentage at the latest available date; and what were the figures in June 1979.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following information is in the Library. As a result of the change to a claimant-based unemployment count in 1982, detailed statistics of unemployment by industry are no longer collected. The table shows figures for May 1982, the last date on which such information was collected, and for May 1979 (statistics for June 1979 are not available). They relate to unemployed registrants whose last employment had been in the construction industry in the Liverpool travel-to-work area and Merseyside special development area as defined at that time.

	May 1979	May 1982
Liverpool TTWA:		
Construction workers registered as unemployed	7,137	12,782
Percentage of total unemployed	12·5	14·5
Merseyside SDA:		
Construction workers registered as unemployed	10,405	19,112
Percentage of total unemployed	12·9	14·3

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General what was the level of unemployment in the Liverpool, Riverside constituency at the latest available date both in figures and as a percentage.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following information is in the Library. On 12 December 1985 the number of unemployed claimants in the Liverpool, Riverside parliamentary constituency was 12,078. Unemployment rates are not calculated for areas smaller than travel-to-work areas.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General what was the level of unemployment in *(a)* the Liverpool travel-to-work area and *(b)* the Merseyside special development area at the latest date both in figures and as a percentage.

Mr. Alan Clark: On 12 December 1985, the number of unemployed claimants in the Liverpool travel-to-work area was 105,461, which corresponds to an unemployment rate of 20·9 per cent. Special development areas were abolished in November 1984. The travel-to-work areas in the Merseyside area with development status, Liverpool, Wirral and Chester, Wigan and St. Helens, and Widnes and Runcorn, had in total 191,589 unemployed claimants on 12 December 1985, an unemployment rate of 19·9 per cent.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Disabled People (Equipment and Aids)

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he intends to visit the Bettman centre for assessment by disabled people of equipment and gadgets in Coventry;

(2) if he will make it his policy that every local authority personal social services department should set up a centre where disabled people can assess gadgets, equipment and home aids with the assistance of occupational therapists;

(3) what information he has about which local authorities provide centres for disabled people to try out gadgets, aids and equipment with the assistance of occupational therapists.

Mr. Newton: I have no plans at present to visit the Bettman centre. I consider that both aid centres and assessment centres can be a valuable addition to services for disabled people and I hope that this new centre proves to be so.

It is of course for individual local authorities to decide whether to set up such centres, taking account of local circumstances, and we do not have comprehensive information about their arrangements. However, we are aware that a number of authorities, either alone or in association with health authorities and/or voluntary bodies, have set up or contribute towards the cost of running aid centres where a selection of aids can be seen and tried out by disabled people under the supervision of trained staff. There are 14 such centres in the United Kingdom offering a fully comprehensive service; these are situated in Belfast, Birmingham, Caerphilly, Edinburgh, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sheffield, Southampton, Stockport and Swindon.

A more limited service is offered in Blackpool, Dudley, Portsmouth and Wakefield. Other places where aids can be seen and tried out include some social services departments some of which have assessment centres similar to the Bettman centre; and hospital occupational therapy departments some of which have arrangements for use also by local authority staff.

AIDS

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the period within which the incidence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome is currently doubling;

(2) what is the projection, on the basis of the current state of medical advice and knowledge, of the likely number of acquired immune deficiency syndrome sufferers in each year up to 1990.

Mr. Hayhoe: The number of cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome reported to the communicable disease surveillance centre has doubled in the last 10 months. However, the rate of increase of cases has varied considerably in the short term and should not be used as the sole basis for estimates of future spread.

Recent predictions by the communicable disease surveillance centre of the numbers of new cases of AIDS in the United Kingdom for the years 1986-88, published in the *Lancet* of 7 September 1985 are as follows:

	Number
1986	336
1987	785
1988	1,837

These predictions do not take into account changing epidemiological features and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

It is not possible to predict on any scientific basis beyond 1988 because the various factors affecting the incidence of the disease are likely to change. It is also hoped that the planned national public information campaign on AIDS will be starting to have effect on incidence by 1988.

Competitive Tenders

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all guidance and other circular letters issued by his Department to health authorities and health authority chairmen on the subject of competitive tendering, indicating the purpose of each communication.

Mr. Hayhoe: The information requested is:

Circular HC(83), 18 September 1983 — asked health authorities to test the cost effectiveness of their domestic, catering and laundry services by putting them out to tender; and gave guidance on the procedures they should adopt.

DA(83)40, 22 November 1983 — attached specimen contracts for domestic and catering services; and told health authorities not to specify rates of pay or conditions of service for contractors staff.

Addendum to DA(83)40, 9 March 1984 — attached specimen contracts for laundry services.

Second Addendum to DA(83)40, 12 October 1984 — attached specimen contracts for linen and garment rental services.

Letter from Minister for Health to Regional Chairmen, 9 October 1984—explained why it was wrong for health authorities to specify the terms and conditions of service which private contractors should provide for staff working on NHS contracts.

Letters from Chairman of NHS Management Board to Regional Chairmen 3 January 1986 gave further advice to assist health authorities to obtain maximum benefits from the policy.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been *(a)* the total number of new hospital beds since May 1979 and *(b)* the total number of hospital beds closed, including those in hospitals which have been partially closed since May 1979 by region.

Mr. Whitney: I regret that there was an error in my reply of 16 December to the hon. Member. The figure for numbers of beds in hospitals or parts of hospitals approved for permanent closure between May 1979 and the end of June 1985 is 18,673.

The number of new hospital beds provided since 1979 and the number of hospital beds approved for closure from May 1979 to the end of June 1985 by region are as follows:

Region	*Closures*	*Completed*
Northern	684	916
Yorkshire	1,865	763
Trent	2,343	2,177
East Anglian	503	1,264
North West Thames	1,851	368
North East Thames	2,093	579
South East Thames	660	590
South West Thames	1,456	554
Wessex	750	739
Oxford	985	265
South Western	690	355
West Midlands	2,060	711
Mersey	1,877	2,427
North Western	814	783
SHAs	42	—

Social Security Reform

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what level of benefit is assumed for 16 and 17-year-old unemployed claimants in the illustrative examples of the effects of the social security White Paper;

(2) what account the technical annexe to the White Paper on social security analysis of gainers and losers takes of 16 and 17-year-olds who currently claim benefit in their own right.

Mr. Newton: The illustrative figures assume that 16 to 17-year-old claimants will continue to be entitled to benefit in their own right, with a personal allowance of £18·20 per week for single people and £36·40 for couples, increased by any further premiums where eligible. The effects for this age group are included in the tables in the technical annex.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans the Government have for payment and assessment of family credit to strikers' families during the period of a strike under the White Paper on the reform of social security.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what he estimates will be the percentage take up of family credit.

Mr. Newton: As explained in paragraph 2.10 of that document, the illustrations in the technical annex to the White Paper "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691) are consistent with a take-up rate of 60 per cent.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of working families will have their marginal tax rates *(a)* increased and *(b)* reduced as a result of the implementation of proposals contained in the White Paper "Reform of Social Security", Cmnd. 9691.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information about changes in marginal tax rates for individuals is not available.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state, for the London borough of Newham, each category of claimant, the numbers involved and the amounts gained or lost each week in benefits arising from his recent White Paper proposals for the reform of Social Security.

Mr. Newton: This information is not available.

Hospital Waiting Lists (Bolton)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to meet the Bolton health authority to discuss the waiting list on non-urgent cases waiting for operations for over one year in the area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: No. Management of the waiting list on non-urgent cases waiting for operations in Bolton is a matter for the Bolton health authority. My hon. Friend may wish, therefore, to address his concern to the chairman of that authority.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he has made of changes in the work load of his Department's local office staff since 1979.

Mr. Major: There has been a large number of changes in work loads and procedures both in supplementary benefit and contributory benefits since 1979. These have involved variously both reduced and increased activity and their net effect on the national complement has been a reduction of 4,229 posts.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many jobs have been lost in his Department's offices in the east Midlands since May 1979.

Mr. Major: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to those offices which were in the Department's east Midlands and East Anglia region before re-organisation in August 1982.

In May 1979 the complement for these offices was 3,465. The present complement is 3,559·5.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now increase the number of typists working in local offices of his Department by at least 2,000 extra posts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: No. Such a proposal forms part of a bid for over 15,000 additional staff made recently by the Departmental trade union side which is currently being considered.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now increase the number of special case officers working in local offices of his Department by at least 200 posts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: No. Such a proposal forms part of a bid for over 15,000 additional staff made recently by the Departmental trade union side and which is currently being considered.

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many local offices of his Department in England now use staff to handwrite rather than type letters to claimants.

Mr. Major: All local offices of the Department of Health and Social Security make use of both handwritten and typed letters to claimants. The Department prefers individual letters to be typed, but often a handwritten letter or the completion by hand of a pre-printed standard letter or form, is the quickest and simplest way to make an inquiry or to provide information.

Personal Records

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action is being taken to tighten up security of personal records kept by his Department on individuals and procedures for disclosing such information on the telephone; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: A review of standing instructions about disclosure of information has been completed and revised instructions to staff on the protection of personal information held in Departmental records are being issued. These include additional guidance on the disclosure of information by telephone.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many persons claimed supplementary benefit in 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and to the nearest available date in 1985.

Mr. Major: The table shows the number of claims to supplementary benefit received nationally for each of the years 1979 to 1984, and the number of persons receiving supplementary benefit at 30 July 1985 — the latest available — and at comparative dates since 1979. The figures of claims to benefit for 1985 show the number received up to 19 November only—the latest available figures.

	Claims received	*Benefit recipients**
1979	5,169,992	3,197,019
1980	5,828,263	3,379,728
1981	5,456,585	3,780,980
1982	6,103,862	4,376,895
1983	5,889,787	4,661,318
1984	6,359,881	4,968,956
1985	5,482,137	5,169,435

* *Source:* 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will name the local office which had received recent guidance from the chief adjudication officer referred to in the reply to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr, on 28 October, *Official Report*, column *381*.

Mr. Major: The guidance was given to one of the adjudication officers at Birmingham, Perry Barr integrated local office.

Retirement Pension

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the percentage rise in retirement pension claims during (i) 1983-84 and (ii) 1984-85.

Mr. Major: Retirement pension claims (all categories) rose by 1 per cent. between 1982-83 and 1983-84 and by 22·9 per cent. between 1983-84 and 1984-85. Numbers of claims in each year were:

	Number
1982-83	649,679
1983-84	656,208
1984-85	806,190

Benefits

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many persons received *(a)* unemployment benefit and *(b)* family income supplement in (i) 1979-80 and (ii) 1984-85.

Mr. Major: Information is not available for the whole of the periods requested, but is available for November of each year. The figures for November in the financial years requested are given in the table:

	November 1979	*November 1984*
Unemployment benefit	467,000	896,000
Family Income Supplement	77,000	200,000

North West Thames Regional Health Authority

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to cease the process of redistribution of resources from the North West Thames region to other regions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: The process of resource distribution aims both to direct larger cash increases to those regions which have historically received less than their fair share of resources, and to reflect regions' changing population size and structure. The need for adjustments between regions to reflect population changes will continue after historic deprivation has been made good; the impact on the North-West Thames region will depend on changes in its population relative to the population of other regions.

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects the review of the resource allocation working party formulae by the National Health Service management board to be completed; whether the board will be seeking evidence from the North West Thames regional health authority; and if he intends to publish the results of the review.

Mr. Hayhoe: My right hon. Friend has asked the NHS management board to report to him by the end of 1986. The conduct of the review will be discussed with regional health authority chairmen shortly, and I would certainly expect all regions to be invited to submit evidence. Decisions have not yet been taken about the form in which the results of the review will be published.

Debendox

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent representations he has received from the Debendox Action Group; when he received them; and what reply he has sent.

Mr. Hayhoe: None. My predecessor met Action Group representatives in December 1984 and agreed to ask a consultant adviser or other qualified adviser in DHSS to

consider evidence about Debendox which became available after the Committee on Safety of Medicines last considered the product in March 1983.

I am writing to the right hon. Member to let him have a progress report on this matter.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for severe disablement allowance had been received by 19 November; how many of these claims have been decided; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: As at 19 November some 53,000 claims for severe disablement allowance had been recorded as received, but we know that mistakes in recording have been made and the figure probably overstates the true one; 10,165 claims had been decided.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average time between receipt of a claim for severe disablement allowance and the issue of an order book *(a)* when the award is made after initial application by an adjudication officer alone and *(b)* when the award is made after initial application on the basis of a decision of an adjudicating medical authority on percentage disablement and recorded cause of incapacity for work.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the information is not available.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the age breakdown and recorded cause of incapacity for work of *(a)* people who have been awarded severe disablement allowance and *(b)* people refused severe disablement allowance; and if he will give this information using the same classification of awards and refusals as in his answer of 29 November 1985, *Official Report*, columns *657-58*.

Mr. Newton: A special analysis is being made to provide as much of the information as possible. I shall reply to the hon. Member when it is complete.

Social Security Files (Wick)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many *(a)* supplementary benefit and *(b)* national insurance benefit claim files relating to residents in Orkney are currently held in Wick.

Mr. Major: At the Department's office in Wick on 20 December 1985 — the latest figures available — there were 775 active supplementary benefit claim files relating to residents of Orkney and the associated islands. No national insurance benefit claims for the Orkneys are dealt with by Wick.

Hip Operations (Waiting Lists)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the mean average interval between the date a patient was placed on the waiting list and the date of admission to a National Health Service hospital for a total hip replacement or other orthoplasty of the hip in England in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Whitney: The estimated mean interval between the date a patient was placed on the waiting list and the date of admission to a National Health Service hospital for toal hip replacement or other arthroplasty of hip in England in 1983, the latest year for which information is available centrally, was 35·5 weeks. The estimated median interval, which gives a more typical indication of the waiting experience of the "average" case, was 24 weeks.

Cervical Screening

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his talks with health authority chairmen have covered delays in screening cervical smears in pathology laboratories.

Mr. Hayhoe: Other more suitable mechanisms exist for setting service priorities and monitoring their achievement. As part of the normal process for setting service priorities health authorities will be asked to give priority to improving their cervical cancer screening programmes, including ensuring that laboratories can meet demand and avoid backlogs. Arrangements for monitoring the achievement of service priorities are an integral part of the NHS planning and accountability process. Whenever it proves necessary, this issue will be raised at annual Ministerial reviews of particular regional health authorities.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what details are available to his Department about health authorities or family practitioner committees which have issued instructions to doctors in clinics or family doctors, or both, to suspend, delay or reduce the taking of cervical smears because of a backlog in pathology laboratories.

Mr. Hayhoe: The management of local cervical cancer screening programmes is the responsibility of district health authorities, who are best placed to judge the most effective response to local problems such as laboratory backlogs. They are not required to report their detailed operational decisions. However through the normal arrangements for setting service priorities all health authorities will be required to give priority to improving their programmes including ensuring that laboratories can meet demand and avoid backlogs.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate how many women will not be called for cervical cancer screening, under current arrangements, before 1993.

Mr. Hayhoe: All women identifiable from family practitioner committee records as being at risk from cervical cancer should receive an invitation to be screened under the computerised call and recall arrangements which health authorities will be required to implement no later than March 1988.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy on the maximum interval between successive cervical cancer smears for women under 35 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: The recommended interval between routine cervical smears for all women who are or have been sexually active is five years. This is based on the advice of the independent expert Committee on Gynaecological Cytology which reviews regularly the available evidence on the screening interval.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he proposes to collect, collate and publish information on delays by health authorities in dealing with cervical smears; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: No. Delays in particular laboratories are primarily a matter for local management. However through the normal arrangements for setting service priorities, health authorities will be asked to ensure that laboratories can meet demand and avoid backlogs. Arrangements for monitoring the achievement of service priorities is an integral part of the NHS planning and accountability process.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish his review of the number of medical conditions which lead to exemption from prescription charges.

Mr. Hayhoe: I expect to announce the outcome of the review soon.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services for each quarter of the calendar year 1984, the first three quarters of 1985 and for the financial years 1983-84 and 1984-85, for England, what were *(a)* the number of prescriptions dispensed, *(b)* the percentage of prescriptions exempt from charges, *(c)* the costs of prescriptions: (i) the payments by patients (excluding pre-payment certificates), (ii) the payments from public funds, (iii) the total costs and (iv) the average gross costs per prescription, *(d)* the number and type of pre-payment certificates and *(e)* the revenue from sale of pre-payment certificates.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *766*]: The information requested, in respect of the family practitioner services in England, is set out in the table:

	1984				*1985**		*Financial years†*	
	Jan-Mar	*Apr-June*	*Jul-Sep*	*Oct-Dec*	*Jan-Mar*	*Apr-June*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*
Prescriptions dispensed (millions)	87·60	85·50	81·80	88·10	90·80	81·00	337·00	345·40
Prescriptions exempt from charges (percentage)‡	78·50	79·10	79·40	79·90	79·70	81·40	78·00	79·30
Costs								
(i) Payments by patients (excluding pre-payment certificates (£ million)	26·00	27·90	26·50	27·50	27·90	29·50	99·80	109·10
(ii) Payments from public funds (£ million)	344·50	349·20	350·40	380·90	385·50	363·60	1,331·80	1,441·10
(iii) Total costs (£ million)	374·40	379·50	379·40	411·20	418·10	395·80	1,442·50	1,562·50
(iv) Average gross cost per prescription (£)	4·27	4·44	4·64	4·67	4·60	4·89	4·28	4·52
Pre-payment certificates								
Number								
4 Monthly (thousands)	65·20	55·50	53·40	58·60	65·10	47·10	225·00	232·50
12 Monthly (thousands)	156·80	79·10	83·80	94·60	174·00	71·60	427·10	431·60
Revenue (£ million)	3·90	2·40	2·50	2·80	4·80	2·70	10·90	12·40

*Figures are not yet available for the third quarter of 1985.
†To allow for the time lag in payments, the statistical data has been adjusted to make it compatible with the annual financial information.
‡Derived from prescriptions dispensed by pharmacists.

Cancer Treatment Facilities (Thames Areas)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when considering the proposals of the North-East Thames health authority on the creation of specialist cancer provision in its area, what attention he pays to the location of cancer provision facilities in other Thames health authority areas.

Mr. Whitney: The development of cancer treatment services in North-East Thames is a matter for the regional and district health authorities. Any proposals to change the present disposition of services would be referred to Ministers only if they were opposed by the relevant community health council. In reaching a decision Ministers would, like the regional health authority itself, take account of all relevant points including, where appropriate, the location and capacity of facilities in other Thames regions.

Smoking

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of those organisations which have made representations to his Department requesting *(a)* further restrictions on smoking on National Health Service premises, *(b)* further restrictions on smoking in public places and *(c)* banning smoking altogether; what was his reply in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: In formulating policy on smoking, the Government take note of all representations made, though I am not aware of any to ban smoking completely. However a number of representations have been made over past years about smoking on National Health Service premises and in public places by a variety of organisations and it would not be practicable to give details of names and our response to each.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to revise his Department's circular HC(85)22 relating to restrictions on smoking on National Health Service premises; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: There are no plans to revise the circular issued to health authorities last May promoting non-smoking on National Health Service premises.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to take steps to introduce a policy of recruiting only non-smokers in the National Health Service.

Mr. Hayhoe: No.

Housing Benefit

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he intends to lay draft regulations to amend the Housing Benefit Regulations 1985 to give a similar effect to his policy towards students' income under deeds of covenant in relation to standard housing benefit as in relation to supplementary benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Yes. We are proposing to amend the Housing Benefits Regulations to ensure that the treatment of convenanted payments for housing benefit purposes is consistent with the intended supplementary benefit approach. Draft regulations have now been referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee and the local authority associations for their views.

Departmental Appointments

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those bodies to which his Department makes appointments, the number of appointees and the number of these who are women.

Mr. Fowler: I refer the hon. Member to pages 35-39 and 78 of the Cabinet Office (MPO) booklet "Public Bodies 1985" (ISBN 011 430008 9), published on 17 December last year, copies of which are in the Library. I also appoint members to the management sides of the bodies listed in the table which also gives the other information requested. The information given relates to the two year period ending on 31 December 1985.

Name of body	*Number of members*		*Number of additional co-opted members*	
	Total	*Women*	*Total*	*Women*
Whitley Councils for the Health Services (Great Britain)	51	5	3	1
Nursing and Midwifery Staff Negotiating Council	6	2	0	0
Joint Negotiating Committee for Professions Allied to Medicines	5	1	1	0

Hospital Closures

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospitals have been closed, or partly closed, due to funding restrictions in the last two months; where they are; and how much money has been saved as a result.

Mr. Whitney: Health authorities are not required to report such information to the Department, so I regret that I am unable to answer the question posed by the hon. Member, who is no doubt aware that we are spending more on health services than ever before.

Local Offices (Heating)

Dr. Glyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on how many occasions his Department's offices have had to close owing to the failure of their heating systems; and what steps are taken in these circumstances regarding provision of services, particularly in relation to holiday periods.

Mr. Major: Information on the breakdown of office heating systems is not collected as a matter of routine. I am, however, aware that following the Christmas holiday period there were heating failures in a number of our local offices. In some cases it was necessary, because of the extreme cold, for management to close the office until urgent repairs to the heating system could be completed. In most cases the office was closed for a day or less and in no case did it take more than two days for the repairs to be completed.

We are, of course, concerned that such breakdowns occur and officials are in touch with the Property Services Agency on this issue.

When a breakdown occurs the manager of the office takes whatever steps are practicable to keep the public informed and to advise local social services departments and other agencies. In cases of urgency claimants could contact a neighbouring office or their local social services department.

Heart Transplants

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the long-term financial allocation for heart transplants; what assessment he has made of growth in numbers of and demands for this type of operation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: £1,600,000 has been allocated to the heart transplant programmes at Papworth and Harefield hospitals in 1985-86. The report of an evaluation of the costs and benefits of heart transplantation, commissioned by the Department and undertaken by Mr. Martin Buxton and Professor Roy Acheson, was published in April 1985 and a copy placed in the Library; I refer my hon. Friend to chapter 11 of this report, which considers the difficulty inherent in estimating potential demand for the operation. Following the publication of the report, my right hon. Friend asked the supra regional services advisory group to make recommendations on how the development of heart transplantation within the National Health Service might

best be taken forward; he has now received these recommendations and will announce his decisions very soon.

General Practitioners (Bristol Meeting)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the cost, purpose and outcome of a meeting held with seven general practitioners at a hotel in Bristol in the first week of December 1985 organised by Arthur Irving Associates on behalf of the Central Office of Information.

Mr. Whitney: The meeting which cost, I understand, about £700 was part of a programme of quantitative and qualitative research to evaluate the Government's campaign of education and information on drug misuse. This programme included interviews with young people, parents and professionals — of whom general practitioners are a key group. I am told that the Bristol meeting provided some useful insights for the evaluation.

NHS Premises (Telephones)

Mr. Golding asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress has been made in ensuring that all telephones in National Health Service premises can be used by the hard of hearing reliant on hearing aids; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The extent to which inductive couplers have been fitted to telephones on National Health Service premises is not known centrally. Decisions to install such equipment are for individual health authorities. Information as to its availability and benefits was recently given to works officers of regional health authorities.

Health Services Board

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he will compile a register of the interests of members of the Health Services Board;

(2) whether the recommendations of the Salmon committee on standards of conduct in public life apply to the Health Services Board.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *319*]: Those members of the Board who are civil servants are subject to the normal civil service rules of conduct which have had regard to the recommendations of the Salmon committee.

Other members are either subject to the general guidance on rules of conduct issued to health authorities in health memorandum (62)21 where appropriate or they are subject to agreed procedures regarding declaration of interest.

Public Life (Standards of Conduct)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice he has issued to regional health authorities and district health authorities on compliance with the recommendations of the Salmon committee on standards of conduct in public life with reference to interests of members, officers employees and consultants of authorities and representations received from others, including Members of Parliament.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985 c. *319*]: The standing orders of health authorities already require members and employees to declare any interest they may have in commercial concerns with whom the authority is, or is likely to, enter into a contractual relationship. I am currently considering the need for revised guidance on the standards of conduct in the National Health Service taking account of the recommendations in the Salmon committee report.

Benefit Statistics

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing for 1971, 1981 and the latest date for which estimates are available the number of households in the United Kingdom, with the figures broken down to distinguish between no family, one family and two or more family households, as in "Social Trends" no. 15 table 2.5 for Great Britain, but also showing whether the married couples and lone parents have one, two, three or more dependent children, with the latter defined as children aged under 16 years or 16 to 18 years in full-time education.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 November 1985 c. *542-44*]: Further statistics on the numbers of households are now available, showing the proportionate breakdown of households by type for the United Kingdom as a whole in 1983. These are comparable to the figures for Great Britain in the last column of my reply on 26 November and take account of the results of the Continuous Household Survey in Northern Ireland.

The figures are as follows:

1983	
Households	*United Kingdom*
One family households	*Percentage*
Married couple only	26
Married couple with one dependent child	11
Married couple with two dependent children	13
Married couple with three or more dependent children	6
Married couple with non-dependent children only	8
Lone parent with one dependent child	2
Lone parent with two dependent children	2
Lone parent with three or more dependent children	1
Lone parent with non-dependent children only	4
Two or more family households	1
No family households	26
Total households	100

Supplementary Benefits

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services in each year since its introduction, what has been the gross and net saving from the removal from *(a)* 16 and 17-year olds, *(b)* 18 to 20-year olds supplementary benefit non-householders' rent addition; and what would be the cost of reversing these changes in a full year at 1985-86 benefit rates.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. *131*]: Information about the actual savings made as a result of the removal of the supplementary benefit non-householders rent addition for 16-20 year olds is not available.

The estimated gross and net costs of reversing the changes at 1985-86 benefit rates are as follows:

	Gross Cost to Supplementary Benefit £ million	**Gross saving on Housing Benefit* £ million	*Net cost to Supplementary Benefit and Housing Benefit* £ million
(a) Restoring the non-householders rent contributions for 16 and 17 years olds	30	10	20
(b) Restoring the non-householders rent contribution for 18 to 20 year olds	60	15	45

* ie The overall reduction in housing benefit for householders which would also follow from such a change. The loss to the householder would normally precisely match the non-householder gain.

National Health Service (Revenue and Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each health district the revenue and capital expenditure in each year since 1974, expressing the figures *(a)* in money terms *(b)* adjusted by the gross domestic product deflator and *(c)* adjusted by the movement of National Health Service pay and prices.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1985, c. *142*]: Tables showing revenue and capital expenditure by regional health authorities in each year from 1974-75 to 1984-85 have been placed in the Library. The cash figures have been adjusted by the gross domestic product deflator and by movements in NHS pay and prices for revenue and in construction prices for capital to a common 1983-84 base. Details of district health authority expenditure which are held centrally only for the years following the 1982 re-organisation have also been placed in the Library. Capital expenditure on major schemes is charged to regional health authority accounts and to that extent comparisons cannot usefully be drawn between district health authority expenditure figures. For both revenue and capital, it is inappropriate to revalue district health authority expenditure by reference to centrally assessed movements in pay and prices, because the composition of that expenditure can differ substantially from the national average. Although revenue and capital expenditure by regional health authorities has been revalued by centrally assessed movements in pay and prices, the composition of that expenditure can also differ from the national average.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what procedures are followed by district health authorities, regional health authorities and his department in the event of a contractor failing to achieve the standards laid down in a privatised cleaning, laundry or catering contract and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1985, c. *236*]: It is the responsibility of district health authorities to decide what steps need to be taken to bring the performance of contractors up to the required standards. They are expected to refer any proposals to cancel contracts to their regional health authority and the Department so that consideration can be given to whether all reasonable efforts have been made to obtain a satisfactory service.

Teaching Hospitals

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, if he will give for each region and for England in 1985-86 *(a)* the revenue allocations, *(b)* the growth addition in revenue over 1984-85 after allowing for movements in National Health Service pay and prices, *(c)* the service increment for teaching, *(d)* the capital allocation, *(e)* the percentage share of their weighted population entitlement and *(f)* the central capital contribution to major teaching hospital schemes.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *312*]: The information requested is set out in the table, with the exception of *(b)*; it will not be possible to provide this until after the end of the financial year.

1985-86

RHA	*Revenue*		*Capital*		
	Revenue Allocation £000s	*Service Increment* £000s	*Capital Allocation** £000s	*RAWP allocation as per cent. of weighted population share*	*Central Teaching support* £000s
Northern	617,301	13,068	39,037	88·7	239
Yorkshire	691,845	12,455	54,338	106·2	88
Trent	844,837	31,232	65,418	90·5	2,066
East Anglian	352,923	5,738	23,431	87·2	48
North West Thames	712,955	27,534	42,180	87·2	2,588
North East Thames	903,411	48,261	48,617	88·5	—
South East Thames	789,584	31,182	49,622	90·8	—
South West Thames	602,770	12,966	39,023	86·9	2,847
Wessex	503,853	9,186	60,945	134·2	2,034
Oxford	396,765	7,388	25,114	87·2	—

RHA	Revenue Revenue Allocation	Revenue Service Increment	Capital Allocation*	Capital RAWP allocation as per cent. of weighted population share	Central Teaching support
	£000s	£000s	£000s		£000s
South-Western	607,426	10,160	50,099	112·7	184
West-Midlands	962,044	13,926	85,375	115·9	—
Mersey	503,795	14,472	29,751	87·5	1,725
North-Western	849,811	22,265	70,433	119·6	1,560
Total	9,339,320	259,833	683,383	—	13,379

* Includes Joint Finance.

NHS Employees

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the ratio of claimants to staff in local offices of his Department *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region for each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *322*]: Information is not available in the precise form requested. The following analysis refers to supplementary benefit claimants only.

No records were kept before 1983 on the number of staff employed on supplementary benefit duties.

From 1983 the ratio of staff to claimants in local offices is as follows:

	1 August 1983 Ratio	1 August 1984 Ratio	1 August 1985 Ratio
(a) Nationally	1 : 129	1 : 132	1 : 133
(b) Regions			
North Eastern	1 : 133	1 : 132	1 : 135
London North	1 : 129	1 : 134	1 : 136
London South	1 : 122	1 : 123	1 : 123
Wales and South Western	1 : 131	1 : 136	1 : 138
Midlands	1 : 145	1 : 145	1 : 147
North Western	1 : 135	1 : 144	1 : 147
Scotland	1 : 108	1 : 104	1 : 103

No records are kept for claimants or staff in standard economic planning regions.

Health Statistics (Amber Valley)

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the change in the numbers of doctors, nurses and midwives in *(a)* Amber Valley and *(b)* Derbyshire between 1979 and 1985.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *322-23*]: I regret that there is an error in my reply to the hon. Member.

Note 3 to the table should read:

(3) In 1980 the working week for nursing and midwifery staff was reduced from 40 hours to 37½. Part of the increase in nursing and midwifery staff is directly attributable to this change.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Industry (Costs)

Mr. Watts asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give a comparison of the total cost to industry of *(a)* a 1 per cent. increase in interest rates, *(b)* a 1 per cent. increase in labour costs, *(c)* the rise in cost of imported materials consequent upon a 1 per cent. decline in the pound sterling dollar exchange rate and *(d)* the rise in cost of imported materials consequent upon a 1 per cent. fall in the trade weighted average value of the pound sterling.

Mr. MacGregor: The cost to industry of a 1 per cent. increase in labour costs is approximately £1 billion in a year. This is roughly three times as large as the cost to industry of either of the two exchange rate changes (for given dollar prices of oil and other commodities) and four times as large as the cost of a one percentage point increase in interest rates.

Johnson Matthey Bankers

Mr. Canavan asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many representations he has received about the Johnson Matthey Bank; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: About 80 letters have been received.

United States (Taxation)

Sir William Clark asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications for the operation of the United Kingdom/United States double taxation convention in terms of the operation of the exemption from federal excise tax and for United Kingdom insurance companies operating in the United States of America of the tax reform legislation passed by the United States House of Representatives; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: The United States tax reform bill, if passed in its present form, would remove part of the exemption presently enjoyed by British insurance companies under the United Kingdom/United States double taxation convention. We have been making strong representations to the United States Administration on the proposal. We will continue to support British insurance companies in seeking to have the relevant provision removed from the tax reform bill.

Wages

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give figures for the percentage of the wage bill paid by employers to the Exchequer for national insurance and tax under the following headings: (i) for all income levels, (ii) for incomes in excess of £12,000 per annum and (iii) for incomes less than £5,000 per annum.

Mr. Moore: The most recent information is for 1982-83. As a percentage of the wage bill (taken to include employers' national insurance contributions as well as

gross pay), the amount paid over in income tax and national insurance contributions on the employee's behalf, and in employers' national insurance contributions (including the surcharge, since abolished) is estimated to have been (i) 31 per cent. (ii) 35 per cent. and (iii) 24 per cent. Employees in employment for only part of the year but earning, whilst in employment, at a weekly rate equivalent to more than £12,000 in a complete year, have been included in (ii). Correspondingly, part-year employees earning at a weekly rate equivalent to more than £5,000 in a complete year have been excluded from (iii).

Deep-discounted Securities

Mr. Stern asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *770*, on the subject of deep-discounted securities, when he intends to publish a full and detailed list of the amounts deemed by the Inland Revenue to be the issue price and interest element for each such security not issued in the United Kingdom which is subject to these provisions.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It would not be practicable to publish such a list.

Mr. Stern asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *770*, on the subject of deep-discounted securities, how he intends to determine the issue price of United States stripped securities where there is no specific date of issue and when the instruments are stripped on demand.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The rights to interest or redemption amounts from United States stripped securities are not regarded as securities issued by a company for United Kingdom tax purposes and the deep-discount legislation does not apply to them.

EC (Budget Contributions)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total net payment made by the United Kingdom to the EEC since 1 January 1973; if he will express this as a net amount per day of membership; and what estimate he has made of the comparable net daily cost in 1987.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Local Authority Expenditure

Mr. Straw asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* comparing the Government's estimates for local authority *(a)* current, *(b)* capital and *(c)* total expenditure contained in each public expenditure White Paper from 1979 to date, against the actual outturn of expenditure under these headings, and on a constant price basis.

Mr. MacGregor: Some of the information requested will be published shortly in the 1986 puublic expenditure White Paper. I shall write to the hon. Member giving the remaining material.

THE ARTS

Parks and Open Spaces

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts how many parks and open spaces are currently administered by the Arts Council.

Mr. Luce: None.

South Bank Centre

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will give details of the qualifications of Mr. Richard Pulford, general director, administration of the South Bank Centre.

Mr. Luce: Mr. Pulford is an experienced administrator who was deputy secretary general of the Arts Council, and has been planning director for the South Bank.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what advice was sought by the Arts Council in determining the structure, staffing levels and pay of senior management for the South Bank Centre.

Mr. Luce: The Arts Council consulted the Government on its proposals.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will list the salaries or expenses paid to members of the South Bank board since its inception; and how much is budgeted for 1986-87.

Mr. Luce: No member of the South Bank board receives a salary from the Arts Council; I will write to the hon. Member about the arrangements for expenses.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts (1) how many existing staff in the South Bank concert halls have been offered jobs following abolition of the Greater London council by the South Bank board;

(2) if he will list the positions, the salaries and the names of those so far appointed to administer the South Bank Centre following abolition of the Greater London council on 31 March.

Mr. Luce: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts when he expects the Arts Council to declare its 1986-87 level of funding for the South Bank board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The Arts Council expects to indicate the level of funding for the South Bank board within the next four weeks.

Arts Council

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts when he expects the Arts Council to announce its 1986-87 funding for clients; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The Arts Council expects to make an announcement as soon as possible after its next meeting on 29 January.

PRIME MINISTER

Public Money (Allocation)

Mr. Nellist asked the Prime Minister if she will give similar information on identifiable grants and subsidies

to local authorities to that given in her answer to the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) on 12 December, *Official Report*, columns *712-15*, for *(a)* Coventry, *(b)* Birmingham and *(c)* Liverpool both in cash prices and at constant 1979 prices.

The Prime Minister: The identifiable grants and subsidies paid to Coventry, Birmingham and Liverpool district councils are given in table 1 (cash prices) and table 2 (1979-80 prices). The figures are explained in the notes to tables 1 and 2.

Unemployment statistics by local authority areas are not available prior to 1983-84.

Attention is drawn to the discontinuities which result from the change in the rate support grant arrangements in 1981-82 and the introduction of housing benefit payments by DHSS in 1982-83.

Table 1—Identifiable grants and subsidies paid to Coventry, Birmingham and Liverpool district councils—Cash prices

		1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Coventry								
(i) In total	£ million	71·9	87·4	80·4	84·4	108·1	102·9	103·5
(Capital grants in brackets)	£ million	(2·0)	(3·1)	(1·5)	(2·9)	(2·8)	102·9	103·5
(ii) Per person	£	213	258	253	266	342	324	330
(iii) Per unemployed person	£	213	258	253	266	4,048	3,837	3,981
(iv) Per unemployed person under 20	£	213	258	253	266	20,440	19,452	21,514
(v) Per person of pensionable age	£	1,419	1,693	1,538	1,595	2,039	1,931	1,942
Birmingham								
(i) In total	£ million	260·9	307·0	255·8	250·7	351·6	356·7	359·3
(Capital grants in brackets)	£ million	(2·6)	(12·3)	(5·8)	(5·4)	(3·6)	356·7	359·3
(ii) Per person	£	241	298	251	246	347	355	358
(iii) Per unemployed person	£	241	298	251	246	3,788	3,857	3,893
(iv) Per unemployed person under 20	£	241	298	251	246	18,419	20,218	22,089
(v) Per person of pensionable age	£	1,510	1,746	1,437	1,409	1,991	2,031	2,046
Liverpool								
(i) In total	£ million	164·0	199·1	174·8	181·7	239·9	233·5	254·0
(Capital grants in brackets)	£ million	(5·5)	(6·5)	(6·1)	(8·0)	(6·1)	233·5	254·0
(ii) Per person	£	299	388	338	356	477	470	517
(iii) Per unemployed person	£	299	388	338	356	4,343	4,221	4,467
(iv) Per unemployed person under 20	£	299	388	338	356	20,176	22,245	25,556
(v) Per person of pensionable age	£	1,703	2,061	1,807	1,885	2,533	2,495	2,714

Table 2—Identifiable grants and subsidies paid to Coventry, Birmingham and Liverpool district councils—1979-80 prices

		1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Coventry								
(i) In total	£ million	71·9	73·5	61·5	60·3	73·9	67·3	64·5
(Capital grants in brackets)	£ million	(2·0)	(2·6)	(1·1)	(2·1)	(1·9)	67·3	64·5
(ii) Per person	£	213	217	193	190	234	212	205
(iii) Per unemployed person	£	213	217	193	190	2,768	2,511	2,481
(iv) Per unemployed person under 20	£	213	217	193	190	13,978	12,728	13,408
(v) Per person of pensionable age	£	1,419	1,425	1,176	1,139	1,395	1,263	1,210
Birmingham								
(i) In total	£ million	260·9	258·4	195·6	179·1	240·5	223·4	233·9
(Capital grants in brackets)	£ million	(2·6)	(10·4)	(4·4)	(3·8)	(2·4)	233·4	223·9
(ii) Per person	£	241	251	192	176	237	232	223
(iii) Per unemployed person	£	241	251	192	176	2,590	2,523	2,426
(iv) Per unemployed person under 20	£	241	251	192	176	12,596	13,230	13,765
(v) Per person of pensionable age	£	1,510	1,470	1,099	1,007	1,362	1,329	1,275
Liverpool								
(i) In total	£ million	164·0	167·6	133·6	129·8	164·0	152·8	158·3
(Capital grants in brackets)	£ million	(5·5)	(5·4)	(4·6)	(5·7)	(4·2)	152·8	158·3
(ii) Per person	£	299	326	258	254	326	307	322
(iii) Per unemployed person	£	299	326	258	254	2,970	2,762	2,784
(iv) Per unemployed person under 20	£	299	326	258	254	13,798	14,556	15,926
(v) Per person of pensionable age	£	1,703	1,735	1,382	1,347	1,732	1,633	1,691

Notes to Tables 1 and 2

1. Table 1 gives information at cash prices. Table 2 gives the same figures converted to 1979-80 prices using the GDP deflator.
2. The figures include rate support grant, housing subsidies, housing benefit, specific revenue grants and capital grants. Capital grants are not

available however for 1984-85 and 1985-86. The amounts included for capital grants in the totals for the earlier years are shown in brackets under line (i) of the information for each authority.

3. The figures included for rate support grant are affected by the change which occurred in 1981-82 when block grant and domestic rate relief grant superseded the needs, resources and domestic elements. Figures prior to 1981-82 are not on a comparable basis.

4. Up to 1982-83 the figures include rent and rate rebates paid by the DOE. The 1982-83 figures also include some housing benefits paid by the DHSS. Thereafter, all housing benefits were paid by the DHSS.

5. The figures only include grants and subsidies to the three authorities and do not include any payments to persons, companies or other organisations within the areas administered by them. Information on the latter is not readily available. If such payments could be included, the figures would be very much larger.

6. The figures also exclude any proportion of the grants to the upper tier authorities within whose areas these authorities are located.

7. Estimates of population figures for use in calculating lines (ii) and (v) of the information for each authority were obtained from OPCS. 1984-85 figures have been used as estimates for 1985-86.

8. The figures in lines (iii) and (iv) for each authority are based on unemployment data from the Department of Employment. These are not available before 1983-84. Figures for unemployed persons under 20 have been used in place of those for persons under 21, which are not available.

Westland Helicopters

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) when the Government first learned that Westlands was in financial difficulties; and when they first intervened in the process of finding a solution to the difficulties;

(2) whether she will publish in the *Official Report* particulars of the initiatives taken by the Government over the past 12 months to save Westland helicopters together with the representations made to foreign governments and foreign firms, showing the relevant dates.

The Prime Minister: It was known throughout 1985 that Westland faced potential financial difficulties. Westland approached a number of British and European companies to see whether an association with them could provide a solution to its problems, but without success. When it became known that Westland had received proposals from United Technologies and Fiat, the Government agreed that the then Secretary of State for Defence should explore further the possibility of an alternative association with Aerospatiale, MBB and Augusta becoming available for consideration by the board of Westland. The then Secretary of State for Defence accordingly had a number of contacts with his opposite numbers in France, Germany and Italy during November and December.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether the disclosures made by the Secretary of State for Defence concerning Cabinet and other discussions concerning the future of the British helicopter industry are to be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

The Prime Minister: That is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister what is her policy towards the intervention of the European Commission in the Westland case; under what authority the commission acted when threatening Westland with loss of contracts in the event of it establishing a link with Sikorski and Fiat; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Commission has made clear that there is no Commission decision or policy on Westland, and that it has no intention of intervening in a private decision.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) further to her letter dated 1 January to Sir John Cuckney concerning the future of Westland helicopters, whether she will publish in the *Official Report* particulars of the contributions which would be expected from Her Majesty's Government in the case of each of the existing and prospective future European collaborative projects to which she refers; whether and to what extent letters of intent would be signed within the lifetime of this Government; and what would be the extent of the commitment in terms of money and numbers of helicopters;

(2) whether she will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the existing and future European collaborative projects together with the stage which each has reached, the role and actual or prospective work load assigned to Westland and the number of helicopters ordered by each of the countries concerned or for which a requirement has been indicated; and what is the Government's estimate of the resultant minimum and maximum annual work load for Westland in terms of *(a)* design and development and *(b)* production.

The Prime Minister: A commitment has been entered into between Italy and the United Kingdom for the development of the EH101 anti-submarine helicopter. Production orders for the two nations are expected to amount to 90 military aircraft but contracts will not be placed in the near future. Development is being shared equally between the United Kingdom and Italy but obviously I cannot predict what the production share will be.

A memorandum of understanding in which the United Kingdom is participating on equal terms with France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands governing the feasibility study of the NATO transport and anti-submarine helicopter for the 1990s (NH 90) was signed in September 1985. There is at present no commitment to future development or production on the part of any nation.

Negotiations with Italy and the Netherlands on a battlefield helicopter, a development of the existing Italian A129 helicopter, have been under way for some time. The industries of all three nations have been planning to be involved in the studies which would follow signature of a memorandum of understanding, whose preparation is well advanced. Recently, the possibility of amalgamating this project with the comparable Franco-German PAH2 has been suggested.

I cannot at this stage comment on the future levels of financial commitment, work load or aircraft requirements in either the transport/anti-submarine or light attack helicopter categories.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) whether, if the Westland shareholders reject the European consortium proposals for investment in the company, she will make it her policy to dismiss the Secretary of State for Defence;

(2) whether she will now make it her policy to dismiss the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Defence.

The Prime Minister: No.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether the letter sent by the Secretary of State for Defence to Lloyd's Bank International regarding investment in Westlands represents Government policy.

The Prime Minister: The then Secretary of State's letter of 3 January to the managing director of Lloyd's Merchant Bank was confined to questions relating to his responsibilities for defence procurement.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) further to her letter dated 1 January to Sir John Cuckney concerning the future of Westland helicopters, whether she will make it her policy that no orders will be placed for production models unless and until it can be shown that the military requirement can be met at an acceptable cost and that the European consortium is also the most cost-effective source of supply, in the event that Westland accept the European consortium proposal;

(2) further to her letter dated 1 January to Sir John Cuckney concerning the future of Westland helicopters, whether she will list in the *Official Report* the considerations which will be taken into account in deciding which helicopter comes from the most cost effective source; what weight will be given to the reduction in public revenue and the increase in public expenditure which would result from a loss of jobs in the United Kingdom; and whether contracts for the supply of the military helicopters will be open to tender on a specification which will admit competition from the United States of America as well as European firms;

(3) what is the Government's policy regarding discrimination against United States suppliers of defence materials.

The Prime Minister: As I said in the letter to which the hon. Member refers, Government policy will remain that the United Kingdom should procure its helicopters from the most cost-effective source. Our policy is to secure the best long term value for money on a national basis in procuring the equipment which the armed forces need for their tasks. Accordingly we buy British whenever it is sensible, economic and consistent with our international obligations to do so, and acquire from overseas only when the advantages of cost, performance and time scale outweigh the longer term benefits of procuring the British alternative. The criteria used in deciding the source of our requirements are set out in the 1983 open government document "Value for Money in Defence Procurement".

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister, further to her letter dated 1 January to Sir John Cuckney concerning the future of Westland helicopters, whether any of the Governments and companies belonging to the European consortium have collaborated with the United States Government and/or United States firms on defence projects in the aircraft field; and whether he will publish particulars in the *Official Report*.

The Prime Minister: Collaboration in development and production is widespread in the aircraft and associated equipment field. Examples for some of the companies to which the hon. Member refers include:

British Aerospace:
Harrier AV8A, AV8B, GR5; Hawk for USN; all with McDonnell Douglas.

Agusta:
Licence build of various United States helicopters (Boeing Chinook, Bell 212 and 412, and Sikorsky S61N) before turning to in-house design and development (A109, A129)

MBB:
Manufacture and assembly of Phantom for German air force.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether the Government were aware before 29 November that an agreement was to be signed in London on that date between Lloyds International Bank and two companies owned by foreign Governments to form a consortium to seek a major shareholding in Westland.

The Prime Minister: I understand that Aerospatiale and MBB formally appointed Lloyds Merchant Bank to advise them on 5 November. The Government were made aware of the appointment shortly after.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) whether the Governments which made the threats against Westland communicated these threats to Her Majesty's Government; whether this was done before the threats were made public; what was the reaction of Her Majesty's Government to these threats; and if she will publish the terms of any communication she has sent to the Governments concerned expressing the Government's views on the matter;

(2) which European Governments and companies have indicated that a number of projects in which Westland is expecting to participate with other European companies may be lost to Westland if the United Technologies/Fiat proposals are accepted; to whom the indications have been given and in what form; and if the Government will make it its policy to institute proceedings before the European Court of Justice in respect of any action by any of the Governments or companies concerned which would discriminate against Westland on the grounds that it had accepted help from a non-European firm.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to my letter of 1 January to Sir John Cuckney, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

No doubt the Governments and companies will be considering the position further once Westland's shareholders have reached a decision.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether her letter dated 1 January to Sir John Cuckney concerning the future of Westland was written in the knowledge that the Secretary of State for Defence would be writing to Lloyds Bank International on the same matter.

The Prime Minister: The then Secretary of State for Defence's letter was written in response to a letter of 3 January from the managing director of Lloyds Merchant Bank.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the future survival of Westland helicopters;

(2) what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards maintenance of a complete helicopter manufacturing facility in the United Kingdom which would not be dependent on supplies from the Continent in time of war; and to what extent this will be realised in the case of the proposals put forward by the European consortium and by Sikorsky-Fiat, respectively.

The Prime Minister: The Government would wish to see a United Kingdom helicopter design, development and

manufacturing capability maintained if possible. As a private sector company, it is for Westland to decide the best route to follow to secure its future and that of its employees.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether the Government intend to make it a condition for placing an order for helicopters with a European consortium that no shares in any of the companies concerned will be bought by an American company.

The Prime Minister: No.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister, further to her letter dated 1 January to Sir John Cuckney concerning the future of Westland helicopters, whether, in the event of Westland agreeing to collaborate with the consortium on joint projects, the company will be given access to finance on the same scale and on no less favourable terms than the other participants; and whether the Government will make it their policy to protect Westland from unfair competition from foreign state-controlled and state-supported companies.

The Prime Minister: Westland will continue to have the same eligibility for Government support as other United Kingdom companies in the private sector.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) whether Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that the Governments and companies which have threatened to discriminate against Westland will not use their position in the consortium to transfer output and employment from the United Kingdom to the Continent in the event that the European consortium offer to Westland is accepted: and what safeguards have been agreed to seek to ensure that this will not happen;

(2) what she estimates would be the value of the work which would be put at risk for Westland if it collaborates with Sikorsky-Fiat; and if she will publish in the *Official Report* the basis on which the calculation was made.

The Prime Minister: The Government will resist to the best of their ability any attempts by others to discriminate against Westland just as they would resist attempts to discriminate against any British company. The commercial arrangements between Westland and companies which may become shareholders in it are a matter for Westland and the other companies concerned.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister what representations have been made by the Italian Government concerning the Sikorsky-Fiat proposals; what part Fiat would play in these proposals; and if the threats to Westland have been extended to Fiat by the Governments and companies referred to in her letter to Sir John Cuckney dated 1 January.

The Prime Minister: The Italian Government indicated on a number of occasions, most recently on 7 January, a clear position in favour of strengthening of European collaboration and maintaining and developing collaborative programmes. Within this framework they would prefer the European consortium's proposals. The role of Fiat in the event of the United Technologies/Fiat proposals being accepted is a matter for the companies.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether she will institute an inquiry into the publication of recent correspondence between the Solicitor-General and the Secretary of State for Defence; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman shortly.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her reply of 19 December, if Her Majesty's Government have conditionally approved the purchase of six additional Sea King helicopters from the Westland company in the event of it accepting the financial offer from the European consortium; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer being given today by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown).

Civil Servants (Armstrong Memorandum)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister (1) if she will amend the Armstrong memorandum of guidance on conduct for civil servants to cover the situation where there is a conflict of opinion between the head of the civil servants' Department and the Prime Minister; and if she will make a statement;

(2) whether she will clarify the terms of the memorandum sent by the head of the Civil Service to Departments after the Ponting Case on the relationship between civil servants and Ministers to cover the kind of briefing of the Press which has taken and is taking place in the Westland affair.

The Prime Minister: I see no need to clarify or amend the terms of that note of guidance.

Channel Fixed Link

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister what assumption Her Majesty's Government have made about the extent to which a Channel tunnel would be usable in time of war; and what measures will be taken to ensure that the relevant specialised shipping is available in time of need if the Channel tunnel is built.

The Prime Minister: It is not our practice to reveal details of our wartime plans.

United States (Trade Deficit)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether she will publish in the *Official Report* details of the United States trade deficit in manufactures with France, Italy and West Germany for the most recent period of 12 months for which figures are available; and how this compares with the United States surplus with each of the countries on defence equipment.

The Prime Minister: The United States trade deficit in manufactures for 1984 with the countries mentioned was as follows:

	$ billion
France	2·5
Germany	10·2
Italy	4·7

Information on certain items of defence equipment is confidential and on others is not separately identified. It

is therefore not possible to give complete figures for the United States trade balance in defence equipment with each country.

United States (Defence Suppliers)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards dependence on supplies of arms and war material from the United States of America.

The Prime Minister: The Government's policy on defence equipment collaboration is fully set out in paragraphs 312 to 321 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1985 (Cmnd. 9430-1).

European Council (Report)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she has yet received from the Commission the report requested by the meeting of the European Council in Fontainebleau in 1984 about a People's Europe; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Committee on a People's Europe delivered a first report in March 1985 and a second in June. These were considered by the Brussels and Milan European councils, as I reported to the House on 2 April and 2 July last year.

European Assembly (Proposals)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the proposals by the European assembly for the creation of a European anthem, a European flag, a Euro-TV channel, the formulation of tax systems and the establishing of offices for receiving complaints about Europe, which proposals were made in response to the Fontainebleau Council of Ministers proposals of 1984.

The Prime Minister: These are expressions of view by the European Assembly. There has been no change in the Government's position since the European Council considered the report of the People's Europe Committee in June 1985. The issue of tax approximation was remitted by the European Council to Finance Ministers for further study. No consideration has been given by member Governments to the idea of complaints offices.

Urban Priority Areas (Church Commission)

Mr. Rooker asked the Prime Minister if she will list the rank and Department of civil servants loaned or seconded by Her Majesty's Government to the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on urban priority areas.

The Prime Minister: Mr. J. N. Pearson was seconded from the Department of the Environment to be secretary of the commission. His rank was principal up to 1 January 1985, on which date he was promoted to grade 5.

Airport Security

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister if she will state the number of occasions on which military personnel have been involved in exercises at Heathrow airport in each of the past five years; on whose proposal such exercises are undertaken; and which other airports in Great Britain have been involved in similar exercises in each of the past five years.

The Prime Minister: The number of routine security exercises involving the deployment of troops at Heathrow airport in each of the past five years is as follows. A similar exercise was held at Gatwick airport in 1983. The exercises are held at the request of the chief officer of police responsible for the policing of the airports.

	Number
1981	3
1982	4
1983	6
1984	6
1985	7

Company Takeovers

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister on what basis Ministers intervene in the complete or partial take over of one company by another.

The Prime Minister: Under the Fair Trading Act 1973 it is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to consider, in the light of advice from the Director General of Fair Trading, whether to refer any qualifying merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

DEFENCE

Falkland Islands

47. **Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many ferry ships accompanied the task force to the Falkland Islands; and what part they played in the hostilities.

Mr. Stanley: Initially, six ferries (Baltic Ferry, Nordic Ferry, Europic Ferry, St. Edmund, Elk and Norland) accompanied the task force. They were needed to carry troops and their support equipment. The Tor Caledonia followed with stores and vehicles but arrived after hostilities had ceased.

The Europic Ferry and the Norland were used to carry troops for the first landings at San Carlos. The remaining troops and stores were disembarked over the next few days at San Carlos and Ajax bay.

Airfields

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list, for all airfields in the United Kingdom owned or substantially used by his Department, all buildings which are frequently used or occupied by more than 1,000 members of the public for recreational purposes and which are within two miles of the airfield perimeter.

Mr. Lee: The public are admitted to airfields owned by my Department for various purposes, including air displays such as the Farnborough air show, open days and sporting events, but we have no knowledge of the purposes to which buildings beyond our perimeter are put. That is a matter for the local planning authority concerned.

Bolton and Bury (Defence Establishments)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Defence further to the answer of 16 December, *Official Report*, column 97, if he will list the number of people employed in each of the five defence establishments in Bolton and Bury.

Mr. Lee: The number of people employed in each of the five defence establishments in Bolton and Bury is as follows:

	Number of personnel
Bolton	
Army Careers Information Centre	3
TAVRA Centre	4
Bury	
TAVRA Centre	*5½
Army Regimental Headquarters	5
Army Training Camp and Area, Holcombe Moor	5

*Part-time employees are counted as half.

South Africa (Lecturers)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of any lecturer at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, who, within the last five years, has undertaken lecturing or other teaching engagements in South African universities in his capacity as a lecturer at Sandhurst.

Mr. Lee: No lecturer at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, has undertaken lecturing or other teaching engagements in South African universities in his capacity as a lecturer at Sandhurst in the last five years.

Southern Industrial Pay Office

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if it remains his intention to proceed with the proposals to create a southern industrial pay office to cover the whole of the south of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The expansion of CPRO Portsmouth to create a southern industrial pay office commenced in 1984 and will be completed in 1986 although the original plans have been modified because of the intention to introduce commercial management into the royal dockyards as explained in my letter to the hon. Member dated 11 December 1985.

Civil Defence

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any information about arrangements made under the United States-United Kingdom lines of communication agreement is made available to county emergency planning officers in Cheshire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester or Lancashire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: Information about the arrangements made under the United States-United Kingdom lines of communication arrangement is generally classified and it would not be in the public interest to detail its circulation.

13 Signals Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many former members of 13 Signals Regiment have been discharged since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Lee: According to our records, of those serving in 13 Signals Regiment on or after 3 February 1984 77 have been discharged from that regiment since that date.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many former members of 13 Signals Regiment have been discharged before completion of their engagement since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Lee: According to our records, of those serving in 13 Signals Regiment on or after 3 February 1984 43 have since then been discharged from that regiment before completion of their engagement.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of 13 Signals Regiment are yet to be discharged before completion of their engagement.

Mr. Lee: Two members of 13 Signals Regiment are in the process of being discharged before completing their engagement and applications for discharge from a further three are currently being considered.

9 Signals Regiment

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many officers of 9 Signals Regiment have been discharged since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Lee: According to our records, of those officers serving in 9 Signals Regiment on or after 3 February 1984 five have left the service since that date, two at their own request and three on completion of their short service commission.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many officers of 9 Signals Regiment have been subjected to interrogation since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Lee: Some 15 officers provided statements of evidence as part of the investigation into the alleged breaches of security at 9 Signals Regiment. A large number were interviewed but not required to provide such statements, and it would not now be possible to establish this figure precisely without disproportionate cost and effort.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many of the 300 service men who have provided statements of evidence as part of the investigation into alleged breaches of the Official Secrets Act at 9 Signals Regiment have been discharged since 3 February 1984;

(2) how many of the 300 service men who have provided statements of evidence as part of the investigation into the alleged breaches of the Official Secrets Act at 9 Signals Regiment *(a)* are awaiting discharge, *(b)* have been discharged and *(c)* have been discharged prematurely or are to be discharged prematurely.

Mr. Lee: This information could not be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many senior non-commissioned officers of 9 Signals Regiment have been subjected to interrogation since 3 February 1984.

Mr. Lee: Ninety seven senior non-commissioned officers provided statements of evidence as part of the investigation into the alleged breaches of security at 9 Signal Regiment. A large number were interviewed but

not required to provide such statements, and it would not now be possible to establish this figure precisely without disproportionate cost and effort.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 83 service men prematurely discharged from 9 Signals Regiment have been subjected to interrogation since 3 January 1984.

Mr. Lee: I shall reply shortly.

RAF Personnel

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to the answer of 21 November, *Official Report*, column 252, whether a decision has been made yet on the future of Senior Aircraftsman Alan Lightower, Senior Aircraftsman Wayne Kriehn, Senior Aircraftsman Gwynfor Owen and Senior Aircraftsman Geoffrey Jones.

Mr. Stanley: No.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many servicemen have been subjected to interrogation since 3 February 1984 by Flight Sergeant Mason and Flight Sergeant Sheehan.

Mr. Lee: This information is not available.

Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether members of the armed forces of (i) Honduras, (ii) Guatemala and (iii) El Salvador have received training in his Department's establishments in the United Kingdom since August 1983.

Mr. Stanley: No, but El Salvador may receive some training in the United Kingdom in 1986.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether British troops stationed in Belize have provided training to members of the armed forces of (i) Honduras, (ii) Guatemala and (iii) El Salvador since August 1983.

Mr. Stanley: No.

Warships

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what saving the Government would expect to make if the warships now on order in British shipyards were built in German shipyards.

Mr. Lee: It is not the Government's policy to place orders for warships overseas.

Westland Helicopters

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the letter to him, dated 3 January, from Mr. Horne was received; when it was sent; and whether he had prior knowledge of the dispatch of the letter or its terms.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall answer shortly.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence who convened the meeting of the armaments directors of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and France in London on or around the afternoon of 29 November 1985; what proposals were discussed; and from whom each proposal originated.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The former Secretary of State, after consultation with Dr. Woerner convened the meeting. The armaments directors' unanimous recommendations resulted from a review of policies pursued since 1978 in the field of helicopter collaboration.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence who convened the meeting of senior executives of Agusta, Aerospatiale and Messerschmidt-Bolkow-Blohm in London on or around 29 November 1985; what proposals were considered at the meeting; and from whom each proposal originated.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The meeting originated in a request from Aerospatiale and MBB to my right hon. Friend, the then Secretary of State for Defence. He accepted this request just as he had previously agreed to see representatives of Sikorsky. At his suggestion Agusta were also invited to attend. After the three companies had met my right hon. Friend, and he had left for another engagement outside London, they had, I understand, a meeting with Lloyds Merchant Bank out of which their proposals emerged.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) further to his letter dated 3 January to Mr. Horne, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* full details of the indications given by the other Governments concerned in each of the three projects of their intention to withdraw from collaboration with Westland if the company decides to collaborate with Sikorsky and Fiat on the production of a helicopter;

(2) which of the Governments or firms in question took the initiative in forming the consortium which is bidding for a shareholding in Westland; and when and by whom the Government were first appraised of their intention;

(3) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the battlefield helicopter on which the United Kingdom has been intending to proceed with a feasibility study with Italy; what provision has been made for buying this helicopter, and at what cost in the long-term United Kingdom defence expenditure plans; which of the other Governments in the consortium have expressed an interest in buying the helicopter when developed and at what cost; and what is the value of the work for Westland;

(4) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* particulars showing the terms on which the Government would be invited to buy the proposed European helicopter; whether and to what extent the price would include payment for the development to date of the A129 and the PAH2; and if he will state the amount spent on the development to date;

(5) what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards buying arms and equipment from United Kingdom firms wholly or partly owned by United States firms; whether there has been any recent change in this policy; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the major United Kingdom defence contractors which are wholly or partly owned by United States firms;

(6) whether the Government are satisfied that the United Kingdom service requirement for which the new European helicopter is designed could not be met from United States sources at a competitive price; and whether the Government propose to enter into any contractual commitment which would prevent the United Kingdom buying a competitor helicopter at some future date;

(7) whether the general policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the purchase of helicopters from the proposed European consortium is based on the cost-benefit

for the United Kingdom as well as on the strategic implications; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the costs and benefits of each alternative as well as the strategic implications;

(8) which of the Governments and companies concerned have said they will take part in the NH90 helicopter development, and which have said that they will withdraw, if Westland collaborates with Sikorski-Fiat; and what claims Westland or Her Majesty's Government would have under the terms of the agreement if the agreement is denounced.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister earlier today.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) further to his letter, dated 3 January, to Mr. Horne, whether the Italian Government or Agusta have said that in the event of a link-up between Westland and Sikorsky-Fiat they will not proceed with the full development of the 13 tonne (EH 101) helicopter launched in 1984; which other countries would be interested in replacing Westland in this bilateral arrangement; whether any United Kingdom defence procurement interest would be jeopardised; and what claims Westland or the British Government would have under the terms of the agreement against Agusta if the agreement was denounced on the Italian side;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the 13 tonne class (EH 101) helicopter being developed by Westland and Agusta; what requirement for each of the armed services in the United Kingdom would be met by this helicopter; how many machines would be purchased by the United Kingdom and Italian Governments and at what cost; whether comparable machines are available or under development in the United States of America; whether the Agusta-Westland machine would be cheaper than a comparable United States machine; and whether the complete machine would be made in the United Kingdom independently of components made in Italy.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I will answer shortly.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to his letter, dated 3 January, to Mr. Horne, if he will give particulars to the 8-9 tonne helicopter (NH90) concerning which there is a memorandum of understanding; to what extent the five Governments are committed to develop this helicopter and to buy the machine when developed; what use the United Kingdom has for this helicopter; when it is expected to be in operation; how much of the development work will be in the United Kingdom; how much of the complete helicopter will be made in the United Kingdom; what is the amount of work which has been given to Westland under this project to date; and what future commitments of work have been made to Westland.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A memorandum of understanding covering the 14-month feasibility study into the NATO transport/anti-submarine helicopter for the 1990s was signed by France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and United Kingdom in September 1985. At this stage nations are only committed to take part in the feasibility study and will take a decision on whether to proceed to a further phase once the results of the feasibility study have been evaluated. The NH90 helicopter is likely to be of a size and configuration which could make it a contender to meet a United Kingdom light support helicopter requirement. Work during the feasibility study is shared on an equal basis between the five industries; no industrial plans have been made at this stage for any possible later phases.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards the purchase of the improved version of the Agusta A129 anti-tank helicopter; how this helicopter compares with the nearest equivalent produced by *(a)* Sikorsky and *(b)* any other United States company; what would be the cost in each case; how much of the improved Agusta A129 helicopter represents United Kingdom technology; and how much would be built in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Collaborative development of the A129 LAH is one of the options for meeting the Army's requirement for an anti-tank helicopter for the 1990s. Although it is envisaged that the A129 LAH would be an advanced helicopter, using the latest technology, the configuration, cost and industrial arrangements await the results and evaluation of a feasibility study. There is no equivalent helicopter currently produced by Sikorsky or any other American company, although a number of American companies are competing to develop an aircraft to meet the US service requirement for a light anti-tank helicopter to enter service in the 1990s.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence which of the three helicopter projects referred to in his letter dated 3 January to Mr. Horne would be an amalgam of the A129 and PAH2 helicopters.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The five-nation collaborative battlefield helicopter.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will publish for each of the three proposed collaborative helicopter projects referred to in his letter to Mr. Horne of 3 January the location of the relevant manufacturing plants.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The location of the principal plants of the companies participating in the NH90 project, which involves the largest number of countries in a European helicopter programme, is as follows:

France
Germany
Italy
United Kingdom
Netherlands
Marseilles
Munich
Milan
Yeovil
Amsterdam

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much he estimates will be saved in the defence budget if Westland joins the proposed European consortium to produce a battle helicopter; and if he will publish the *Official Report* the basis on which the calculation was made.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I have given today to a question from the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown).

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether, in considering the proposals for joint development of a battle helicopter, the Government took into account the effect of this on the design capability of Westland Helicopters; and if he will make a statement showing the extent to which the proposed new helicopter relies on design work already done on the A129 and the PAH2 together with the Government's estimate of the share of the design work, including work already done, which will accrue to Westland;

(2) what part Westland has played in developing the A129 and PAH2 helicopters; and what share Westland would get in designing the new helicopter if they agree to join the European consortium;

(3) how many man hours of work have already been done on the design and development of the helicopter which is to be built by a European consortium, and in

which countries; how many more hours need to be done and how much would be done in the United Kingdom if Westland agreed to take part; and where the pre-production models would be built;

(4) what military characteristics are lacking in the A129 and PAH2 helicopters which will not be lacking in the proposed consortium helicopter; when the new helicopter will be available for battlefield use and how this compares with delivery dates for the A129 and PAH2, respectively; and whether the characteristics required can be found in a helicopter being built or developed in the United States of America;

(5) whether the European consortium has undertaken to supply a battle helicopter within a given price range regardless of cost; who will bear the development costs; and what information he has as to the price for a comparable United States helicopter;

(6) who is to provide the development finance for the helicopter to be built by the European consortium bidding for Westland; how much will be contributed directly or indirectly by the United Kingdom Government; whether a ceiling would be set on the United Kingdom contribution; and whether the United Kingdom will be free to purchase helicopters elsewhere if the proposed helicopter does not meet its specification or is not delivered on time.

(7) what proportion of the existing staff would be employed on work on the helicopter to be built by a European consortium in the event of the company agreeing to take part in the project;

Mr. Norman Lamont: The A129 anti-tank helicopter is an Italian project designed and built by Agusta and due to enter full production shortly. The PAH2 anti-tank helicopter is a Franco-German project, designed by Aerospatiale and MBB, due to begin full development this year and enter service in the early 1990s. Westland has not been involved in the development of either helicopter.

Over the past year discussions have been taking place between Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom about the possibility of developing the A129 collaboratively to produce an advanced A129 LAH, to enter service in the mid-1990s; these negotiations have yet to be concluded.

Defence Ministers from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom indicated in December their desire to see a single European anti-tank helicopter project, which would combine elements of A129 LAH and PAH2. It is too early to say what, if any, of the elements of the A129 LAH and PAH2 programmes would be brought into a combined European programme or to comment on future levels of workshare, costs or numbers of aircraft from any future sole European collaborative anti-tank helicopter programme.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government have considered the strategic implications of the offer by a consortium of continental European manufacturers to buy a 29·9 per cent. stake in Westland Helicopters; and whether the Government have sought and obtained a guarantee that the battle helicopter which is to replace the A129 and PAH2 will not be dependent on sub-assemblies and components manufactured outside the United Kingdom, in the event that the European consortium offer to Westland is accepted.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The implications for procurement strategy in this field have been fully considered. The specific arrangements for the battlefield helicopter project will be for consideration in the light of the outcome of decisions by the Westland shareholders on the future of the company. It is a feature of most collaborative projects that, in order to obtain the benefits of scale in production, the participants depend upon each other's industry for components and sub-assemblies: Tornado and EH101 are examples.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what part he or his officials played in the discussions, finalised on 29 November, leading to the formation of the European consortium which is seeking a stake in Westland.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Senior representatives of the European companies met my right hon. Friend, the then Secretary of State for Defence, and Ministry of Defence officials on 29 November 1985. Ministry of Defence officials have provided factual information on the Department's plans for future helicopter procurement. Westland has been regularly provided with similar information as part of the routine liaison between the Department and its main helicopter supplier.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the nature and purpose of the NH90 project; what the letters NH convey; and why he told the Lloyd's Merchant Bank that a United States stake in Westland would be incompatible with participation by that company in the NH90 project.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister earlier today.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence how Her Majesty's Government intend to implement the assurances given by the Prime Minister to the board of Westland plc regarding that company's future participation in European projects.

Mr. Norman Lamont: We shall seek on all occasions to persuade our European partners of the advantages of Westland's participation in helicopter projects of mutual interest.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government considered the range, characteristics and estimated cost of the helicopters currently and prospectively available in examining the case for purchasing supplies from a European consortium; and if he will publish this information in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My Department keeps itself informed of the operational characteristics and estimated cost of helicopters which might potentially satisfy the needs of the armed services.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government considered the merits of the AST404 helicopter compared to the NH90 for supply to the British Army; what are the main fighting and other characteristics of each; what was the estimated United Kingdom content of each; and what was the estimated cost in each case before and after taking account of other costs and benefits.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The comparison the hon. Member is seeking is between a Ministry of Defence staff target and a specific helicopter project which is currently the subject of international feasibility study. No answer is therefore possible on the basis requested.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is satisfied his policy on United States collaboration with Westland will not affect the willingness of the United States to place contracts for strategic defence initiative work in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have no reason to suppose that decisions on the future of Westland will affect the placing of SDI work.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has examined the financial position of Agusta; how this compares with that of Westland; and what assessment he has made of the implications for each of these companies of a Westland link up with Sikorsky and Fiat.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Agusta, in common with other Western helicopter manufacturers, has experienced difficulties stemming from the stagnation of the world helicopter market following a period of growth in the 1970s. I understand that it is the intention of the Italian Government to sustain Agusta as a centre for the design, development and production of modern helicopters.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government are satisfied that other EEC countries would be willing to supply helicopters to the United Kingdom for use in the Falklands should hostilities recommence.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I will answer shortly.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations were made to the Governments of France, Italy and Germany before 29 November last to persuade them to take a shareholding directly or indirectly in Westland helicopters in return for a commitment by the United Kingdom to buy a continental helicopter.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I will answer shortly.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what rates of exchange were used to cost the various options open to his Department for the purchase of helicopters; and what effect there would be if the costings were all adjusted to current rates of exchange.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I will answer shortly.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government will give an undertaking that helicopters purchased from the European consortium will be built in the United Kingdom in the event of Westland agreeing to join the consortium.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The implications for procurement strategy in this field have been fully considered. The specific arrangements for the battlefield helicopter project will be for consideration in the light of the outcome of decisions by the Westland shareholders on the future of the company. It is a feature of most collaborative projects that, in order to obtain the benefits of scale in production, the participants depend upon each other's industry for components and sub-assemblies: Tornado and EH101 are examples.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in the negotiations leading up to the European consortium proposals for a share stake in Westland, he made it clear to the other Governments and companies concerned that the British Government would continue to support Westland's wish to participate in joint European projects.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Yes.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government are satisfied with the terms on which Westland Helicopters would participate in a European consortium to manufacture a battle helicopter in the event of the European consortium's proposals for Westlands being accepted; whether representatives of nationalised companies in other countries will be represented on the board of Westland; how Her Majesty's Government's interests will be safeguarded; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* such details as he has of the ownership, turnover and production of the firms concerned.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The commercial arrangements between Westland and any companies which may acquire a shareholding in it would be for the companies themselves to decide. Her Majesty's Government's interests in specific projects would be safeguarded in the contractual and other arrangements for those projects.

No doubt the hon. Member could obtain direct from the relevant companies copies of their annual reports giving the further information he seeks.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will indicate in which year he anticipates being able to place the order for six Westland Sea King helicopters if the projected saving of £25 million from merging the A129 and PAH2 helicopters is achieved.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Ministry of Defence cannot guarantee the order for six Sea Kings. However, if the plans for a five-nation battlefield helicopter project are approved, the order will be placed in late 1986, consistent with delivery in early 1990. This would apply whatever reconstruction proposals Westland's shareholders accepted.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give a breakdown and details of the £25 million projected savings in overheads from the merging of the A129 and PAH2 helicopter projects.

Mr. Norman Lamont: If a battlefield helicopter were procured on a five-nation basis, the United Kingdom defence budget would expect to contribute less than to a two-nation project because the costs of development would be more widely shared. The saving in the Department's forward costings is calculated to amount to £25 million by March 1991.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement explaining where and when the recent meeting of national armaments directors of France, Germany and Italy took place at which the decision was made to purchase only helicopters built in Europe; and what steps he took to publicise the decisions made at the meeting and the implications of the decisions for defence policy.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall answer shortly.

Tornado Aircraft

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the significance of the Tornado aircraft programme to the defence of the United Kingdom; how much public money has been committed to it; and if he intends to cancel the programme in the light of the disclosure of Libyan part ownership of Fiat.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall answer shortly.

European Fighter Aircraft

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the significance of the European fighter aircraft to the defence of the United Kingdom; how much public money has been committed to it; and if he intends to cancel the programme in the light of the disclosure of Libyan part ownership of Fiat.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall answer shortly.

NATO Costs

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the total costs of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation defences were borne by the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy, respectively, in the most recent annual period for which figures are available.

Mr. Stanley: The countries mentioned accounted for the following percentage of total defence spending by NATO members in 1984:

	per cent.
United States	70·6
United Kingdom	6·7
France	6·0
Germany	6·0
Italy	2·8

Notes:

(1) These figures are compiled from NATO sources, except for France. They are based on NATO definitions of defence expenditure.

(2) The United Kingdom devotes some 95 per cent. of its defence spending to NATO; comparable figures are not available for other countries.

Arms Supplies

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government are satisfied at the co-operation from the United States of America in supplying arms and equipment for use by the British forces; and if Her Majesty's Government are also satisfied with similar co-operation from Italy, France and Germany.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Yes.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the defence implications of the consequences for the ferry fleet of the proposed Channel tunnel.

Mr. Stanley: The effect of a Channel fixed link upon the ferry fleet and the consequential defence implications, are being taken fully into account in the assessment of the Channel Fixed Link proposals.

Fox Hunting

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to prohibit the use of regimental funds in connection with the use of departmental property, such as horses, to participate in fox hunting.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: No. Hunting is a demanding mounted activity which brings benefit in terms of improving equestrian standards, and positive exercise and development for the horses. Regimental funds are not public funds, so the question of a prohibition does not arise.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any insurance costs arise to public funds in respect of the participation of Army *(a)* horses and *(b)* personnel in hunting activities.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: No.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence how regiments organise payments for block bookings taken out with hunts each winter; and what costs arise to public funds in this respect.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: All payments to hunts are made from non-public funds.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current annual cost of keeping a Cavalry, Guards or King's Troop horse; and if this is fully met from public funds.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: The average annual cost of an Army horse is about £800 which is met from public funds.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence what costs arise to public funds in respect of the participation of Army staff and horses in fox hunting; and if he will give the figures for the last two seasons broken down by character of cost.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: There are no additional costs to public funds.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence when, pursuant to the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, Army horses were first permitted to ride in hunts.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: Records show that Army horses have been hunted since at least 1902, but it is believed that Army horses have participated in hunts for many years before that date.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many days in the 1984-85 season the 19 Army officers referred to in the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, hunted.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: Detailed records are not kept but on average each officer hunted about seven times during the season. Officers pay the entry fees for hunts from their own money.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many days in the 1984-85 season any of the 25 soldiers referred to in the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, actually rode to hounds.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: Detailed records are not kept but each soldier hunted about three or four times during the season. Unlike officers, soldiers do not pay entry fees to the hunts; these are paid on their behalf from regimental funds.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence what were the duties of the 25 soldiers referred to in the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *782*, in the 1984-85 season whilst at RAVC Melton Mowbray.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: To exercise and look after the Army horses sent by London units to Melton Mowbray.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many horses from each of the Household Cavalry, Kings' Troop Royal Horse Artillery and the Guards Division were injured whilst hunting; and how many died whilst hunting or from causes directly related to hunting, in each of the last two seasons.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: During the last two seasons one horse died whilst on a hunt but its death was not directly related to hunting. No separate records are kept of injuries sustained on hunts.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence how the horses are selected to participate in hunting activities; how are the *(a)* officers and *(b)* men selected from amongst the volunteers; and how many horses have been selected in total in each of the last five years, broken down by the number of times they have been so selected.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: The horses that are selected for hunting are those which would benefit from the vigorous exercise and the teamwork involved in hunting. They tend to be the younger horses which have spent the summer on ceremonial duties in London. The officers and men selected for hunts are those who enjoy the hunts, are competent riders and are available to exercise the horses. Records are not kept of the number of times a horse has been selected for hunts during the last five years.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current usage of Land Rover registration number 64 HG 93 and Rice trailer 43 FL 94; and if he will make a statement on their use in connection with attendance at hunts in each of the last two seasons.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: Rice trailer 43 FL 94 is the property of the Guards Saddle club, having been purchased and insured by the club. Land Rover 64 HG 93 is the only military transport used by the personnel from the Household Division involved in the winter training at Melton Mowbray. It is used to collect forage, transport soldiers and tow a horse box. Money is recovered from the Guards Saddle club, appropriate to the distance travelled, and if the vehicle is used for taking horses to meets.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence who owns the vehicles used to transport horses to hunt meetings; and who is responsible for the fuel and other running costs.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: With the exception of one military Land Rover which amongst its other duties is sometimes used to take horses to meets, all vehicles used to convey Army horses to hunts are privately owned by the units concerned. Fuel and maintenance costs for these vehicles are met from regimental funds. In the case of the military Land Rover a recovery of cost is made from the unit's saddle club funds when the vehicle is used to transport horses to meets.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of Army horses spend their winter at RAVC Melton Mowbray; what exercise and training the remaining horses receive and where; and why they do not participate in hunting there.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: About 25 per cent. of the Army horses spend the winter at Melton Mowbray. Horses which do not go to Melton Mowbray for winter exercising tend to be: horses which are unlikely to benefit significantly from winter exercising, usually the more mature horses; horses needed for ceremonial duties; horses needed for riding instruction in London. All horses that are based in London are exercised regularly, for varying durations, in Hyde park; some horses from the Household Cavalry are also sent to Sopley, Hampshire for two weeks winter exercising.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards soldiers at RAVC Melton Mowbray concealing their fox hunting activities there from other Army visitors to the centre.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: No attempt is made to conceal this activity from Army visitors to the centre.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Secretary of State for Defence what duties soldiers from the Guards Division would be employed on if they were not acting as grooms for fox hunting at RAVC Melton Mowbray.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *379-80*]: They would be exercising and looking after Army horses or undertaking equestrian training.

Bases and Facilities

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the location by parliamentary constituency of *(a)* all Royal Air Force facilities in the United Kingdom and *(b)* all United States bases and facilities in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 27 November 1985, c. *577*]: The following two communications facilities were omitted in error from the list of bases and facilities used by the United States Forces in the United Kingdom which I gave in my previous reply:

Communications Facility	*Constituency*
RAF Swingate	Dover
RAF Thurso	Caithness and Sutherland

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 14 January 1986

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Phoenix II

Mr. Parris asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about Phoenix II, the proposed engineering steels joint venture between the British Steel Corporation and Guest, Keen and Nettlefold.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Government announced on 7 August 1985 their agreement in principle that Phoenix II should go ahead, as a joint venture company combining BSC's special steels businesses and GKN's special steels and forgings operations. Agreement has now been reached on a number of major outstanding issues, which should enable the new company, to be called United Engineering Steels, to start trading on 1 April 1986.

BSC and GKN will both contribute fixed assets, stocks and cash to the new company. As part of these arrangements the Government have approved the provision of funds for BSC to subscribe £55 million for preference shares and loanstock. United Engineering Steels will be a freestanding, private sector company, and it is the firm intention of BSC and GKN as shareholders, and of the Government, that it will meet all future financial requirements without further recourse to public sector finance or guarantees. The Government approval is also on the understanding that the new company will undertake further investments, particularly in continuous casting facilities.

On the information at present before him, and in accordance with the recommendation of the Director General of Fair Trading, my right hon. and learned Friend has decided not to refer the merger of the relevant BSC and GKN activities to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Formation of the new company is also subject to the agreement of the European Commission under the competition provisions of the treaty of Paris.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Expenditure White Paper

Mr. Lightbown asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intends to publish the 1986 public expenditure White Paper.

Mr. MacGregor: "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1986-87 to 1988-89"—Cmnd. 9702, Vol I and II, will be published at 3.30 pm on Wednesday 15 January, and copies will be available in the Vote Office.

EC Budget

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to receive payment of the 1,000 million European currency units abatement agreed at Fontainebleau in June 1984 in respect of the United Kingdom's excessive net contribution to the 1984 Community budget.

Mr. Brooke: Payment of the 1,000 mecu (£604 million) was made over the period 31 December to 6 January. It could not be paid to the United Kingdom until the Community's new own resources decision had been approved by all member states in accordance with their respective national procedures. Notification of the last of the national approvals was received by the Community on 28 December. The 1,000 mecu were then paid as soon as possible thereafter. Further details are contained in a press notice issued by Her Majesty's Treasury on 7 January, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Kestrel Pension Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Attorney-General if the Director of Public Prosecutions has received any report from the police concerning allegations of fraud in connection with the Kestrel pension scheme run by Hill: Kestrel Communications Limited; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: These allegations were the subject of a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions by the Thames Valley police in December 1984. The Director of Public Prosecutions established a fraud investigation group to co-ordinate the investigation and the result of the inquiries is now under consideration.

St. Edward (Remains)

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Attorney-General if he has received representations about the return of the bones of Saint Edward, the Anglo Saxon martyr king, to Shaftesbury; and if he has been engaged in legal proceedings concerning the return of the bones.

The Attorney-General: I have received a number of representations on this matter from supporters of the King Edward Orthodox Trust, who wish to establish a resting place for the bones at Brookwood Cemetery, and from others who would like to see the bones returned to Shaftesbury where they were discovered. I have no plans, at present, to pursue legal proceedings concerning the return of the bones.

Commercial Counterfeiting

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Attorney-General if the remit for the investigation by the Roskill commission included the trial of cases involving commercial counterfeiting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: I have been asked to reply.

The remit of the fraud trials committee included all criminal proceedings arising from fraud. I would refer my hon. Friend to the statement my right hon. Friend made today.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Intervention Stocks

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the stocks of beef and skimmed milk held in intervention stores in the United Kingdom at the latest convenient date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: A note setting out the volume of United Kingdom and Community intervention stocks, including those of beef and skimmed milk powder, is deposited in the Library of the House and updated monthly.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the cost in 1984-85, and what is the estimated cost in 1985-86, of holding beef and skimmed milk in intervention stores.

Mr. Gummer: Figures for storage and other related costs are:

£'000

	1984-85 (outturn)	*1985-86 (estimate)*
Beef	12,552	23,769
Skimmed milk powder	2,323	924

Source: 1984-85 Appropriation Accounts, Class III, Vote 1, Subhead A1; 1985-86 Winter Supplementary Estimate, Class III, Vote 1, Subhead A1.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the cattle which produced the beef and skimmed milk currently held in intervention stores were fed on imported grain, soya, ground nuts or anchovies.

Mr. Gummer: It is not possible to ascertain on what the animals from which are derived the beef and milk products held in intervention have been fed. I have no evidence that imported groundnuts or anchovies are used in cattle feed, although soya can be a minor ingredient in cattle rations and some imported grain may be used in cattle feed in some areas of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make it his policy that beef and skimmed milk going into intervention stores do not come from cattle reared on imported grain, soya, ground nuts or anchovies, or on crops capable of being used for human consumption.

Mr. Gummer: No. Producers should continue to be free to choose the most economic way of providing feedstuffs for their livestock. It is any way not practicable nor sensible to do this.

EC (Surplus Food)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total tonnage of surplus food in European Economic Community private and public stores at the most recent date for which figures are available; what were the comparable totals on the same date in each of the previous three years; and what was the increase in such total stocks each day over the past 12 months.

Mr. Gummer: A note setting out the volume of produce, including foodstuffs, in intervention and private storage in the European Economic Community on the latest available dates is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly. Information on EC stock levels at the end of December in each of the three previous years is as follows:

'000 tonnes

	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*Date at which applicable in each year*
European Community foodstuffs held in public intervention storage				
Butter	100	692	841	31 December
Skimmed milk powder	567	990	617	31 December
Wheat	6,300	6,857	8,782	31 December
of which:				
Feed	n.a.	n.a.	3,109	31 December
Bread	n.a.	n.a.	5,673	31 December
Barley	1,625	1,102	1,845	31 December
Rye	293	249	426	31 December
Durum	771	714	858	31 December
Beef	203	372	610	31 December
Olive oil	166	102	112	31 December
Oilseeds	37	0	55	31 December
Wine alcohol	n.a.	n.a.	2mhl	September
Sugar (white sugar equivalent)	0	0	88	31 December
European Community foodstuffs held in assisted private storage				
Butter	237	188	107	31 December (1982 and 1983=December)
Cheese	67	91	‡100	December
Beef	26	24	275	Figures represent quantities contracted for storage under schemes operating nearest the end of each year
Pigmeat	10	22	4	31 December
Dried fruit	0	*55	*15	31 December
			†22	31 December
Table wine	38mhl	39mhl	5mhl	31 December

* 1981 crop dried grapes.
† 1982 crop dried grapes and figs suitable for distillation and animal feed.
‡ Estimated.

Figures showing the increase in stocks on a day-to-day basis over the past 12 months are not available.

Annual Review

Mr. Soames asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the outcome of the 1986 annual review of agriculture.

Mr. Jopling: A White Paper setting out the conclusions of the 1986 annual review of agriculture will be laid before Parliament today. The White Paper shows that gross output in current prices is forecast to decrease about 5 per cent. from £12,550 million in 1984 to £11,883 million in 1985. Aggregate farming income during 1985 fell by 43 per cent. following the 35 per cent. increase in 1984. Farm business income, a broader based measure, declined by 25 per cent. following a 27 per cent. increase in 1984. The industry's labour productivity declined by 3 per cent. compared to an average annual growth rate of 7 per cent. over the last decade.

These adverse trends are largely the result of the exceptional weather conditions experienced in 1985 which particularly affected Scotland, Northern Ireland and the hill and upland areas of Wales and Northern England.

The cereals harvest was 4·3 million tonnes below the record level in 1984 and there were marked reductions in farming incomes in the cattle and sheep, cereals and other cropping sectors. Community policies aimed at restraining production were also contributing factors.

Live Fish (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Soames asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to make an order to permit live fish of the salmon family to enter Great Britain from Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling: Following extensive investigations conducted by our officials, my right hon. Friends and I have concluded that the present absolute prohibition on imports of live fish of the salmon family under section 1 of the Diseases of Fish Act 1937 should be relaxed in respect of Northern Ireland. Accordingly, we have today laid before Parliament for its approval a draft statutory instrument entitled The Importation of Live Fish of the Salmon Family Order, which would give effect to this relaxation.

The absolute prohibition under the 1937 Act on imports of live fish of the salmon family has served us well over the years and the Government intend to do nothing which would jeopardise our present relative freedom from serious fish diseases. The relaxation we propose relates only to live fish of the salmon family coming from regularly tested hatcheries in Northern Ireland. We have concluded that such a relaxation is justified because of the fish disease status of Northern Ireland and the measures it takes to secure that status. When the order comes into force movements of live fish of the salmon family from Northern Ireland to Great Britain will need to be licensed by the appropriate Fisheries Department. Licences will be issued only so long as we are satisfied as to the health status of the supplying site.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers' Pay Dispute

38. **Mr. Madel** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on his policy towards the reimbursement of transport costs for children who, as a result of disruption to school timetables in connection with the teachers' dispute, are obliged to travel at times of day when official school transport is not available.

Mr. Dunn: Under section 55(1) of the Education Act 1944 it is for local education authorities to judge whether it is necessary to make arrangements for facilitating the attendance of pupils at schools. Transport provided under such arrangements must be free of charge. Section 55(2) provides a discretionary power for authorities to pay the whole or part of the travel expenses in other cases.

Open University

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has received the report of the Open University's visiting committee; and if he will make a statement on the Open University's allocation of grant for 1986 and the provisional allocation for 1987 and 1988.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend has considered the Open University visiting committee's report. A copy has been sent to the university with a letter notifying it of its grant for 1986 and indicated grants for 1987 and 1988. Copies of the report and the grant letter have been placed in the Library.

ENVIRONMENT

Pollutants (Synergistic Relationship)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the existence of a synergistic relationship between the two pollutant effects sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen.

Mrs. Rumbold: Research so far indicates that these two pollutants can be synergistic in their effects in some cases but that in others their combined effects may be equal to, or less than, the effect of each independently. Further research in my Department's programme is aimed at increasing our understanding of these complex relationships.

Acid Deposition

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what freshwater bodies in the United Kingdom have become unable to support fish stocks because of acidification as a result of anthropogenic emissions of sulphur compounds; and, in each case, if a return to former viability is expected to be achieved by the end of the century, with or without liming operations.

Mrs. Rumbold: There are a number of man made and natural causes of acidification. The freshwaters where fish stocks have been most affected by acidification are mainly areas of high rainfall and acid geology in the north and west of Britain. A report by my Department's acid waters review group identifying the most susceptible areas will soon be published.

It is not possible to say whether or when the affected waters might be returned to their former biological status. Research is being carried out to investigate causes and possible remedies.

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what fall there has been in the level of emission of sulphur dioxide from United Kingdom sources between 1979 and 1984.

Mrs. Rumbold: United Kingdom sulphur dioxide emissions fell from an estimated 5·34 million tonnes in 1979 to an estimated 3·54 million tonnes in 1984, a fall of 33·7 per cent.

Water (Nitrate Levels)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many reports were made to health officials by water undertakings to indicate nitrate levels in public water supplies over 50 mg; and what were the comparable figures in each of the previous three years.

Mr. John Patten: Water authorities and companies notify health authorities whenever nitrate levels in a public water supply exceed 50 mg per litre. During the first six months of 1985, 70 supplies exceeded 50 mg nitrate per litre at some time, in 1984, 81 supplies and in 1983, 82 supplies. I do not have comparable information for earlier years.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to reduce nitrate levels in public water supplies.

Mr. John Patten: No public water supply is allowed to contain nitrate levels which the Government's medical advisers consider to be a danger to public health. As a result of my Department's recent examination of applications for derogations from the nitrate standard of the EC drinking water directive, concentrations in seven supplies have been or are being reduced. A group of experts will shortly be reporting to Ministers on the scope for limiting nitrate concentrations in water sources and supplies in the longer term.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Victim Support Schemes

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has reached a conclusion on the possibility of providing additional funding for victim support schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Yes. I remain of the view that individual schemes should in the main be able to look to their local communities as their primary sources of funds. Such an arrangement best corresponds with the spontaneous and voluntary character of the victims support movement. I am, however, conscious that some schemes are experiencing particular financial difficulties, and I therefore propose to make £136,000 available in the financial year 1986-87 to help such schemes. This will be in addition to the grant which will continue to be paid to the National Association of Victims Support Schemes to support its headquarters work. The money will be paid to NAVSS, which will allocate grants to local schemes which are in particular need of financial assistance. I understand that NAVSS will shortly be writing to local management committees inviting applications. Victims support schemes, like other voluntary bodies, can also apply for assistance under general Government programmes such as the urban programme and the MSC voluntary projects and community programmes.

Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Report)

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the report by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on his strategy for the coming year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I am today placing copies of the Commissioner's report to me in the Library, and I am sending a copy to all right hon. and hon. Members for constituencies wholly or partly within the Metropolitan police district. I plan to meet London Members shortly to discuss the report, and I hope that the House as a whole will also have the opportunity to debate it.

I have discussed the Commissioner's report fully with him. It describes the progress made towards achieving the strategy last year, and sets a new force goal for 1986.

The Metropolitan police have been under heavy pressure for much of the past year, notably during the disturbances in September and October. Despite this the Commissioner is able to report achievements in many fields. The continued growth in the number of neighbourhood watch schemes, and the further development of community-police consultative groups is particularly welcome. Consultative groups in many parts of London now play an important part in the development of the policing policies for their areas.

The force goal for 1986 will be to improve the quality of service to the public by:

(a) The reduction of criminal opportunity through crime prevention, public contact, involvement and cooperation;

(b) (i) The enhanced detection of specific criminal offences (for example, robbery, burglary, drug misuse, racial attacks, vandalism and auto-crime) in accordance with local or centrally identified priorities; (ii) A concerted attack on organised crime and the elimination of the profits therefrom;

(c) The enhanced support, care and concern for victims of crime;

(d) Improved effectiveness both in the preservation of public tranquillity through closer community-police relations and in the policing of public disorder through better tactical control, communications, equipment and training.

I greatly welcome the new emphasis on support for the victims of crime.

The Commissioner expresses in the report his views on the manpower needs of the force. As I told the House on 21 October, I have set in hand urgent work to consider where there are specific needs for further increases in the force establishment. At the same time, I have emphasised the continuing importance of securing the most effective use of existing resources. The report gives a full account of the initiatives which the Commissioner is pursuing to this end.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the increase in the number of 14 to 17-year-olds and 17 to 21-year-olds cautioned for indictable offences between 1983 and 1984.

Mr. Mellor: Statistics of cautions are published annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" (chapter 5 of the latest issue of 1984, Cmnd. 9621) and more detail is given in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary Tables, Volume 4". Table S4.1(c) of the issue of the latter for 1984 shows that between 1983 and 1984 the number of cautions of those aged 14 to 16 increased by 10 per cent. and of those aged 17 to 20 by 34 per cent.

Coroners

Mr. Haynes asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will introduce legislation to consolidate the law regarding the duties of coroners.

Mr. Mellor: We have no immediate plans to do so.

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the number of criminal offences recorded in 1985 and the number in 1978.

Mr. Mellor: Information on notifiable offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the first three quarters of 1985 was published in "Home Office Statistical Bulletin", issue 34/85 on 11 December 1985. The number of offences in 1978 was published in the report on criminal statistics for that year (Cmnd. 7670).

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Mr. Hirst asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the operation of neighbourhood watch schemes.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Neighbourhood watch provides an important stimulus for community involvement in practical crime prevention and I am encouraged by its continued expansion. Some 8,000 individual schemes are now operating in England and Wales, and more are planned. Schemes which are properly designed and carefully introduced can reduce local crime. The results of detailed evaluations of neighbourhood watch schemes in the Metropolitan police district, which we expect towards the end of the year, should provide further information on how to obtain the full benefit of this valuable crime prevention initiative.

Shops Bill

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will update the figures previously given for the number of representations he has received from members of the public and interested parties for and against the Shops Bill *[Lords]* detailing the total numbers involved; and if he will list any shopping chains that have written in favour and those against.

Mr. Waddington: We have received 27 representations in favour of the Bill since its publication and 16,292 against. The following multiple retailers have written in favour of the Bill since its publication:

Wyevale Garden Centres Limited
Notcutts Garden Centres Limited
William Stike Limited
Briggs Boot Stores.

The Co-operative Union Limited has written against.

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects Sir Cyril Philips to complete his next annual report on the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Sir Cyril Philips has undertaken a comprehensive programme of visits and has consulted a number of organisations interested in the operation of the prevention of terrorism legislation. Observations from other interested persons or organisations may be sent to him direct or received on his behalf by the Home Office F.4 division by 24 January. I hope to make the report public later this month.

SCOTLAND

Acid Deposition

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will give figures to show the current levels of deposited acidity in grams of hydrogen ion per square metre per year, deposited non-marine sulphate, and deposited nitrate in grams of sulphur and nitrogen per square metre per year for *(a)* the Loch Ard area and *(b)* the Merrick in Galloway; and what is the number of years over which the figures are averaged;

(2) if he will publish estimates of levels of deposited acidity in grams of hydrogen ion per square metre per year and deposited non-marine sulphate and deposited nitrate in grams of sulphur and nitrogen per square metre per year for *(a)* the Loch Ard area, central Scotland and *(b)* the Merrick in Galloway for the years 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2001, respectively.

Mr. Ancram: Figures of the levels of deposited acidity in the Loch Ard area and the Merrick are not available but values can be deduced from the date published by the Department of the Environment review group on acid rain in 1983 and available from Her Majesty Stationery Office. Ranges representative of these general areas, averaged over three years 1978-1980, within which depositions may be expected to lie are set out in the table.

	Wet Deposition		*Dry Deposition*	
	Loch Ard	*Merrick*	*Loch Ard*	*Merrick*
Hydrogen ion (gH^+m^{-2} $year^{-1}$)	0.05-0.1	0.05-0.1	—	—
Sulphate (gSm^{-2} $year^{-1}$)	1.2-1.6	>1.6	0.5-1.0	0.5-1.0
Nitrate (gNm^{-2} $year^{-1}$)	0.2-0.4	0.1-0.2	Not Available	

It is not possible to make an accurate estimate of future deposition levels at specific sites in individual years because of the difficulty of forecasting emissions and the large year-to-year variation introduced by meteorological factors. Data from a number of Scottish sites suggest, however, that if present emission patterns remain relatively constant there is unlikely to be a significant change in deposition levels over the Loch Ard and Merrick

areas in the next 15 years. A reduction in emissions would, however, be expected to result in generally reduced depositions.

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has to the maximum level of sulphur deposition, expressed in kilograms per hectare per year, which lochs and freshwaters in acid-sensitive areas of Scotland can tolerate without experiencing long-term acidification; and what information he has as to which specific bodies of water have already been acidified beyond this maximum level.

Mr. Ancram: The sensitivity of lochs and freshwaters to acidity varies according to geological and other conditions, and the level of sulphur deposition above which ecosystems may become affected is subject to continuing research. The biological effects of long-term acidification have, however, been evident so far only in the surface waters of the Galloway and Trossach areas.

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage change there has been in the concentration of acidity of rainfall in Scotland between 1979 and 1984.

Mr. Ancram: Current research indicates that between 1979 and 1984 the concentration of acidity in rainfall in Scotland has reduced substantially, probably by 40 to 50 per cent., although the trend has not been consistent over the country due to effects of variable weather patterns. These figures are based on measurements taken since 1978 at a number of different sites throughout the country.

EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Paymaster General why claimants who are disallowed unemployment benefit on availability grounds are included in the unemployment totals if they continue to sign on as unemployed.

Mr. Alan Clark: The monthly unemployment count relates to those claiming benefits at unemployment benefit offices. The count may therefore include some people who are disallowed benefit on availability grounds who continue to sign on, usually because they are appealing against disallowance.

Nuclear Power Industry

Mr. Ashdown asked the Paymaster General if he will describe the types of information published by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate in respect of accidents, incidents and untoward occurrences, including those without any radiological consequences, at licensed nuclear sites and at other nuclear sites; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Health and Safety Executive publishes a quarterly statement of all incidents at nuclear installations which are reported to Ministers under the arrangements announced by my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, Central (Mr. Moore), the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy, to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 26 July 1982, at column 374.

In addition, the executive publishes reports of special investigations that it carries out.

Employment Schemes

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General how many people have been assisted by the work on own account scheme in each of the last five years for which figures are available; what was the cost of the scheme in each year; if he will provide details of the assistance given in each individual case in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The number of people helped in the last five years and the total cost of the business on own account scheme in each of those years was:

	Beneficiaries	*Expenditure* £
1980-81	11	9,906
1981-82	13	19,762
1982-83	7	24,085
1983-84	13	34,568
1984-85	7	26,272

Details of the grants awarded, but not necessarily paid, in 1984-85 are as follows:

£1,700 for piano tuning.
£6,000 for word processing and office services.
£6,700 for picture framing.
£4,000 for music composition.
£5,180 for car sales and valeting.
£6,000 for saddlery.
£5,000 for electronics repairs.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General if he will provide details of the work on own account scheme and the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The business on own account scheme is intended to help certain very severely disabled people who have no other means of obtaining employment to set up their own businesses. It provides assistance in cases where other schemes, such as the enterprise allowance scheme, are not appropriate or do not make adequate financial provision. The scheme is administered by the Manpower Services Commission.

Assistance under the scheme is given in the form of a single grant towards the cost of the tools, equipment, premises alterations and so on necessary to start up a business. MSC's disablement resettlement officers can advise potential applicants as to their eligibility, the criteria for which are:

(i) the applicant must be severely disabled and classified as section II disabled according to the registration scheme set up under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944;

(ii) the applicant must be considered capable of running the business;

(iii) the proposed business should be well thought out and considered to be viable;

(iv) the business must be a last resort, that is all other avenues of resettlement into open and sheltered employment must have been explored.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Third World (Private Aid)

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to what factors he attributes the decline in net private aid flows to the Third world between 1980 and 1984, and in particular the fall in bank lending.

Mr. Raison: The decline in net private flows to developing countries is the product of general world

economic circumstances. During the 1970s many such countries borrowed heavily on floating rate terms in currencies which in recent years have yielded high real rates of interest. This has led to an increasing level of debt servicing and a corresponding decline in creditworthiness. The increased risk of international bank lending has resulted in banks, including those in the United Kingdom, reducing the level of net lending to developing countries.

Net private flows from the United Kingdom to developing countries are estimated to have declined from £4·5 billion in 1980 to £1·4 billion in 1984, the main element being a decline from £1·9 billion to £0·1 billion in bank lending on market terms (that is loans with a maturity of one year or more, net of repayments). Total international bank lending from all sources to developing countries declined markedly over the same period.

Aid Statistics

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will set out in tabular form from Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation sources the actual monetary amount, converted to pounds sterling or United States dollars, of official aid provided in 1984 by France, Canada, West Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, Italy and the United States of America.

Mr. Raison: Net official development assistance provided in 1984 by the listed countries was:

	US $ billion	*US $ billion*
France	*2·552	†3·768
Canada	1·625	
West Germany	2·782	
Japan	4·319	
United Kingdom	1·418	
Italy	1·105	
United States	8·711	

* Excludes disbursements to overseas departments and territories.
† Includes disbursements to overseas departments and territories.
Source: OECD development assistance committee chairman's report for 1985 (draft).

ENERGY

Polkemmet Bing

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Energy what conclusions the National Coal Board's chief scientist for Scotland has reached following his analysis of the length of copper piping taken from near the Polkemmet Bing and supplied by the hon. Member for Linlithgow to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt) on 16 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The National Coal Board's monitoring of the fumes at the Polkemmet Bing has shown that the levels of hydrogen sulphide and sulphur dioxide at the perimeter of the burning Bing are less than one part per million; concentrations at nearby properties should be even lower because of dilution. Experts believe that these low concentrations would not be a health hazard, even though they have unpleasant odours and are capable of discolouring some metals such as copper.

The section of copper pipe which the hon. Member passed on to me on 16 December has been examined by the Scottish area of the NCB's chief scientist, with the assistance of the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh. They conclude that the discolouration of the pipe is a film of copper sulphide, which is to be expected given the prevailing conditions at Polkemmet. I shall be writing to the hon. Member to give him the details of the reports.

PRIME MINISTER

Israeli Prime Minister

Q42. **Mr. Latham** asked the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the forthcoming visit to the United Kingdom by the Prime Minister of Israel.

The Prime Minister: The Prime Minister of the State of Israel will visit the United Kingdom at my invitation from 21-26 January. I look forward to my talks with Mr. Peres.

Children (Ministerial Responsibility)

Q49. **Mr. Dickens** asked the Prime Minister if she will allocate specific ministerial responsibility for the welfare and protection of children to co-ordinate the responsibilities of the Department of Health and Social Security, education, police and voluntary services; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I am fully aware of the need for effective co-ordination on all matters concerned with the welfare and protection of children. But I do not believe that my hon. Friend's proposal would secure the result he earnestly seeks. At present the Secretary of State for Social Services is the lead Minister in the existing arrangements.

British Rail

Q60. **Dr. Marek** asked the Prime Minister if she will make it her policy to use British Rail at least once in the course of her official duties in 1986.

The Prime Minister: I will try.

EC (Majority Voting)

Q78. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Prime Minister what has been the response of other European Economic Community members to the reservation which she placed at the Luxembourg summit in December on the proposal to extend majority voting to directives dealing with terms and conditions of employment; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: At the Foreign Affairs Council on 16-17 December, there was a brief discussion in which my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, maintained our reserve on the working environment text dealing with the health and safety of workers on the grounds that this article, as drafted, might be used to impose unfair burdens on our small and medium businesses. It has already been agreed to maintain unanimity for directives concerned with harmonisation of laws relating to other rights and interests of employed persons.

Engagements

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Westland plc

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether she will institute an inquiry into the publication of recent correspondence between the Solicitor-General and the Secretary of State for Defence: and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister [*pursuant to her reply*, 13 January 1986]: An inquiry has been instituted.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish detailed statistics on pupil-teacher ratios and unit costs in primary, secondary and grammar schools for each of the five education and library board areas in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Scott: The latest available information is as follows:

	Belfast	*North-Eastern*	*South-Eastern*	*Southern*	*Western*
1. Pupil/teacher ratios					
Primary (including nursery)	21·7	23·5	23·8	23·8	23·8
Secondary	14·0	15·3	15·1	15·4	15·2
Grammar	15·5	16·0	17·2	15·7	16·1
2. Cost per pupil	£	£	£	£	£
Primary (including nursery)	739	642	627	612	629
Secondary	1,314	1,064	1,063	984	1,042
Grammar	1,047	1,003	919	1,023	1,010

Notes:
(a) Pupil and teacher numbers are as at January 1985: expenditure as in 1984-85 financial year.
(b) Unit pupil costs exclude expenditure on certain school-related services—eg school meals, home-school transport and other miscellaneous items.

Terrorism

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce legislation to provide for stiffer sentences for terrorist activities, including the reintroduction of the death penalty for murder.

Mr. Tom King: No.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Board and Lodging

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to action taken by local authorities in Tyne and Wear on cases referred to them in accordance with his Department's circular S12/85 on substandard board and lodging accommodation.

Mr. Newton: I understand that local authorities in the Tyne and Wear area have taken action in two cases following reference to them in accordance with the Department's circular S12/85. The details of any such action are of course the responsibility of the local authorities concerned—the boroughs of Sunderland and South Tyneside—and the hon. Member may therefore wish to consult them direct.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps have been taken to ensure the payment of arrears of supplementary benefit board and lodging allowances following the statement to the House on 17 December 1985 by the Minister for Social Security, the hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton).

Mr. Newton: Instructions were issued last week on the payment of arrears of benefit to people in ordinary board and lodging between 29 April and 24 November 1985. Copies of the instructions are in the Library. Local offices will be identifying affected cases and paying arrears as soon as possible.

We shall also take the earliest possible opportunity to secure, take in and, as appropriate, act upon judicial clarification of the effect of the Supplementary Benefit (Requirements) Amendment and Temporary Provisions Regulations (SI 1984/2034), which governed the payments for all types of boarders from December 1984 to April 1985.

Hospitals

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all new hospitals which have opened since May 1979 or are due to open over the next 18 months, indicating the first date on which approval for each scheme was given.

Mr. Whitney: The tables list the major capital schemes completed since May 1979 and those expected to be completed in 1986-87 and give in each case the year in which the scheme was first approved. A major scheme is one above a certain cost, which has varied over time, which requires it to be subject to departmental approvals. During the period many smaller capital projects have been completed, but for which full records are not held centrally.

Region and Scheme	Approval in principle given
Major capital schemes completed since May 1979	
Northern	
Furness (Barrow) DGH Scheme 1 Ph 1	1972
North Tyneside Scheme 1 Ph 1	1977
Queen Elizabeth Gateshead Ph 1	1979
Royal Victoria Infirmary Ph 4	1964
South Cleveland General Ph 1	1972
Yorkshire	
Grimsby DGH Ph 1	1975
Leeds General Infirmary Ph 1	1960
Trent	
Chesterfield DGH Ph 1	1972
Glenfield DGH Ph 1	1976
Lincoln County Ph 1	1978
Northern General Ph 1c	1980
Queens Medical Centre Ph 2	1975
Rotherham DGH Ph 2	1978
East Anglian	
Great Yarmouth DGH Ph 1	1976
Hinchinbrooke Hospital Ph 3	1979
Ipswich Ph 1 (Heath Road Wing)	1977
Kings Lynn DGH Ph 2	1971
North West Thames	
Watford (Shrodells) Wing Ph 3	1970
North East Thames	
Broomfield DGH Ph 5	1980
Colchester DGH Ph 2	1979
London Hospital Clinical Building Ph 1	1970
Newham Hospital Ph 1	1976
South East Thames	
Kent & Sussex Hospital Ph 1	1978
Maidstone DGH Ph 1	1977
Orpington DGH Ph 1	1978
South West Thames	
Croydon/Mayday DGH	1976
Redhill DGH (Nucleus)	1976
St Georges Block G2 and F Ph 2	1979
Wessex	
Southampton General Ph 5 (Maternity)	1968
Southampton General Ph 5 West Ward Block	1968
Oxford	
Milton Keynes DGH Ph 1	1979
South Western	
Derriford DGH Ph 1	1971
West Midlands	
Dudley DGH (Russells Hall) Ph 3a	1970
Stafford DGH Ph 4	1971
Mersey	
Arrowe Park New DGH	1964
Countess of Chester (W Cheshire)	1977
Halton DGH Ph 2	1981
Macclesfield Development (Nucleus)	1978
Royal Liverpool Ph 2/3	1967
North Western	
Hope Hospital Salford Ph 1	1976
Preston New Hospital Ph 1	1975
Preston New Hospital Ph 2	1977
Major capital schemes due for completion 1986-87	
Yorkshire	
Scarborough DGH Ph 1	1981
Trent	
Derby City Ph 1	1980
Derby Royal Infirmary Ph 2	1980
North West Thames	
Hemel Hempstead Ph 1	1982
St Marys W2 Ph 1B	1980
North East Thames	
Harold Wood Hospital Ph 1	1981
Wessex	
Royal Hants County Winchester	1980
Royal S Hants Southampton Ph 3	1980
W Dorset DGH Ph 1	1981
South Western	
West Somerset (Musgrove Park) Ph 1	1980
Weston Super Mare New Hospital	1979
West Midlands	
Bromsgrove & Redditch DGH Ph 1	1980
North Western	
Tameside General Hospital Ph 2	1981

Social Services (Exhibition)

Mr. Neil Thorne asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will arrange for an exhibition relating to social services today to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Whitney: I understand that arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 27 January 1986 to 31 January 1986.

AIDS

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services who are the members of the interdepartmental committee on acquired immune deficiency syndrome; when the committee last met; and what are its terms of reference.

Mr. Hayhoe: The ministerial steering group on AIDS and the interdepartmental group on AIDS comprise representatives from the following Departments: Health and Social Security, Home Office, Employment, Education and Science, Environment, Defence, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Cabinet Office, Treasury, Trade and Industry, and the Welsh, Northern Ireland, and Scottish Offices.

The ministerial steering group met on 2 December 1985 and the first meeting of the interdepartmental group will be held on 21 January. The interdepartmental group's terms of reference are

"to advise the Ministerial Steering Group on AIDS on the development of a co-ordinated strategy towards the wider issues arising out of the infection with the HTLVIII virus, and on any measures needed to implement that strategy".

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he intends to publish guidelines to those people in the National Health Service who are likely to come into contact with individuals who are HTLVIII positive.

Mr. Hayhoe: The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens has already issued interim guidelines on AIDS

for clinical and laboratory staff. ACDP is revising the guidelines to take account of current scientific knowledge and these should be published in the early part of this year.

Drugs Campaign

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make a statement on the current position of the Government's drug misuse education and information campaign.

Mr. Fowler: The campaign of information and education about the misuse of drugs has been running since February. It features a set of leaflets for parents, two television commercials and a series of poster and press advertisements. In December last year a video training package entitled "Working with Drug Users" was launched.

As the next stage, the Government have launched "Double Take", a video package for young people, especially 12 to 15-year-olds. The package will be issued free for retention to any secondary school in England and Wales that applies for it. All secondary school headteachers in England and Wales are being mailed with details of the package.

The 1985 campaign as a whole has been evaluated by two independent market research companies and the initial results are now available. The evaluation consisted of a long-term "quantitative" survey to check significant shifts in opinion and attitudes as well as a smaller "qualitative" study of the campaign. The main findings of the evaluation include:

—the campaign was widely noticed and appreciated not only by young people, the main target audience, but also by parents.

—a reduction in the proportion of young people who considered heroin attractive or glamorous.

—an increased awareness of the social and physical ill-effects of misusing heroin.

—an increased resistance to the idea of experimenting with heroin.

This evaluation will form the base from which decisions about activity in 1986-87 will be made. A budget of £2 million will be available for further work in 1986-87.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of people on the waiting list for acute surgery in each London health district from November 1982 until the latest available date.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1985, c. *155*]: The available information at 30 September and 31 March is given in the table.

Number of cases on acute surgical in-patient waiting lists in National Health Service hospitals in district health authorities wholly or partly within the Greater London council area

District health authority	*30 September 1982**	*31 March 1983**	*30 September 1983**	*31 March 1984**	*30 September 1984*	*31 March 1985*
Barnet	3,521	3,614	3,708	3,356	3,689	3,766
Harrow	1,271	1,383	1,257	1,521	1,132	1,104
Hillingdon	5,809	5,900	5,799	5,954	6,162	6,665
Hounslow and Spelthorne	3,100	3,211	3,707	3,610	4,104	3,839
Ealing	1,367	1,268	1,610	1,689	1,341	1,659
Brent	1,620	1,908	2,243	2,169	2,097	1,840
Paddington and North Kensington	2,628	2,416	2,282	2,757	2,881	2,380
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,972	2,930	2,632	2,679	2,294	2,830
Victoria	2,713	2,731	2,602	2,657	2,637	2,327
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	4,312	4,497	4,234	5,199	5,665	6,103
Hampstead	1,948	1,675	1,705	1,879	1,776	2,133
Bloomsbury	8,904	10,342	9,842	11,694	11,921	12,853
Islington	1,072	1,123	1,312	1,571	1,476	1,748
City and Hackney	4,131	4,436	4,985	5,434	5,834	6,399
Newham	2,222	2,000	2,412	1,504	1,550	1,162
Tower Hamlets	5,563	5,505	5,495	5,476	5,508	5,823
Enfield	2,952	2,676	2,755	2,829	2,792	3,069
Haringey	1,708	1,456	1,350	1,108	1,211	1,208
Redbridge	1,688	1,658	1,465	1,623	1,577	1,375
Waltham Forest	3,245	3,712	3,566	3,963	3,670	3,945
Bexley	1,049	1,148	1,026	920	1,268	1,348
Greenwich	2,138	2,579	2,463	2,435	2,241	2,026
Bromley	1,906	2,122	2,103	1,910	1,806	1,919
West Lambeth	5,602	4,616	4,215	5,006	5,158	4,732
Camberwell	3,128	2,927	2,949	2,842	2,954	2,748
Lewisham and North Southwark	4,800	4,726	4,347	5,207	5,496	5,840
Croydon	3,006	2,922	2,709	2,390	1,942	2,142
Kingston and Esher	3,168	3,038	2,948	3,118	2,934	3,070
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	2,266	2,333	2,571	2,740	2,899	2,770
Wandsworth	2,939	3,139	2,863	3,048	2,987	3,044
Merton and Sutton	3,530	3,374	3,285	2,622	2,411	2,424

* Figures before 30 September 1984 exclude a small number of surgical specialist units which were not separately identifiable.

NHS (Pay)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the index for the movement of National Health Service pay and prices since 1970, expressing 1970 costs as 100; and whether separate indices are used to deflate health service costs in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *312*]: There is not an index of National Health

Service pay and price movements, but indices are maintained, based on centrally assessed movements of pay and prices in England, for health and community health service revenue and capital expenditure respectively. The indices are available from 1971-72 and are shown in the table with the index for 1971-72 expressed as 100. Figures are not available for the current financial year.

Real increases in expenditure on the HCHS are measured by reference to general inflation, as recorded by movements in the GDP deflator, since this approach records changes in the real cost of the service. It would, in any event, be highly misleading to revalue district or health board expenditure by reference to national pay and price indices, because the composition of that expenditure can vary from the national average.

Separate pay and price indices are not maintained for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Hospital and Community Health Services

	Revenue	*Capital*
1971-72	100·0	100·0
1972-73	109·0	108·2
1973-74	119·6	123·9
1974-75	162·9	154·1
1975-76	209·8	201·3
1976-77	238·7	225·4
1977-78	259·2	257·7
1978-79	284·1	287·8
1979-80	342·4	347·4
1980-81	438·2	437·4
1981-82	474·2	451·4
1982-83	505·0	458·6
1983-84	530·6	465·9
1984-85	561·4	483·1

TRANSPORT

Bus Lanes (Millbank)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether his Department was consulted prior to the designation and eventual implementation of two new bus lanes along Millbank between Parliament square and Abingdon street; what advice was given to the Greater London council; and what assessment he has made of the effect on traffic flows to and from the Palace of Westminster;

(2) what representations were received, what advice was given, and what meetings were held with the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis prior to the introduction by the Greater London council of new bus lanes along Millbank between Parliament square and Abingdon street in order to ascertain how they might affect the Palace of Westminster and access to it.

Mr. Ridley: The GLC is solely and entirely responsible for this scheme. I understand that they have consulted the House authorities (who have expressed their concern at the scheme) and the police. They have not consulted me. The GLC has classified the scheme as experimental and my approval is not required. It will be open to Westminster city council from 1 April to decide if it should be abandoned forthwith. Meanwhile, the GLC is pressing ahead despite the concern that has been expressed and the fact that Westminster city council has recently announced a comprehensive review of traffic and environmental conditions in the area.

DEFENCE

Strategic Defence Initiative

13. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what changes will be made in the defence budget over the next five years as a result of British participation in the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Younger: None. The provision for defence expenditure up to 1988-89 was given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his autumn statement on 12 November.

22. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many contracts have been created to date for British institutions through the activities of the strategic defence initiative participation office.

26. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of procurement contracts which may be available to the west midlands in the take-up of the United Kingdom's strategic defence initiative responsibilities; and if he will make a statement.

30. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimate of the value of research contracts which could accrue to the United Kingdom from the strategic defence initiative research programme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Since the formal agreement between the United States and United Kingdom Governments on British participation in SDI research was only concluded on 6 December 1985 it would be premature to make such an assessment. We are confident, however, that the terms of the agreement will provide for substantial British participation.

29. **Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what evaluation his Department has made of the feasibility of the strategic defence initiative as a defence system.

Mr. Younger: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft).

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence what defence technology of use to Britain he expects to obtain from United Kingdom participation in the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have nothing to add to what my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Defence said in this House on 9 December 1985, at column 623.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the implications of United Kingdom participation in strategic defence initiative research for United Kingdom research into emerging technologies with application for conventional defence.

Mr. Lee: I have nothing to add to what my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Defence said in the House on 9 December 1985, at columns 623-24.

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Defence what changes will be made in the defence budget over the next five years as a result of British participation in the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have nothing to add to what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) earlier.

Expenditure

20. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the present level of planned defence spending as a percentage of all public expenditure; and what was the comparable figure for 1979.

Mr. Stanley: Based on the figure for general Government expenditure in the 1985 autumn statement made by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 12 November, planned defence expenditure is expected to be 11·5 per cent. of general Government expenditure in 1985-86, compared to 10 per cent. in 1978-79.

Nuclear Tests (Report)

21. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to discuss the Australian Royal Commission report on British nuclear tests with his Australian counterpart; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: At the instigation of the Australian Government, discussions between British and Australian officials took place in Canberra last week on those recommendations of the Australian Royal Commission's report which may affect the United Kingdom. I plan to meet Senator Evans, the Australian Minister for Resources and Energy, next week to discuss these matters. It would be premature to make a statement until the outcome of our discussions with the Australian Government has been fully considered.

A13

23. **Mr. Squire** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in the light of the recently published line of the A13 marshes route, he will review his Department's need for its landholding on the Rainham marshes.

Mr. Lee: None of the published routes for the A13 road will be materially affected by the existence of the Purfleet firing range, which is my Department's only remaining landholding in the area. The need for this heavily used range continues.

Nuclear Back-packs

24. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to equip British soldiers stationed on British soil with man mobile atomic weapons (nuclear back-packs).

Mr. Stanley: No.

Nuclear Materials (Stocks)

27. **Mr. Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now answer parliamentary questions on the levels of the United Kingdom stock of weapons grade nuclear materials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It has been the longstanding practice of successive Governments not to disclose information of this nature.

Trident

28. **Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimate of the proportion of British-made content in the Trident programme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Approximately 55 per cent. or over £5,100 million by value of the total estimated cost of Trident (£9,285 million at 1984-85 prices and at £1=$1·38) is planned to be spent in the United Kingdom. In addition, there are a number of British companies competing for work on the United States Trident II programme. To date, 128 contracts (at a value of some $38 million) have been placed with 50 United Kingdom firms. Many of these sub-contracts are for initial quantities with the potential for follow-on orders.

32. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to complete development of the Trident missile programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The development of the United Kingdom Trident system is planned to be completed to enable it to be deployed in the mid-1990s.

Mr. Proctor asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate the current cost of Trident and the proportion it will take up of the defence budget; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: My predecessor announced an estimate of the cost of Trident of £9,285 million at 1984-85 prices and at an exchange rate of £1=$1·38 on 29 January 1985. Over its procurement period, Trident is expected to absorb about 3 per cent. of the defence budget.

International Committee of the Red Cross (Protocols)

31. **Mr. Lester** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if there has been a full military review of the International Committee of the Red Cross, protocols 1 and 2 of 1977, initialled by Her Majesty's Government but not yet ratified.

Mr. Stanley: I understand that a full review of the military implications of protocols 1 and 2 was conducted prior to the then Government's initialling of these protocols in 1977.

Nimrod Aircraft

33. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the likely introduction date of the Nimrod airborne early warning aircraft into squadron service.

Mr. Norman Lamont: This must be dependent on the outcome of the current negotiations with GEC Avionics Limited and on the consequent decisions on the best way to take the project forward.

Battlefield Nuclear Weapons

34. **Mr. Caborn** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects SACEUR to visit the United Kingdom to begin negotiations for the development of modernised battlefield nuclear weapons.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Members for

Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) and for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 22 November 1985 at column *351*. Initial discussions with SACEUR's staff are planned to commence in February.

Nuclear Tests (Compensation)

35. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about payment of compensation to former service men and women as a result of Britain's nuclear testing programme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Within the past three months I have received seven such representations. Two of these were inquiries made by hon. Members on behalf of constituents, two were early-day motions laid before the House by hon. Members and three were questions for oral answer tabled by hon. Members.

37. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department now intends to review claims for compensation to ex-service personnel arising from Britain's nuclear test programme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Members for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) and Worsley (Mr. Lewis) earlier today.

European Fighter Aircraft

36. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will report on progress on the European fighter aircraft.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins).

Mutually Assured Destruction

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his United States counterpart concerning an evaluation of the strategy of mutually assured destruction.

Mr. Stanley: My right hon. Friend's predecessor regularly discussed with Mr. Weinberger matters pertaining to NATO's strategy of deterrence, which has preserved peace with freedom in western Europe for more than 40 years.

Fighter Pilots (Training)

Mr. Livsey asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the present cost for training Royal Air Force fighter pilots.

Mr. Lee: The RAF does not separately categorise fighter pilots. The average cost to the Ministry of Defence of training a student pilot to the point when he joins an operational fast jet squadron is approximately £2·87 million (at 1984-85 prices).

Departmental Efficiency

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Defence what methods he uses to measure the efficiency of his Department.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State informed the House of certain steps which have been taken to improve the efficiency of defence in his speech in the defence debate on 12 June 1985, at columns 915-16, and a fuller record was given in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates" (Cmnd. 9430-1).

Private Shipyards (Security)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if there have been any breaches of security at the private yards where HMS Otter and HMS Euryalus are being refitted.

Mr. Lee: I am not aware of any breaches in security in these yards. The security arrangements at these private yards were examined in detail by the security authorities, to confirm that they complied with my Department's requirements. Some small improvement in the existing arrangements were made as a result.

If the hon. Gentleman has any relevant information I should be grateful to hear from him.

NATO

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he next intends to meet his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts; and what he expects to discuss.

Mr. Stanley: My right hon. Friend expects to meet his NATO counterparts collectively at the spring meeting of the nuclear planning group, administrative details of which will be released nearer the time. The agenda is confidential.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 15 January 1986

WALES

Retail Businesses

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on the number of retail businesses employing 10 or fewer people in the Cardiff, West parliamentary constituency in (i) 1965 to 1970, (ii) 1971 to 1975, (iii) 1976 to 1980 and (iv) 1981 to 1984.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The information is not available.

SCOTLAND

Nets

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he plans to seek further control over the use of nylon monofilament nets in Scotland.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend plans to introduce orders shortly under sections 1 and 2 of the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984 to prohibit fishing for salmon or sea trout with a gill net in a specified sea area off the coast of Scotland and to prohibit the carriage of monofilament gill nets in British fishing boats in Scottish inshore waters.

Forth Bridge (Tolls)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now instigate an inquiry into the policy for tolls on the Forth road bridge following the recommendatons of his Department's report on 9 October 1985.

Mr. Ancram: No.

EMPLOYMENT

New Businesses

52. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Paymaster General how many new businesses were established in the greater London area in 1978 and 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that estimates are not available for the period specified. The available estimates, which relate to 1980 to 1983, are published in an article in the 18 January 1985 edition of *British Business*, a copy of which is in the Library.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Pendry asked the Paymaster General if he will provide a detailed breakdown of the number of unemployed claimants in the Littleborough and Saddleworth parliamentary constituency using the most recent available figures, analysed by sex and by the age of the unemployed and duration of unemployment.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following information is in the Library. The figures relate to 10 October 1985, the latest date for which an analysis of unemployment by age and duration is available.

Age and Duration Analysis of the Unemployed for Statistical Date 10 October 1985

Littleborough and Saddleworth CC

Males

Duration of Unemployment in weeks	*Under 17*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*50-54*	*55-59*	*60 and over*	*Total*
One or less	3	7	9	5	22	9	3	2	4	7	4	3	4	82
Over 1 and up to 2	4	2	7	8	25	11	8	5	3	4	1	3	0	81
Over 2 and up to 4	9	11	12	11	26	10	9	7	7	6	3	4	4	119
Over 4 and up to 6	18	14	25	5	19	15	11	9	5	4	9	15	6	155
Over 6 and up to 8	2	4	10	5	22	10	8	6	8	3	3	4	1	86
Over 8 and up to 13	1	9	14	15	35	30	11	17	16	10	9	11	3	181
Over 13 and up to 26	10	22	26	28	93	31	27	32	16	13	22	18	19	357
Over 26 and up to 39	1	8	16	12	44	28	20	18	14	10	9	22	22	224
Over 39 and up to 52	0	1	8	11	36	20	19	20	12	8	16	10	9	170
Over 52 and up to 65	0	9	5	10	22	13	9	9	4	6	4	11	2	104
Over 65 and up to 78	0	0	6	4	18	16	7	6	4	3	4	9	5	82
Over 78 and up to 104	0	0	6	10	28	21	17	13	12	10	9	19	1	146
Over 104 and up to 156	0	0	6	11	30	24	29	21	20	13	18	29	6	207
Over 156 and up to 208	0	0	0	2	22	16	16	14	17	13	19	25	2	146
Over 208 and up to 260	0	0	0	0	11	14	13	17	11	13	15	21	1	116
Over 260	0	0	0	0	6	10	15	15	8	12	22	32	6	126
Grand totals Males	48	87	150	137	459	278	222	211	161	135	167	236	91	2,382

Females

Duration of Unemployment in weeks	*Under 17*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*50-54*	*55-59*	*60 and over*	*Total*
One or less	5	1	1	2	12	5	5	7	2	0	1	2	0	43
Over 1 and up to 2	6	3	8	3	12	9	3	5	2	3	2	0	0	56
Over 2 and up to 4	7	6	14	5	25	14	11	7	5	4	2	1	0	101
Over 4 and up to 6	23	15	21	8	17	8	11	5	6	4	4	7	0	129
Over 6 and up to 8	2	2	3	3	11	10	4	5	1	0	2	0	0	43
Over 8 and up to 13	2	6	7	8	28	22	9	6	5	4	3	7	0	107
Over 13 and up to 26	6	10	13	10	66	49	22	17	9	10	10	7	0	229
Over 26 and up to 39	0	9	7	5	29	33	24	18	7	8	5	7	0	152

Duration of Unemployment in weeks	Under 17	17	18	19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60 and over	Total
Over 39 and up to 52	0	4	4	6	25	26	10	6	13	7	7	7	0	115
Over 52 and up to 65	0	8	5	6	12	17	14	5	3	7	4	2	0	83
Over 65 and up to 78	0	2	6	4	10	7	8	7	4	4	4	6	0	62
Over 78 and up to 104	0	0	0	6	9	6	10	8	5	3	8	7	0	62
Over 104 and up to 156	0	0	3	7	12	5	6	1	4	9	10	16	0	73
Over 156 and up to 208	0	0	0	1	6	6	6	3	5	7	9	7	0	50
Over 208 and up to 260	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	2	2	5	6	13	0	35
Over 260	0	0	0	0	2	1	5	0	0	2	5	16	0	31
Grand totals Females	51	66	92	74	279	220	150	102	73	77	82	105	0	1,371

Mr. Pendry asked the Paymaster General if he will provide a breakdown of the number of unemployed claimants in the Littleborough and Saddleworth parliamentary constituency by their last trade, occupation or profession.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information requested is not available.

Youth Training

Sir Hector Monro asked the Paymaster General whether he is satisfied that the Christmas undertaking under the youth training scheme that all unemployed minimum age school leavers would be offered a suitable place by Christmas 1985 has been met; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I am very pleased to say that the Government's undertaking has been effectively met for the third successive year. There are around 300,000 young people on the youth training scheme and on 3 January only 2,290 youngsters were waiting for the offer of a place. The comparable figure for the previous year was 3,850.

This is another excellent achievement by all concerned — the Manpower Services Commission, the careers service, employers, trade unions, local authorities, colleges and voluntary organisations—and I am grateful for their support and commitment. I very much look forward to this continuing under the new two year scheme to be introduced in April.

The enthusiasm of young people for the youth training scheme is clearly demonstrated by these figures, and I am confident that the new scheme will be equally popular with them.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Drink-driving Statistics

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give such information, either readily available, or as may be provided without incurring disproportionate cost, regarding the number of people stopped and breathalysed by the police during the Christmas period by force area throughout England and Wales; and if he will make a statement on the operation of breath tests and the level of positive breath tests.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The official Home Office statistics on breath tests in England and Wales in 1985 including the Christmas period, will not be available until the middle of this year, but the Association of Chief Police Officers has collated provisional figures for roadside screening tests from 31 police forces and this information is given in the table.

Roadside screening breath tests carried out from 22 December 1985 to 1 January 1986

Police force	Number of tests	Positive results
Cambridgeshire	632	43
Cheshire	341	54
Cleveland	54	15
Derbyshire	490	49
Devon and Cornwall	245	98
Dorset	133	33
Essex	493	84
Gloucestershire	139	40
Greater Manchester	890	193
Gwent	314	27
Hampshire	465	112
Hertfordshire	224	27
Humberside	161	51
Kent	132	46
Lancashire	484	119
Lincolnshire	206	34
Merseyside	104	60
Norfolk	265	23
Northumbria	116	80
North Wales	1,134	142
Nottinghamshire	*4,733	*115
South Wales	113	51
South Yorkshire	629	92
Staffordshire	445	23
Surrey	287	51
Sussex	620	77
Thames Valley	827	211
Warwickshire	137	20
West Mercia	188	47
West Yorkshire	359	149
Wiltshire	152	37
Totals	15,511	2,203

* Figures relate to the period from 19 December 1985 to 2 January 1986.

City Fraud

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reasons he attributes to the increase in the amount of City fraud under investigation between 1981 and 1984; how many separate cases are being investigated involving the years 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985; and what is the total amount of money involved in each year.

Mr. Mellor: I presume the hon. Member has in mind the figures published in the recent report of the Fraud Trials Committee (page 245) which were discussed in that report. I am informed by the Commissioner of Police for the City of London that the only additional information which can be provided without incurring disproportionate cost is that given in the following table, which shows the number of new investigations into fraud in the City started each year by the company fraud department. These figures are consistent with the reply given to a question from the

hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) on 6 December 1985, at column 358. They have narrower coverage than the figures published in the Roskill report because they do not include cases where after the initial investigation the police were not satisfied that an offence had been committed and because they also exclude a small number of cases investigated on behalf of provincial forces or overseas law enforcement agencies where the alleged offence was committed outside of the City.

New investigations into City fraud started by the City of London police

	Number
1981	54
1982	60
1983	61
1984	91
1985	81

Malaysia (Drug-Trafficking)

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now make a statement on his investigations into measures being taken in Malaysia to deter drug-trafficking; and what is their relevance to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Mellor: There are some similarities between Malaysian and United Kingdom drugs law and we understand that consideration is being given by the Malaysian Government to the introduction of legislation on the confiscation of the assets of drug traffickers. All Governments, however, have to ensure that any legislation on these matters reflects local conditions and the particular nature of their drugs problem; the recent changes in the maximum penalty under our law for drug trafficking and our proposals for legislation on the confiscation of assets reflect this approach.

Airport Security (Manchester)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Greater Manchester on what consultations he undertook with interested organisations prior to the decision to post machine gun guards at Manchester international airport, as to whether local representatives of the Police Federation were consulted about the decision, and as to what consideration he gave to the alternative of using military personnel to undertake the duties which have now been assigned to uniformed police officers.

Mr. Hurd: I would refer the right hon. Member to the reply the Prime Minister gave to a question from him today.

Road Traffic Offences

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many motorists have been prosecuted in England and Wales and Greater London, respectively, in each quarter since 1 January 1982 for failing to observe traffic lights, distinguishing between those cases involving injury, death and no injury.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Martial Art Weapons

Mr. Sayeed asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he proposes to issue guidance on the sale of potentially dangerous martial art weapons to young people; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Possession of an offensive weapon in a public place without reasonable excuse is an offence under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, and I have been particularly concerned at the indiscriminate sale of martial arts weapons to persons with no valid reason to possess them. In conjunction with the Martial Arts Commission I am therefore issuing guidelines to traders urging that such items should not be sold to persons under 18 or to those who cannot produce evidence of membership of a bona fide martial arts club. I look to traders to act responsibly and to pay close attention to the guidelines, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

ENVIRONMENT

Local Authorities (Wages and Salaries)

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total annual expenditure on wages and salaries of *(a)* local authority manual workers, *(b)* local authority administrative workers and *(c)* firemen; and what are the total numbers employed in each group.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested is given in the table below:

	Wages & salaries 1985-86 estimates*		*Numbers (June 1985)*	
	£ million	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Total*
(a) Manual workers	2,420	357,600	566,500	924,100
(b) Administrative workers†	4,160	504,100	144,500	648,600
(c) Firemen	370	36,900	400	37,300

* Excluding national insurance and superannuation but including London weighting.
† Defined as all white-collar workers employed on general services except teachers and lecturers.

Rates

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities which are currently consulting or have in the past consulted representatives of industrial and commercial ratepayers, as permitted under section 13 of the Rates Act 1984.

Mrs. Rumbold: All major rating and precepting authorities are obliged, under sectin 13 of the Rates Act 1984, to consult representatives of industrial and commercial ratepayers before setting their rates or precepts each year.

Building Standards

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations concerning unsatisfactory building work he has received in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Sir George Young: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) on 21 November 1984. The information provided by the Office of Fair Trading for each of the last 10 years is as follows:

Year	Number
1975	13,061
1976	16,375
1977	20,675
1978	23,136
1979	27,960
1980	24,436
1981	24,673
1982	28,727
1983	36,316
1984	46,549
1985*	18,950

* (first 6 months).

Rate Capping

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if money paid by a health authority to a local authority under the terms of section 1 of the Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudications Act 1983 is to be taken into account for ratecapping calculations; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The rate limits proposed for rate-capped authorities are based on the level of total expenditure earlier determined for them. Total expenditure is reduced by most payments into the rate fund including payments by a health authority towards projects which they jointly finance with local authorities. Rate-capped authorities have until 22 January to indicate whether or not they agree to their proposed rate limit, and if they consider it inadequate to cover their spending needs to seek agreement with the Secretary of State on a higher limit.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish his response to the memorandum on the operation and activities of the London Docklands development corporation sent to him by the hon. Members for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), for Bow and Poplar (Mr. Mikardo), for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) and for Newham, South on 5 June 1985.

Sir George Young: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does not intend to publish a formal response to this document which was designed to form the basis for discussions between the right hon. and hon. Members who presented it and the chairman of the London Docklands development corporation.

Sewerage System

Mr. Robert C. Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has, for each water authority, on the number of significant sewer collapses in 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is set out below for English regional water authorities. The Welsh water authority is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Number of significant sewer collapses

	1982-3	1983-4	1984-5
Anglian	180	150	*275
North West	690	600	1,000
Northumbrian	185	256	280
Severn-Trent	473	478	n/a
South West	76	300	230
Southern	296	210	260
Thames	360	390	491
Wessex	275	275	280
Yorkshire	1,218	1,225	1,350

* Anglian 1984-85: Higher estimate based on more comprehensive reporting.

A " significant sewer collapse" is defined as any incident involving actual or suspected structural damage to a sewer, which involves excavation or tunnelling. There are some differences in methods of measurements, so particular caution is needed in drawing comparisons between authorities.

Mr. Dixon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, for each water authority, the total number of properties connected to the sewerage system, the total population connected to the sewerage system and the total population connected to the water supply system.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is set out below for English regional water authorities. The Welsh water authority is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Water Authorities: Population and Properties Connected

Authority	*Properties connected to sewerage system	†Population connected to sewerage system	†Population connected to water supply system
Anglian	1,807	5,192	3,600
North West	2,650	6,878	6,822
Northumbrian	1,006	2,631	1,222
Severn-Trent	3,119	8,173	6,809
South West	531	1,431	1,427
Southern	1,483	3,922	2,047
Thames	4,985	11,489	7,126
Wessex	880	2,378	1,047
Yorkshire	1,755	4,639	4,384

*Source: water authority charges returns
† Source: Water Authorities Association

Water Authorities

Mr. Robert C. Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list for each water authority the target rate of return set for 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88;

(2) if he will list for each water authority the external financing limit set for 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Mr. Dixon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has, for each water authority, on the number of properties flooded by sewage in 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is set out below for English regional water authorities. The Welsh water authority is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Number of premises flooded by foul/combined sewage

	1982-83	1983-84	*1984-85
Anglian	†5,693	1,125	1,180
North West	4,100	2,730	950
Northumbrian	3,342	300	270
Severn-Trent	2,245	1,277	1,287
South West	800	770	770
Southern	350	273	389
Thames	8,300	13,250	12,620
Wessex	3,500	3,500	3,300
Yorkshire	2,104	2,050	2,050

* provisional
† Anglian 1982-83: includes surface water flooding

Mr. Dixon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the organisations which commented on the document entitled "Water Privatisation — a Discussion Paper", indicating which supported privatisation and which opposed it.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer this question shortly.

Mr. Dixon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has for each water authority on the number of people suffering complete loss of piped water supply for a period of 12 hours or more in 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is set out below for English regional water authorities. The Welsh water authority is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Number of people suffering complete loss of piped water supply for 12 hours or more (including repetitions)

	1982-83	1983-84	*1984-85
Anglian	17,000	2,800	2,750
North West	55,000	35,000	45,000
Northumbrian	5,213	647	624
Severn-Trent	45,000	29,400	21,400
South West	3,000	2,410	2,420
Southern	1,615	2,880	5,700
Thames	42,000	N/A	N/A
Wessex	600	500	200
Yorkshire	29,900	32,000	90,000

* Provisional.

Housing

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why he approved an urban development grant for the Spencerbeck estate in Langbaurgh which involves the loss of the second water closet in the three-bedroomed houses.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *465-6*]: Design and layout defects had resulted in part of this estate becoming difficult to let. Following an invitation from the local authority to housebuilders to submit proposals for refurbishment, urban development grant was approved for a scheme which was considered to provide the best overall solution to the problems. The only dwellings to lose a WC are 3-storey, 4-bedroom houses which had proved to be unpopular and which are being reduced to 2-storey, leaving each house with 2 bedrooms.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the totals for England of each aspect of housing needs appraisal listed on the numercial statement sent by housing authorities to his Department on form DOE 16314.

Mr John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *465-6*]: Totals for England, including allowances for any missing figures, for each of the items in local authorities' 1985 housing investment programme housing needs appraisal statements (HIP!) are as follows:

Section A: Dwelling stock position at 1 April 1985

Thousand dwellings

	Local authorities	Housing associations	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
1 Total (including non-permanent)	4,511	439	292	13,275	18,517
2 Specially designed or adapted and intended for use:					
by the elderly					
(a) sheltered	271	83	3	11	368
(b) others	292	15	5	2	314
by the disabled					
(c) wheelchair	11	3	1	3	18
(d) others	21	1	—	8	31
3 Unfit	87	12	2	548	649
4 Fit but lacking amenities	95	7	4	461	566
5 Non-substandard, in need of renovation	1,209	18	23	1,525	2,776
6 Prefabricated reinforced concrete, designed before 1960	131	—	6	25	162
7 Difficult to let	321	4	2	n/a	n/a
8 Total vacant	110	15	19	545	689

Section B: Households in need at 1 April 1985

Thousand households

	Total in need	*On housing list and in need*
1. Overcrowded:		
(a) more than 1 but not more than 1·5 persons per room	415	168
(b) more than 1·5 persons per room	114	58
2. Needing accommodation as described in A2:		
(a) elderly	667	232
(b) disabled	111	13
3. Concealed:		
(a) married couples	193	105
(b) lone parents	170	69
4. Sharing:		
(a) single persons	244	168
(b) other	124	93
5. Others	*	* *
6. Households accepted as homeless 1 April 1984 to 31 March 1985:		*Thousand households*
(a) total		108
(b) of which, in priority need		81

Section C: Nominations made to housing association or new town dwellings between 1 April 1984 and 31 March 1985

	Thousand households
1. Households taking up nominations to secure tenancies:	
(a) total	18
(b) of which, homeless households	2

Section D: Relets (HRA stock) between 1 April 1984 and 31 March 1985

	Thousand dwellings
1. Vacant and available for letting on 1 April 1984	33
2. Came into management during the period:	
(a) newly built	26
(b) through acquisition or following modernisation or, conversion	15
3. Other (including dwellings vacated by existing tenants, even if moving to another local authority dwelling)	412
4. Total available for letting 1 April 1984 to 31 March 1985	487
5. Let through the National Mobility Scheme and, for London, other schemes:	
(a) total	13
(b) which, homeless households	1
6. Let through the Tenants Exchange Scheme	7
7. Let to tenants of other authorities under Exchange Agreements (excluding D5 and D6)	7
8. Let to existing tenants transferring within an authority's own stock	163
9. Let to new secure tenants:	
(a) displaced through slum clearance or redevelopment	7
(b) homeless households	46
(c) housed from waiting list (normal allocation)	156
(d) other	20
10. Let to new tenants not on secure tenancies:	
(a) total	11
(b) of which, homeless households	8
11. Total let 1 April 1984 to 31 March 1985	429
12. Included at D4, but subsequently taken out of management and not available for letting 31 March 1985	26
13. Vacant and available for letting on 31 March 1985	32

Section E: Loans for purchase of dwellings in the private sector between 1 April 1984 and 31 March 1985

	Thousands
1. Total applications in priority categories to local authorities	18
2. Of which:	
(a) granted loans by local authorities	2
(b) referred to building societies	13
3. Referrals resulting in building society loans	9

* Reliable totals cannot be estimated from those figures received less than 500.

n/a Not applicable.

Local authorities' figures for housing not in their ownership, are not usually based on detailed surveys and they are, therefore, less firm. Also, local authorities' criteria for some items might differ: for example, on unfitness, for which the totals are not consistent with the results of the English house condition survey. Authorities' coverage of other households in need (B5) varies so widely that meaningful totals cannot be estimated from the figures received.

The aggregate figures returned, with no adjustment for missing figures, are in the "HIP1 (1985) all items print" which is available in the Library.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish details of the updated returns which he requested by the end of December 1985 from local authorities in respect of additional resources required to operate the Housing Defects Act 1984.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *465-6*]: To date only 25 returns have been received. As soon as a substantial number are available I shall arrange for details to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how does the net provision for the total housing programme in 1986-87 compare with the expected outturn for 1985-86 and if he will show the difference in *(a)* cost and *(b)* real terms.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *465-6*]: The net provision for the total housing programme in 1986-87 is £2,752 million in cash terms and £2,633 million when expressed in real terms at 1985-86 prices. The expected net outturn for 1985-86, based on first quarter estimates, is £2,742 million. In the terminology used in the public expenditure White Papers, "real terms" are equivalent to "cost terms". Figures for net expenditure do not include the spending power available to local authorities and the Housing Corporation from capital receipts.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the most recent estimate of the cost to local authorities of providing bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *465-6*]: According to information published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy gross expenditure by authorities on maintaining homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation in 1984-85 was £14·4 million or £18·77 per household per day; net expenditure, taking into account income from fees and charges including income received direct from the Department of Health and Social Security in respect of such households, was £10·3 million or £13·35 per household per day.

Local Authorities (Staff)

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing the total numbers of staff employed full-time, part-time and full-time equivalent by *(a)* all local authorities in England and *(b)* by local authorities by their party of control since 1979 to date.

Mr. Waldegrave [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *469-70*]: Given below are the figures requested. The figures showing employment in authorities according to political control refer only to those authorities whose political control has remained unchanged between 1979 and 1985.

	June 1979	*June 1985*	*Change per cent.*
England			
Full-time	1,468,995	1,373,994	−6·5
Part-time	876,079	859,726	−1·9
Full-time equivalent	1,813,217	1,714,639	−5·4
Conservative controlled (20·6 per cent. of 1985 Manpower)			
Full-time	318,683	283,409	−3·6
Part-time	191,199	175,980	−8·0
Labour Controlled (22·6 per cent. of 1985 Manpower)			
Full-time	339,683	327,453	−3·6
Part-time	171,678	176,425	+2·8
Liberal controlled (less than 0·1 per cent. of 1985 Manpower)			
Full-time	418	341	−18·4
Part-time	70	50	−28·6
Independent controlled (0·6 per cent. of 1985 Manpower)			
Full-time	12,360	11,880	−3·9
Part-time	1,882	1,935	+2·8

Notes:

(a) Includes only General Services Manpower.

(b) Full Time Equivalents are not available at an individual authority level.

(c) excludes from the analysis by political control:

(i) authorities that have changed political control between 1979 and 1985.

(ii) authorities under no overall political control.

(iii) authorities from whom figures were not available for either or both years.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc

Mr. McNamara asked the Prime Minister what discussions she had with the President of the United States of America on the future of Westland plc.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Prime Minister if she has had any recent discussions with the President of the United States of America over the future of Westland helicopters and the role of the Sikorsky company in a rescue bid for Westland helicopters; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: None.

Mr. McNamara asked the Prime Minister what assessment she has made of the wider national implications of the involvement of British Aerospace plc, as currently proposed in the rescue of Westland plc.

The Prime Minister: There are no wider national implications which make either proposal unacceptable.

Ministers (Gifts)

Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister (1) what are the current limits on the value of gifts received by Ministers in their official capacity which they may retain personally; and what happens to gifts surrendered by Ministers on the grounds that they are valued in excess of the limit;

(2) if she will list all the gifts she has received in her official capacity since 1979; and if she will list those which she has not retained personally on the grounds that their value is in excess of the permitted limit.

The Prime Minister: The current limit for the value of gifts which Ministers may retain is £75. The rules governing disposal of gifts of higher value, of which Ministers are advised when taking office, are similar to those governing the acceptance of gifts by civil servants, which are contained in the Civil Service Pay and Conditions Code (paragraph 9882 to 9893), a copy of which is in the Library.

I regret that information on the numbers of gifts I have received since 1979 could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Airport Security (Manchester)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Prime Minister what consultations Ministers undertook with interested organisations prior to the decision to post guards armed with machine guns at Manchester international airport; if the Police Federation was consulted; and what consideration was given to the alternative of using military personnel to undertake the duties which have now been assigned to uniformed police officers.

The Prime Minister: This was a decision for the chief constable and not for Ministers. I understand that the chief constable discussed his decision with the Police Federation before it was implemented. Armed police officers have for some years been present at Manchester airport when this has been considered necessary; I understand that the chief constable does not think it necessary to ask for military personnel to be deployed at present.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Nets

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he plans to seek further controls over the use of nylon monofilament nets in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Boyson: It is illegal to use a net which is constructed of a single filament of synthetic material for the taking of salmon or freshwater fish in Northern Ireland. There are no plans to seek further controls at present.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Badgers

Mr. Mudd asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to receive the Dunnet review on badgers; and if it is his intention that it will be published.

Mrs. Fenner: I understand that Professor Dunnet's review team has now completed its inquiry and is well advanced with the detailed drafting of its report. I expect to receive that report in two or three months. I have already made clear my intention to publish it in full.

Nylon Monofilament Nets

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he plans to seek further controls over the use of nylon monofilament nets in England and Wales.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Turville School (Member's Correspondence)

Mr. Radice asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Durham, North of 7 October concerning Turville school.

Sir Keith Joseph: I hope to be in a position to reply very shortly. I regret not having been able to do so earlier, but examination of the matters raised has required reference outside my Department.

Teachers' Pay

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what would be the total cost of meeting the National Union of Teachers' latest pay demand for 1986.

Sir Keith Joseph: The National Union of Teachers is to discuss a motion on pay at a special salaries conference on January 18, calling for an increase from April 1986 of at least £1,700 for each teacher. Illustratively, and using teacher numbers in England and Wales as at January 1985, the cost of a £1,700 increase for each teacher would be £770 million, or over 17 per cent. of the 1984-85 salary bill (excluding employers' national insurance and superannuation contributions).

Post-Doctoral Research Associates

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what conveniently available figures he has for 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985 for the number of new Ph.Ds willing to accept appointment as post-doctoral research associates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: This information is not available.

TRANSPORT

British Airways

53. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to be in a position to announce a timetable for the privatisation of British Airways.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government intend to privatise British Airways as soon as possible, but current litigation under US anti-trust law has to be settled before a timetable can be set.

North Devon Road Programme

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the anticipated start and completion dates for *(a)* the north Devon link road stage 2A, *(b)* the north Devon link road stage 2B, *(c)* the north Devon link road stage Barnstaple bypass, *(d)* the A39 Barnstaple relief road, *(e)* the A39 Bideford bridge completion, *(f)* the A361 Braunton bypass, *(g)* the A377 Barnstaple to Exeter improvement and *(h)* the B3226 Aller Cross to Blackmoor Gate improvement, and any other parts of the north Devon road programme.

Mr Michael Spicer: The estimated start and completion dates of trunk road schemes in north Devon which I am at present able to give are:

	Start	*Completion*
North Devon Link Road Stage 2A	Spring 1987	Spring 1989
A39/A361 Barnstaple Bypass	Winter 1986/87	Winter 1988-89
A39 Bideford Bypass	In progress	Summer 1987

Dates for stage 2B of the north Devon Link cannot be determined until the remaining statutory procedures have been completed.

The other road schemes listed are the responsibility of the Devon county council.

Navigation Lights

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied that the navigational beacon at Minsters rock on the Rubha Na Leachaig on the west coast of Scotland is suitable for all weather conditions; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he is satisfied with the efficiency of the navigation lights into Loch Inchard and Kinlochbervie on the west coast of Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Transport Act 1985

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for Transport to whom the letter entitled "Dear Transport Operator" signed by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State was sent; how many copies of the letter were issued; and at what cost.

Mr. David Mitchell: The letter entitled "Dear Transport Operator" was sent to businesses in the transport field who might wish to take up the opportunities provided

by the Transport Act 1985 to extend their activities into public service vehicle operation. About 39,000 copies of the letter were printed, at a cost of £1,500. They were mailed at no extra cost with copies of the leaflet, "Your Business in the Making", for which the combined printing and postage cost was £22,000.

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many copies of the leaflets "Your Business in the Making: Tomorrow's Buses" have been printed; how the leaflets are to be distributed; what has been the total cost; and whether it is planned to issue any other similar leaflets.

Mr. David Mitchell: About 54,500 copies of the leaflet "Your Business in the Making" have been printed and mailed at a cost of £22,000. These leaflets have been mailed to transport businesses which might be interested in extending their activities into public service vehicle operations.

Similar leaflets have been provided for existing bus operators, taxi and hire car operators. Other leaflets are in preparation directed at potential investors and operators in the bus business, financial ad legal advisors and members of the general public.

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements he has already made or plans to make for publicising the terms of the Transport Act 1985; and what is the total estimated cost of such publicity and advertising, including the costs of preparation within his Department.

Mr. David Mitchell: Approximately £950,000 has been set aside for paid publicity, mainly in the form of short leaflets and trade press advertising. The aim is to provide information to the public on the Transport Act, and to draw the attention of those concerned to the new business opportunities it provides. The cost of officials' and my time in preparing information material has not been assessed separately and is not included in this figure.

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will name any advertising agents or public relations consultants who have been retained by his Department to advise on publicity relating to the Transport Act 1985; and what is their likely cost.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department has been advised on the paid publicity programme for the Transport Act 1985 by the Central Office of Information, with assistance on press advertising from Davidson Pearce Ltd, the Department's contracted agency on other issues. A total of approximately £950,000 has been set aside in 1985-86 and 1986-87 for its advice, the preparation of information material, and media costs.

Aircraft Safety

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport what new safety measures are now being taken to improve evacuation standards on aircraft in consequence of the Boeing 737 fire at Manchester international airport on 22 August 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: As I have explained to the right hon. Member, aviation safety requirements and standards are the statutory responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority.

The CAA has recently announced three new mandatory airworthiness instructions for UK airlines:

(1) The date by which all passenger seats must meet more stringent fire resistance standards has been brought forward from 1 December 1987 to 1 July 1987.

(2) By 1 July 1986, access to overwing emergency exits of the type used in Manchester B737 accident must be improved.

(3) By 1 December 1987, floor level emergency escape path lighting must be provided.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department and the Civil Aviation Authority, respectively, first became aware that loss of life in aviation accidents would be reduced by the use of less flammable material on aircraft seats.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Civil aviation safety matters are the statutory responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority. The CAA has advised it has for some time been clear that potential loss of life would be reduced by the introduction of more fire resistant seats. The timing, however, of such a requirement was dependent on the availability of effective and practical materials in production quantities.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the estimated cost of an average airline seat upholstered with fire resistant material compared with one upholstered in current materials.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Civil Aviation Authority is statutorily responsible for aviation safety requirements and standards and I have drawn the hon. Gentleman's question to the attention of the chairman, who will reply direct to him.

Traffic Lights

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many cases of injury have occurred and how many cases of death in England and Wales and Greater London, respectively, in each quarter since 1 January 1982 arising from motorists failing to observe traffic lights.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Information on failure to observe lights is not included in routine accident reports.

Fishing Vessels (Safety)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Transport what action he proposes to take regarding the recommendations contained in the report of the loss of MFV Mhari L in relation to the Coastguard to be alerted rapidly when contact is lost with fishing vessels, fishing vessels being fitted with hydrostatic life rafts and the action recommended when fishing gear foul underwater cables.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *479*]: The recommendations are being studied. At present Her Majesty's Coastguard takes every opportunity to stress the importance of the earliest possible warning that a vessel may be missing, and merchant shipping notices recommend that life rafts be fitted with hydrostatic release units and also advise on the dangers of fishing gear being fouled on the sea bed. My Department is, however, considering what further action can effectively be taken to prevent such tragic losses.

Lighthouses

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the annual cost to the taxpayer of the administration of lighthouses under the control of the

Northern Lighthouse Board; how much of this relates to lighthouses in the Isle of Man; and what contribution is made by the Isle of Man Government towards the cost.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *479*]: The expenses of the board are met, not by the taxpayer, but from the general lighthouse fund, which is derived from light dues levied on shipping using ports in the British Isles.

In 1984-85 the board incurred current and capital expenditure of about £5 million on lighthouses of which of £0·3 million was in the Isle of Man. The Isle of Man Government do not contribute to the board's costs.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent on the improvement carried out on the lighthouse-keepers' houses on Davaar Island; what has been recovered of this cost by subsequent sale or letting of the houses; and what charges have been made on public funds to cover the costs involved.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *479*]: I understand that the Northern Lights Board has spent no money on improving these houses in the last five years. No house has been let or sold, and no charge has fallen on public funds.

Drink-Driving Campaign

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the drink-drive campaign undertaken by his Department during the Christmas holiday period, including the cost and efficiency of the campaign, and the planned follow-up during 1986; and if there are any plans to introduce random breath testing.

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the Christmas drink-drive campaign.

Mr. Ridley: I have asked for a full report on the campaign, the publicity for which cost £1.4 million. This will require an analysis of national accident and breath testing data.

Existing legislation sets out clearly the circumstances in which the police may require a breath test. These are:

- if there is reasonable cause to suspect the motorist of driving, attempting to drive or having driven, with alcohol in his body
- if there is reasonable cause to suspect him of having committed a moving traffic offence
- if he has been involved in an accident

There are no powers to carry out breath tests other than in these circumstances, and I have no plans to propose such powers. Nor do I have plans to change the existing legal limit.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Argentina

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 20 December, *Official Report*, column *364*, what form the contacts with Argentina are taking regarding the question of fisheries in the south-west Atlantic; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation is taking the lead, in consultation with all the Governments concerned, in undertaking a technical assessment of fisheries in the south-west Atlantic. Our own communications with the Argentine Government are conducted through the protecting powers and are confidential.

South Atlantic (Wildlife)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the visit to London of a senior official from the Food and Agriculture Organisation to discuss wildlife in the south Atlantic.

Mr. Renton: An official of the Food and Agriculture Organisation secretariat will visit London later this month in connection with the FAO's technical study of the south-west Atlantic fishery. We are co-operating fully in the preparation of this study, which we hope will lead on to agreement on multilaterally-based fisheries conservation and management arrangements for the area.

Cancer Research

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his committee of scientific experts has started work on the questions put to him regarding European cancer research by the hon. Member for Linlithgow, *Official Report*, column *306*, 18 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Yes. The Committee of EC cancer experts set up following the December Foreign Affairs Council will meet for the first time on 24 January in Brussels. Its task is to make recommendations for a coordinated plan of action to combat cancer in EC member states. The United Kingdom's representative will be Professor Norman Bleehen, honorary director, Medical Research Council unit of clinical oncology and radiotherapeutics.

Hong Kong

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has had discussions with the Chinese Government on the question of the granting of Chinese citizenship to non-Chinese citizens of Hong Kong who are not presently entitled to British citizenship, resulting from the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China in 1997; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: We have discussed this matter with the Chinese Government in the Sino-British joint liaison group. They have confirmed that non-Chinese who meet the legal requirements under Chinese nationality law may apply for Chinese nationality, and that such cases would be dealt with by the appropriate authorities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Industrial Development

8. **Mr. Corbyn** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next proposes to meet the Trades Union Congress to discuss industrial development.

Mr. Pattie: My right hon. and learned Friend, I and other Ministers of the Department meet the TUC at meetings of the National Economic Development Council, where such questions arise regularly.

35. **Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to meet the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress to discuss the state of British industry.

Mr. Brittan: Either I or another Minister from my Department meet the CBI and TUC each month at the National Economic Development Council where such matters are regularly discussed. I have no immediate plans for a separate meeting with the two bodies on this subject.

38. **Mr. Jim Callaghan** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next proposes to meet the Trades Union Congress to discuss industrial development.

Mr. Pattie: My right hon. and learned Friend, I and other Ministers of the Department meet the TUC at meetings of the National Economic Development Council, where such questions arise regularly.

Romania

17. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has had any recent consultations with the Romanian authorities concerning United Kingdom trade with Romania; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Channon: I met the Romanian ambassador yesterday for a general discussion on a number of bilateral issues. I am anxious to increase Anglo-Romanian trade to our mutual benefit.

Industry (Earnings)

22. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the level of earnings in industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. and learned Friend has regular contact with the leaders of the CBI. He has taken every opportunity to make clear to the CBI that the Government fully support its initiative for lower settlements in the present pay round. It is vitally important that our competitive position should not be eroded by excessive pay rises.

Soft Loans

23. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement of progress on implementing the soft loans package announced last August.

Mr. Channon: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry announced on 12 November the introduction of a soft loan facility under the aid and trade provision. Support for several projects is under consideration following useful initial discussions with the Chinese Government.

Research and Development

24. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with public bodies within his responsibility and private companies concerning the dispersal of their research and development activities to the regions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: None.

Regional Policy

25. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with the workings of regional industrial policy.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Yes. However, I intend to supervise closely the workings of the current arrangements and consider carefully the possible need for any future changes which may appear necessary.

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further steps he proposes to take to seek to improve industrial development in the regions.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Under the new regional policy announced in November 1984 a greater emphasis is placed on job creation. Many parts of the country have been designated as assisted areas, thus benefiting from various measures of assistance for industrial development. We will be monitoring the effectiveness of the new arrangements with great care.

Mr. Caborn asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next proposes to meet the National Economic Development Council to discuss the relationship between economic development and job creation in the regions.

Mr. Jack Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next proposes to meet the National Economic Development Council to discuss the relationship between economic development and job creation in the regions.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Either my right hon. and learned Friend or another Minister from the Department attends NEDC each month. Last November, as part of its continuing work on jobs, NEDC discussed papers on job creation in areas of high unemployment. Further related papers will be taken in the coming months.

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the objectives of his Department's regional policy; how he monitors its effectiveness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The objective of the Government's regional industrial policy is to help reduce regional disparities in investment as well as employment opportunities. I can assure my hon. Friend that we will continue to monitor carefully how well the taxpayer's money is being spent in this respect.

Manufacturing Industry

26. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the most recent figure for output in manufacturing industry; and how this compares with the figure for the same month six years ago.

Mr. Howard: The index of production for manufacturing industry in the three months up to October 1985 stood at 103, compared to a base of 100 in 1980. This is 3 per cent. lower than for the corresponding period in 1979.

39. **Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the level of investment in manufacturing industry.

Mr. Howard: In 1984, which is the latest year for which complete outturn figures are available, total investment in manufacturing was nearly £6·4 billion at 1980 prices; 16 per cent. above the trough in the last investment cycle downswing which started in 1980. It is expected that the outturn for 1985 will be nearly £6·8 billion at 1980 prices, about 6 per cent. above the level in 1984.

British Shipbuilders

27. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of British Shipbuilders; and what was discussed.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. and learned Friend last saw Mr. Day on Tuesday 7 January. Their discussion was wide ranging.

Manufactured Goods

28. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the balance of trade in manufactured goods.

Mr. Channon: In the first 11 months of 1985 trade in manufactures was in deficit by £3·1 billion. Over the same period, the current account which covers trade in all visibls and invisibles showed a surplus of £2·8 billion.

Exports (Data Base)

29. **Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the Association of British Chambers of Commerce about the establishment of industry data bases as an aid to the promotion of export trade.

Mr. Channon: There have been a number of discussions between the ABCC and my officials. The British Overseas Trade Board is represented on an ABCC working group co-ordinating the development by individual chambers of commerce of computerised membership data bases. It is expected that these will lead to the movement being able to supply national listings.

British Steel Corporation

30. **Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of the British Steel Corporation; what subjects were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. and learned Friend last met Sir Robert Haslam on 24 October 1985 when he discussed BSC's financing requirements and the general market outlook. I myself last met Sir Robert at the nationalised industries chairmen's dinner hosted by the Prime Minister on 22 November.

Gulf States (Ministerial Visit)

31. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the Minister for Trade's visit to the Gulf states.

Mr. Channon: I had useful meetings with a large number of Ministers and with the resident British businessmen in Kuwait, Oman and YAR. I was also able to see some of the projects in which British firms are involved. The 1985 trade figures to date show good increases in United Kingdom exports to all three markets. My visit confirmed that each will continue to offer worthwhile opportunities for British goods and services in 1986. Provided we are competitive we should be able to increase our market shares. We enjoy substantial surpluses in our trade with all three countries. In Kuwait and Oman there was new emphasis on reciprocity. United Kingdom suppliers and project bidders will find it in their own interests to maximise the local content of their offers. In all three countries there is a strong desire for more British investment in joint ventures.

Company Mergers

33. **Mr. Kenneth Carlisle** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his policy on company mergers in the light of recent merger activity.

Mr. Howard: Recent merger activity has demonstrated the effectiveness of the policy on merger references, announced by the then Secretary of State in July 1984. The policy remains to make references primarily on competition grounds. In evaluating the competitive situation in individual cases, the Secretary of State will have regard to the international context, to the extent of competition in the home market from non-United Kingdom sources, and to the competitive position of United Kingdom companies in overseas markets.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

34. **Mr. Waller** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the progress of negotiations towards a renewed multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Channon: The Council of Ministers will be considering the Community's negotiating mandate at its meeting on 27-28 January. I shall be advancing the Government's position as announced in the House on 9 May last year and maintaining close contact with the British industry and other interested parties. The GATT textiles committee meets for the renewal negotiations on 3 April.

Vauxhall Motors

36. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of Vauxhall Motors; what matters were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the chairman of Vauxhall Motors, Mr. John Fleming, on 3 December 1985 for a general discussion about Vauxhall's future plans in the United Kingdom. During the meeting Vauxhall said that it would be investing a further £8·7 million in its Ellesmere Port plant, increasing output from 28 to 35 vehicles an hour, creating 600 new jobs and lifting the United Kingdom-produced share of United Kingdom sales from 56 per cent. to 64 per cent. this year. Approval for further investment to raise output still higher is to be sought from GM. In

addition, Vauxhall has said that by the end of this year it aims to achieve a 60 per cent. level of United Kingdom content in the vehicles it builds here.

Financial Services Bill (Lloyd's)

37. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations he has received proposing the inclusion of Lloyd's within the scope of the proposed Financial Services Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I have received six letters on this subject. I have nothing to add to what I said during the Second Reading debate on the Financial Services Bill yesterday.

British Telecom

40. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek to increase the powers of OFTEL to intervene in price increases proposed by British Telecom.

Mr. Pattie: No. British Telecom's licence includes certain restrictions on the company's ability to raise prices. The Director General of Telecommunications has powers under the Telecommunications Act 1984 to propose modifications to BT's licence should he judge it necessary to do so having regard to his duties under that Act.

Northern Region

42. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what has been the total amount of regional aid granted in the northern region in the first 12 months of the operation of the new regional aid policy laid down in the Co-operative Development Agency and Industrial Development Act 1984.

Mr. Peter Morrison: £101 million of regional aid has been granted in the northern region in this period.

Latin America

43. **Mr. Wainwright** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list those countries in Latin America to which Britain has supplied arms or security equipment since 1979.

Mr. Channon: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to publish such information.

Anti-dumping Actions

44. **Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the level of costs involved in securing the necessary evidence to promote successful anti-dumping actions; and if he has any plans to provide funds to meet part of these costs of the firms involved.

Mr. Channon: The only recent representations received about the level of costs involved in taking successful anti-dumping action have been from the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, which earlier this year suggested that financial support should be given to trade associations for the purpose of investigating anti-dumping cases. The government have no plans at present to provide any financial assistance to industry to meet such costs. The Department's anti-dumping unit does, however, provide help and advice to industries which believe they are being adversely affected by dumped imports.

Rolls-Royce Ltd.

45. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has taken steps to satisfy himself that all actual and contingent liabilities of Rolls-Royce Ltd. will be advised to the court in that company's application for a reduction in its capital.

Mr. Pattie: The court approved Rolls-Royce's capital reduction on 2 December 1985. The company made available to the court all the information it required in respect of the company's actual and contingent liabilities.

Japan

47. **Mr. Hickmet** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's trading relations with Japan, both bilaterally and in competition for major contracts in third countries.

Mr. Channon: The United Kingdom and its community partners continue to press for a significant increase in Japan's imports of manufactured goods. Competition in third countries remains intense, but the Government's new soft loan facility will assist United Kingdom exporters.

49. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement reporting progress in reducing the visible trade imbalance between the United Kingdom and Japan, following the action programme announced by the Japanese Government last July.

Mr. Channon: Implementation of the action programme is well under way, although it is too early to judge what impact this will have on Japan's low propensity to import. The Government, and the European Commission, will monitor progress closely.

USSR

48. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the expansion of trade with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Channon: Her Majesty's Government are very keen to encourage the expansion of trade between the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and are confident that a substantial increase in the level of trade can be achieved over the period of the new Soviet five-year plan (1986-90).

Public Utility Monopolies

50. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to improve the provisions intended to protect the domestic consumer in existing and proposed privatisation legislation relating to public utility monopolies.

Mr. Howard: My right hon. and learned Friend and I have been and are closely involved in ensuring that

adequate provisions to protect the domestic consumer are included in privatisation legislation relating to public utility monopolies.

Steel Industry

51. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what changes he expects to be made in regard to the capacity and structure of the special or engineering steels industry in the United Kingdom during the next two years.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave yesterday to my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. Parris). Decisions on any changes in the capacity of the UK engineering steels industry will be matters for the board of United Engineering Steels Ltd.

Gartcosh Steelworks

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government have yet determined their position on the closure of the Gartcosh steelworks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is in a position to announce the Government's decision over the future of the Gartcosh steelworks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The report of the Scottish Affairs Committee on the closure of Gartcosh was published on 18 December 1985. The Government's position was explained in evidence to the Committee in November last year.

The Government have examined carefully the report, together with the evidence presented to the Committee which was made available on 20 December. While naturally we accept that there is always scope for alternative forecasts of demand and interpretations of the commercial background, the Government do not regard the arguments in the report and evidence as justifying intervention in BSC's decision to close Gartcosh.

The Government's view remains that the issues raised by BSC's decision to close Gartcosh are commercial, managerial and technical, rather than strategic, and that these issues are properly a matter for BSC. The Government naturally regret the effect of the closure on those whose jobs will be lost and BSC and others are doing what they can to alleviate the effects.

The closure of Gartcosh as well as other reductions in capacity and manpower within the strategy announced last August are necessary to improve BSC's competitive position and to help it attain financial self-sufficiency. BSC has very little room for manoeuvre if it is to achieve this objective, which the Government regard as the highest priority.

Competition

Mr. Cash asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will consider putting forward proposals to improve the practical working and effectiveness of the European Communities rules on competition and, in particular, to seek revision of articles 85 to 94 of the treaty of Rome, EEC regulation 17 of 6 February 1962 and related provisions.

Mr. Channon: I have no plans to seek changes in the competition provisions of the Treaty of Rome. But my Department remains in touch with the Commission about continuing improvements in the speedy and effective application of the rules.

Counterfeiting

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what new measures he proposes to combat the counterfeiting of manufactured goods in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Recording Tapes (Levy)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the present position with regard to the proposals in the Green Paper, Cmnd. 9445, published in February 1985 for the introduction of a levy on blank audio and video tapes; and whether it is still proposed to proceed with such a scheme in the light of comments received.

Mr. Pattie: We are preparing a White Paper setting out our proposals for the reform of copyright law, including details of whether or not we propose to introduce a levy on blank audio and video recording tape.

Westland plc.

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with Sir Raymond Lygo about British Aerospace plc's proposed involvement in Westland; and what view he conveyed to Sir Raymond about the wider national implications and the action he would wish the company to take in the light of these.

Mr. Brittan: I refer the hon. Gentleman to what I said in answer to questions following my statement on 13 January.

NATIONAL FINANCE

£2 Coin

Dr. Twinn asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is now in a position to give further details about the £2 coin to be struck to commemorate the XIII Commonwealth Games to be held in Scotland in 1986.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Yes. Her Majesty made a proclamation on 18 December 1985 under the Coinage Act giving details of this coin.

On the obverse the £2 coin will feature the Raphael Maklouf portrait of Her Majesty the Queen with the inscription "Elizabeth. II. Dei. Gratia. Regina. F.D." and the words "Two Pounds", and on the reverse a St. Andrew's cross surmounted in chief by a crown triumphal overall a thistle of Scotland and the date of the year "1986". It is proposed to strike six versions, one of gold, two of silver and three of nickel brass. The gold coin will have graining on the edge. The silver and nickel coins will also have graining on the edge and in incuse letters the inscription "XIII Commonwealth Games Scotland 1986", followed by the mark of the Royal Mint.

A copy of the proclamation is available in the Library.

Construction Industry

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps he is taking to seek to curb the growth of the black economy in the construction sector; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what estimate he has of the growth of the black economy in the construction industry over the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: The Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise keep under careful review the methods used to counter tax evasion in the construction industry. By the very nature of the problem, it is impossible to provide a reliable estimate of the tax lost through evasion.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has recently received concerning the impact of value added tax thresholds on the construction industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Twenty representations have been received since the last Budget, 15 of them wanting a reduction or abolition of the threshold and five recommending that it be increased. The level of the threshold will, as usual, be reviewed as part of the preparations for my right hon. Friend's Budget.

Third World (Airline Revenues)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has approached the International Monetary Fund to seek its assistance in obtaining release of airline revenues held by Third-world countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The articles of agreement of the International Monetary Fund provide that there should be no discrimination in the treatment of remittances to third countries. The fund is aware of the United Kingdom's concern about blockages of such remittances especially airline remittances (which in almost all cases are covered by provisions which have treaty status). In such cases, wherever appropriate, the United Kingdom supports the fund's policy, of seeking an agreed timetable for the equitable clearance of external arrears. The question of blocked remittances is also raised by the United Kingdom directly with the countries concerned as opportunity arises.

Personal Taxation

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the level of tax reliefs granted for life assurance, mortgage interest, approved pension schemes, employers' contributions to approved pension schemes, retirement annuity and age allowance for each year since 1979; and what has been the annual percentage increase in each case and the total percentage increase 1979-85 in each case.

Mr. Moore: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Personal Incomes

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the gain or loss to those with incomes *(a)* under £5,000, *(b)* £5,000 to £10,000, *(c)* £10,000 to £15,000, *(d)* £15,000 to £20,000, *(e)* £20,000 to £30,000, *(f)* £30,000 to £50,000 and *(g)* over £50,000 a year as a result of each Finance Act since 1979, both in aggregate and per person on average in each of these categories, in each case indicating how much is due to indexation and how much is real gain.

Mr. Moore: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Johnson Matthey Bankers

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many statutory returns were submitted by the Johnson Matthey Bank in the 12-month period preceding its collapse and rescue.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Low-paid Workers

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table giving details of the effects of his proposed social security reforms on the marginal total effective deduction rates of low paid workers setting out the numbers affected by *(a)* the present system and *(b)* the proposed new system for those forgoing 50 to 60 pence, 60 to 70 pence, 70 to 80 pence, 80 to 90 pence, 90 pence to £1 and over £1 for each additional £1 in earnings; and if he will also publish comparable data taking into account the 20 per cent. rates payments these families will have to pay.

Mr. Newton: The estimated numbers of families, including single persons, affected by the various marginal tax rates quoted are shown in the table. The estimates, which exclude families paying tax at higher than the standard rate, have been calculated on a similar basis to the figures in the illustrative tables prepared for the technical annex to the White Paper "Reform of Social Security". The marginal tax rates have been calculated as the sum of the extra income tax and employee's national insurance contribution paid—assumed as 9 per cent.—and the amounts by which means-tested benefits are reduced for every extra £1 of gross earnings. The estimates are necessarily approximate and should only be taken as illustrating the orders of magnitude involved.

Total marginal rate of deduction per extra £1 of gross earnings	*Current scheme*	*Proposed new scheme—without 20 per cent. rates contribution*	*Proposed new scheme—with 20 per cent. rates contribution*
50p but less than 60p	230,000	180,000	80,000
60p but less than 70p	160,000	10,000	10,000
70p but less than 80p	nil	110,000	120,000

Total marginal rate of deduction per extra £1 of gross earnings	Current scheme	Proposed new scheme—without 20 per cent. rates contribution	Proposed new scheme—with 20 per cent. rates contribution
80p but less than 90p	160,000	420,000	410,000
90p but less than £1	60,000	40,000	40,000
£1 and over	70,000	nil	nil

Departmental Staff

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people were employed by his Department in 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and to the nearest available date in 1985.

Mr. Fowler: The numbers of staff in post in my Department for the years in question were:

1 April	
1979	98,369
1980	96,209
1981	97,411
1982	95,543
1983	94,101
1984	90,474
1985	92,788

As at 1 December 1985, the most recent date for which figures are available, the number of staff in post was 92,892.

Advancement of Women

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what meetings he has had with the Equal Opportunities Commission to discuss the implementation of those parts of the United Nations Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women relevant to his Department; and what future plans he has for such meetings.

Mr. Fowler: I have not met the Equal Opportunities Commission to discuss the strategies and have no plans to do so.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to evaluate the success of those parts of the United Nations Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women which apply to his Department; what resources he has allocated to this; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: The Department is studying the text of the Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women and will be considering how best to take its conclusions forward.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has for implementing paragraph 58 of the United Nations Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women, which calls for the collection of timely and reliable statistics on the situation of women.

Mr. Fowler: A good deal of relevant statistical information is already collected by the Department. Much of this information is published.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will establish a special office within his Department to monitor periodically and accelerate the process of equitable representation of women as called for in paragraph 88 of the United Nations Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women.

Mr. Fowler: The Department is working in conjunction with the trade unions to implement the recommendations of the programme of action on equal opportunity for women in the Civil Service as agreed by the Management and Personnel Office and the Council for Civil Service Unions. A departmental equal opportunities officer has been appointed and a network of equal opportunity officers set up covering every personnel section.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services at what levels of gross income entitlement to housing benefit will cease for a working single person, childless couple, couple plus one, two, three and four children and lone parent plus one, two, three and four children, assuming average rent and rates, under the proposals in Cmnd. 9691; and, in each case, at what income levels entitlement ceases at present.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the estimated £450 million reduction in expenditure on housing benefit referred to in his reply of 19 December 1985 to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East, *Official Report*, column *317*, includes reduced expenditure on housing benefit resulting from payment of family credit; and what is his estimate of the reduction in expenditure on housing benefit due to family credit payments.

Mr. Newton: The estimated £450 million reduction in housing benefit expenditure is a broad indication of the likely effect of all the changes, including reductions in housing benefit brought about by increased family credit. It is impossible to isolate the latter effect with any degree of precision, but it is likely to contribute something in the range of £25 million to £50 million towards the overall reduction in housing benefit expenditure.

Social Security (Reform)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the cost of the transitional arrangements to prevent cash losses, as proposed in Cmnd. 9691, for each year that these transitional arrangements are expected to apply.

Mr. Newton: It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the cost of transitional protection until final decisions are taken about the rates of benefit that will apply from April 1988.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many households currently

claiming housing benefit will lose entitlement to *(a)* rent rebate and *(b)* rate rebate, under the proposals in Cmnd. 9691; and, in each case, what is the number of pensioner households and the number of working households with and without children;

(2) how many families currently receiving family income supplement will not be entitled to family credit, on the basis of the structural reforms proposed in Cmnd. 9691;

(3) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing the changes in disposable income after meeting housing costs as a result of the changes proposed in housing benefit in Cmnd. 9691, by client group, on the same bases as the tables showing the effect of structural reform, including the 20 per cent. rates contribution, in the technical annex to Cmnd. 9691;

(4) how many working households with children currently receive *(a)* both family income supplement and housing benefit, *(b)* just family income supplement and *(c)* just housing benefit; and how many, under the structural proposals in Cmnd. 9691, will receive (i) both family credit and housing benefit, (ii) just family credit and (iii) just housing benefit.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will specify the amounts of supplementary benefit that will be received by unemployed single childless people and couples and lone parents aged 16 and 17 years.

Mr. Newton: I assume the hon. Member has in mind income support rather than supplementary benefit, and I refer him to my reply to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 13 January at column *495*.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what compensation, if any, is allowed for the loss of (i) the direct payment of water rates and (ii) payment for residual housing costs in the illustrative benefit rates given in the technical annexe to Cmnd. 9691 for *(a)* single persons aged 18 to 25 years, *(b)* single persons aged 25 years and over and lone parents and *(c)* couples.

Mr. Newton: The technical annex assumes that the resources currently devoted to water rates and residual housing costs are included in the overall amounts available in setting the illustrative rates of weekly benefit. The changes in underlying benefit entitlement of those claimants who currently receive such payments are therefore included in the illustrative tables set out in the annex, along with the other factors that might affect their benefit entitlement. In common with other claimants, transitional protection will ensure that claimants currently receiving payments for water rates and residual housing costs will not experience a fall in cash income as a result of the change from supplementary benefit to income support.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the double family premium for a disabled child will be paid only if the child is blind or in receipt of mobility or attendance allowance; and whether the double premium will also be payable under the family credit scheme.

Mr. Newton: Yes, as regards income support and housing benefit.

In the case of family credit, the structure described in paragraph 3.69 of the White Paper "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691) is based on a maximum credit consisting simply of an adult credit and a child credit, which will be age-related for each child. It does not include the payment of a double family premium. As with the other income-related benefits, any mobility allowance or attendance allowance will be disregarded in full in estimating a family's income.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the responses to the Green Paper, "Reform of Social Security", had been analysed before the publication of the White Paper; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: All responses to the Green Paper were fully considered, but as indicated in my reply to the hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) on 10 December at column *597*, they were not generally in a form which could sensibly be used to provide a simple breakdown of numbers for or against particular aspects of the proposals.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table of gains and losses resulting from the proposed structural reforms contained in Cmnd. 9691, including 20 per cent. rates contribution, which also takes account of the cuts in rate rebates, child benefit and central heating additions and related changes which took effect in 1985.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 20 December at columns *435-436*.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans the Government have for payment and assessment of family credit to strikers' families during the period of a strike under the White Paper on the reform of social security.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1985, c. *495*]: The Government intend to consult further on the operational procedures for family credit. However it is envisaged that payment of the credit would generally be suspended when the recipient was on strike, but that payment would be allowed to continue if a strike lasted for no more than a few days. It would of course be open to the striker to claim income support, subject to the trade dispute rules, in respect of his dependants. Assessment of family credit claimed where a member of the family is on strike will be on the basis of the latter's normal earnings.

Disabled Children

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his latest estimate of the number of *(a)* blind children, *(b)* children in receipt of attendance allowance and mobility allowance and *(c)* other disabled children; and what is his estimate, in each case, where the family is claiming (i) supplementary benefit and (ii) standard housing benefit.

Mr. Newton: The latest information relating to blind children and those receiving attendance allowance and mobility allowance is set out in the table. It is not possible to produce reliable and up to date estimates of the numbers of other disabled children in advance of the results of the

disablement survey being undertaken by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. Neither is it possible to produce reliable estimates of the numbers of disabled children living in families receiving standard housing benefit.

Disabled children in Great Britain (000's)*

	Blind†	*Receiving mobility allowance*	*Receiving attendance allowance*
Total number	2	19	57
Number of families receiving supplementary benefit	n/a	7	1

Notes

* Figures overlap, and relate to different dates. The latest available figure has been used in each case.

† The figures for the blind relate to children registered with their local authority.

Social Fund

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the social fund will make non-recoverable grants only for the purposes of maternity and funeral expenses and community care needs; and whether all other payments will be on the basis of a loan.

Mr. Newton: Yes, except that payments for funeral expenses will be recoverable from the estate of the deceased. The circumstances in which payments will be made for community care needs will be set out in guidance which will be published in due course.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will update to 1983 and, if possible 1984, table 34.41 of "Social Security Statistics 1984", or provide such information as is available relating to receipt of the long-term supplementary benefit rate and additional requirements; and if he will give figures for the number of carers receiving the long term supplementary benefit rate.

Mr. Newton: Social security statistics giving the 1983 figures will be published in March. The information requested is provided in table 10.4 of Supplementary Benefit Statistics, Annual Inquiry December 1983, a copy of which is in the Library. It is regretted that information for 1984 is not yet available.

Income Support Scheme

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans for changes in the entitlement to benefit for the families of those involved in trade disputes under the income support scheme.

Mr. Newton: We intend to make broadly similar provision for trade disputes in relation to income support as currently exists for supplementary benefit, subject to some minor changes and clarifications.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he intends to take, in relation to the decision of the Social Security Commissioners, reference CSB/930/1985, other than his response to applications for review from individual claimants, in relation to *(a)* supplementary benefit claimants who applied for exceptionally severe weather single payments during last winter but who were refused on the basis of the instructions from the chief adjudication officer then in force, *(b)* the 170,000 claimants who, according to his reply of 22 October 1985 to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East, *Official Report*, column *132*, received payments which should now be recalculated and *(c)* claimants who made no claim for a single payment because they were aware of the instructions set out in the chief adjudication officer's guidance.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 6 December at column *394*. The chief adjudication officer's guidance covers both review of decisions made last year and cases where no claim was made at the time.

Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to the answer of 13 November, *Official Report*, column *207-8*, why the McColl committee report on services received by patients at artificial limb and appliance centres has not been published; when he expects to publish it; if he still intends to publish it in full and in the form in which it was submitted to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: As I said in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Hawksley) on 19 December at column *310*, publication before the recess proved impracticable. Since originally submitting its report the working party has made a number of amendments which will be incorporated in the full text to be published shortly.

School Hygiene Inspections

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children were seen by school nurses in the course of hygiene inspections in 1979 and each succeeding year; and what percentage were subsequently referred for medical examination or treatment.

Mr. Whitney: I regret that the exact information requested is not available. Relevant information which is available centrally is shown in the table. It would be extremely unusual for pupils to be referred for medical examination or treatment solely because of infestation.

School health service in England
Hygiene inspections

Year	*Examinations of pupils in schools by school nurses or other authorised persons* (thousands)*	*Pupils found to be infested† (thousands)*
1979	14,500	161
1980	14,573	180
1981	14,223	189
1982	12,795	170
1983	11,682	173
1984	9,402	132

* Individual pupils may have more than one examination during the year.

† Number of individual pupils, not instances of infestation.

NHS Privatisation

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether a record is kept by his Department of any representations made by hon. Members about the privatisation of particular contracts in the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: A record of written representations from hon. and right hon. Members is kept.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he or any of his ministerial colleagues last had contact with directors, staff or consultants of Hospital Hygiene Services, Crothalls, Office Cleaning Services, Pritchards, Brengreen or any of their subsidiaries about the contracting out of hospital services.

Mr. Hayhoe: My right hon. Friend met with representatives of all the contractors listed except Brengreen on 23 July 1985.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which company lost a cleaning, catering or laundry contract with a health authority in the last year for failing to achieve standards laid down in the contract; and which was the health authority concerned.

Mr. Hayhoe: Bromley health authority terminated the domestic contract at Orpington hospital which had been awarded to Hospital Hygiene Services.

District Health Authorities

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether any district health authority chairman has expressed concern to him in discussions about the scope for efficiency savings in the current year and 1987; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether any district health authorities have made any representations to him about the scope for savings in cost improvement programmes in 1986-87 compared with 1985-86.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Consultants

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish information held by his Department on health authorities which have instituted formal arrangements to monitor consultants' commitments to National Health Service work and on health authorities which have instituted disciplinary proceedings against consultants in relation to their commitment to the National Health Service.

Mr. Hayhoe: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member on 19 December, at column *312*.

Operations (Survival Rates)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what studies have been made by or for his Department into the comparative survival rates following operations in different hospitals.

Mr. Whitney: The Department has not sponsored any study specifically on this topic but has commissioned the social medicine and health services research unit, St. Thomas' hospital, London, to conduct research into the incidence of deaths in disease groups amenable to medical treatment. The final report is expected in 1987.

Child Health

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what studies have been carried out by or for his Department into trends in child health, nationally, regionally or locally.

Mr. Whitney: The following studies are currently funded by the Department and are either wholly or in part concerned with trends in child health.

Professor F. Harris, Institute of Child Health, University of Liverpool — Liverpool Congenital Malformations Registry.

Professor O. H. Wolff and Dr. I. Smith, Institute of Child Health, London University Phenylketonuria Register. Jointly funded with Medical Research Council.

Professor W. Holland, United Medical and Dental Schools, St. Thomas' Campus, London, National Study of Health and Growth.

Dr. I. Chalmers, National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, Oxford — a range of projects are being undertaken by this unit.

Professor D. L. Miller, St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, London—National Childhood Encephalopathy Study.

Dr. D. L. Crombie, General Practice Research Unit, Birmingham—National Morbidity Studies.

Professor R. Davie, National Children's Bureau—National Child Development Study.

Dr. W. O. Williams, Royal College of GPs, Swansea Research Unit — The long-term effects of whooping cough in children.

Professor M. Stacey, University of Warwick—Overview of research on the provision and utilisation of the child health services. This includes details of some locally and centrally funded projects completed between 1980 and 1984.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps the Government have taken to reduce social class inequalities in child health.

Mr. Hayhoe: The Government's policy is aimed at directing health care services towards the most vulnerable groups of people and towards those areas of the country with the greatest need. In the field of child health, the Government have endorsed the recommendations of the maternity services advisory committee, which emphasised the need for a high level of maternity and neonatal services. The Government have also initiated campaigns to improve the take-up of vaccination and immunisation; and is discussing with the professional bodies concerned the content and scope of child health surveillance. These activities will benefit those children whose health needs may arise from social inequalities.

Primary Care Package

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the district health authorities areas in which the £9 million primary care package awarded in 1983 has been spent;

(2) how much of the £9 million primary care package was spent centrally.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether, further to the answer of 12 December

1985, *Official Report*, columns *767-8*, the spending items mentioned in the last sentence of the answer were financed from the £9 million primary care package.

Mr. Hayhoe: Yes.

NHS Property Sales

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish an estimate of the number of residential places for National Health Service staff which will be lost as a result of the selling of National Health Service property in 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall publish this information as soon as I have received and approved action plans from all health authorities. I regret that a number of authorities failed to submit their plans by 31 December but I am expecting to receive most during January.

General Practitioner Premises

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the current levels of Government-financed or backed spending or lending for the building or improvement of general practitioner premises; and if they are cash limited.

Mr. Hayhoe: No separate figures are available for spending on the cost rent scheme which is not cash limited. Spending under the improvement grant scheme amounted to £2·6 million in 1984-85, the last year for which out-turn figures are available. This spending is not cash limited. Spending under the enhanced improvement grant scheme for inner cities is cash limited and amounted to £0·5 million in 1984-85. The cash allocation for the scheme for the current financial year is £1·25 million. The General Practice Finance Corporation, whose borrowing is covered by Treasury guarantees and is subject to public expenditure control, lent £23·2 million to general medical practitioners in 1984-85 for the purchase, construction or adaptation of surgery premises. Its net borrowing limit for 1985-86 is £22·5 million.

Child Abuse

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the further programme of work on child abuse which his Department now has in hand.

Mr. Whitney: We expect to make such a statement shortly.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that no voluntary sector activity in the fields of health and social services will cease or be substantially reduced as a result of the abolition of the metropolitan counties and the Greater London council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: I refer the hon. Member to my replies to him on 10 December at column *612* and on 18 December at column *237*. Decisions about whether any particular voluntary sector activity affected by abolition of the metropolitan county councils and the Greater London council should continue to be supported from public funds are for the appropriate successor authorities.

Inpatient Stays

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how the attitude of patients or carers to the reduction of inpatient stays will be measured; and if he will make a statement;

(2)if he is aware of any local, district or regional surveys of attitudes of patients or carers to the reduction in average inpatient stays in any or all types of hospital.

Mr. Whitney: We are not aware of any studies of patients' or carers' attitudes specifically on reductions in lengths of stay.

Statistics

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those statistics which were collected by or for his Department on health and social services matters which are no longer collected as a result of Rayner exercises in Government Departments, health authorities or family practitioners' committees.

Mr. Whitney: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Budget Spectacles

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the information collected by his Department on the market price of budget spectacles.

Mr. Hayhoe: The information collected by my Department is that which is available to everyone from advertising and published price lists.

Hip Replacements

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how his Department arrived at its estimate of the median interval between a patient being placed on a hip replacement waiting list and the date of admission to a National Health Service hospital for a total hip replacement; and when the equivalent figure for 1984 will be available.

Mr. Whitney: The estimated median interval between the date a patient was placed on the waiting list and the date of admission to a National Health Service non-psychiatric hospital is based on the sample information held centrally. The median value is the waiting time of the middle case of a group of patients when ranked in order of waiting time. Equivalent 1984 information is expected to be available in May this year.

Residential Care (Booklet)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why he has not sought to make "Home Life—A Code of Priorities for Residential Care" binding on local authorities.

Mr. Whitney: It would not be appropriate to make binding the provisions of a code that was drafted in advisory terms and dealt with matters on which discretionary judgments had to be made. However, my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Social Services and for Wales, in their foreword to the published code, asked local authorities to regard it in the same light as general guidance issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970.

Nursing Homes (Booklet)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why he has not formally directed health authorities to conform with "Registration and Inspection of Nursing Homes: A Handbook for Health Authorities".

Mr. Whitney: That would have been inappropriate. As the preface to the handbook makes clear, its purpose is twofold: to provide advice to health authorities on their responsibilities in relation to registration and inspection of nursing homes, and to provide model guidelines, which can be adapted to meet local needs, to assist health authorities in carrying out their duties.

Post-operative Infections

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the sample information on post-operative infections held by his Department for 1979 and each year since.

Mr. Whitney: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Stanley Royd Hospital, Wakefield

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he received the report of the committee of inquiry into the outbreak of food poisoning at Stanley Royd hospital, Wakefield.

Mr. Hayhoe: On 6 December 1985.

Food Poisoning

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases of food poisoning occurred in National Health Service hospitals in 1979 and each succeeding year.

Mr. Whitney: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 28 November at columns *652-654*, which provides the information requested for England and Wales.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people died of food poisoning in National Health Service hospitals in 1979 and each succeeding year, distinguishing between patients and others.

Mr. Whitney: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Tobacco Company Sponsorship

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy towards the acceptance by health authorities of tobacco company sponsorship for National Health Service hospitals or wards.

Mr. Whitney: We would expect that with their first-hand knowledge of the health effects of smoking authorities would wish to avoid the acceptance of tobacco company sponsorship for National Health Service hospitals or wards.

Academic Department of General Practice

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which are the five academic departments of general practice which have been supported; and what was the total cost of this support.

Mr. Hayhoe: The five academic departments of general practice which are receiving support as part of the initiative on primary care in inner cities are those at St. Bartholomew's hospital, St. Thomas' hospital, Guy's hospital, St. Mary's hospital and University College hospital. Each Department has been advised that it may spend up to £25,000 in each of two years to fund additional posts to work on projects which would benefit primary health care in their areas.

Homeless and Rootless Persons

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the localities covered by the experimental schemes to promote primary health care of the homeless and rootless.

Mr. Hayhoe: Pilot trials for providing primary health care for homeless and rootless people will be mounted in the localities of City and east London and Camden and Islington family practitioner committees.

Short-term Benefits

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Social Services in what circumstances reduced rates of short-term benefits are paid; and whether he has any plans for changing them.

Mr. Newton: Payment of short-term benefits at the full rate depends on the claimant having paid or been credited with national insurance contributions on earnings of 50 times the lower earnings limit, below which contributions are not payable, in the relevant tax year. In the current year the lower limit is £35·50 so that to qualify for full benefit a person needs to have paid contributions on earnings of at least £1,775 in the year. People who cannot meet this condition but have paid contributions on earnings of £887·50 or more receive half-rate benefit and those who have paid on £1,331·25 or more receive three-quarter rate.

The half rate of employment benefit for a single person is £15·23 and the three-quarter rate is £22·84. The rates for sickness benefit and maternity allowance are slightly lower. The administrative costs of paying such reduced rates of benefit are high—over 20 per cent. Over half the recipients receive no financial advantage from the benefit because they also draw supplementary benefit. The rest are likely either to have partners who are working or to have other resources of their own.

The Government have concluded that these arrangements are an unjustified complication of the social security system and do not represent a sensible use of resources. We therefore propose in the forthcoming Social Security Bill to abolish the power to make regulations for the payment of these reduced rates. Subject to parliamentary agreement to this proposal further consideration will be given to the date of implementation. Transitional protection will be given to people who are receiving the benefit at that date. The change will save about £20 million net in a full year.

Family Practitioner Committees

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will list in the *Official Report* those family practitioner committees which have been criticised by his Department's director of audit or other officials from his Department for having made insufficient provision for internal audit; whether he will estimate the annual expenditure necessary to remedy those identified shortcomings; and whether he will now revise his earlier view that internal audit for family practitioner committees should not attract additional Government funding.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1985, c. *153-4*]: I regret that the second page of my answer was omitted. The full text was as follows:

"In their preliminary review of the accounts of Family Practitioner Committees for the financial year 1985-86 Statutory Auditors have, to date, issued reports on the inadequate provision for internal audit at the following Committees:

Oxfordshire FPC
Suffolk FPC
Cambridgeshire FPC
Norfolk FPC
Buckinghamshire FPC
Coventry FPC
Staffordshire FPC
Birmingham FPC
Walsall FPC
Solihull FPC
Dudley FPC
Warwickshire FPC
Wolverhampton FPC
Sandwell FPC
Shropshire FPC

Following their examination of the accounts for 1984-85, the last year for which responsibility for the provision of internal audit services to Family Practitioner Committees lay with the linked District Health Authority, Statutory Auditors commented on the inadequacy of such services at the following authorities:

Huddersfield HA — in respect of Kirklees FPC
North Lincolnshire HA — in respect of Lincolnshire FPC
Wakefield HA — in respect of Wakefield FPC
Doncaster HA — in respect of Doncaster FPC
Chichester HA — in respect of West Sussex FPC
Wirral HA — in respect of Wirral FPC
St. Helens and Knowsley HA — in respect of St. Helens and Knowsley FPC
Isle of Wight HA— in respect of Isle of Wight FPC
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly HA — in respect of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly FPC
City and Hackney HA — in respect of City and East London FPC
South Sefton HA — in respect of Sefton FPC

The expenditure necessary to remedy shortcomings in internal audit depends on the assessment by individual FPCs of their needs and on decisions they take on the way that these needs should be met.

All relevant burdens on FPCs will, however, be taken into account in the distribution of the limited resources available to FPCs for 1986-87. Consideration will be given to whether any financial help can be provided to FPCs with little or no current internal audit resources."

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Upper Waiting Hall (Exhibitions)

Mr. Pawsey asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will take steps to introduce a revised system for booking exhibitions in the Upper Waiting Hall which avoids the need for personal queuing.

Mr. Biffen: I understand that the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee of the Services Committee will be reviewing this matter shortly.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Lord Privy Seal what is the present system for booking exhibitions in the Upper Waiting Hall; who is permitted actually to make the bookings; what are the time limits on bookings; and on how many occasions in the last 12 months persons have sought, at the earliest available opportunity, to book exhibitions more than there have been slots available.

Mr. Biffen: Under arrangements agreed by the Services Committee exhibitions may be booked on a first-come-first-served basis at the Serjeant at Arms' Office. A booking may be made by an hon. Member or by his secretary or research assistant. Bookings may be made immediately after the announcement of the appropriate recess dates as follows:

Recess Date Announced	*Booking Period Available*
Summer	End of Summer Recess to Christmas Recess
Christmas	End of Christmas Recess to Easter Recess
Easter	End of Easter Recess to Summer Recess

In the past 12 months, 17 hon. Members applied for bookings on opening days without success.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Lord Privy Seal (1) if he will take steps to introduce arrangements for booking the Upper Waiting Hall for exhibitions for a period of half a week; and if he will make a statement.

(2) if he will take steps to introduce arrangements to permit two small exhibitions to be mounted simultaneously in the Upper Waiting Hall, one on each side; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: I have asked the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee of the Services Committee to include these matters in its forthcoming review of exhibition arrangements.

DEFENCE

Defence Attachés

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has in mind to strengthen the contribution of defence attachés to the work of his Department.

Mr. Younger: Our service attachés play a very important part in the work of posts overseas: in representing the British armed forces overseas; in developing the relationships between the armed services of this country and those of the nations to which they are accredited, including, where appropriate, facilitating military co-operation; in assisting defence equipment co-operation and collaboration; and, together with the head of defence export services and his staff, in assisting defence export effort.

We have sought to strengthen our effort in a number of these areas, including military assistance overseas, equipment co-operation and collaboration, and defence sales. In view of the important contribution our service attachés can make, I believe that it would be helpful if they were able to talk to Ministers, my senior military advisers and officials of my Department and of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in order to keep themselves abreast with latest developments.

I have therefore decided, in consultation with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, that the principal service attachés and advisers now serving abroad should return to this country in the spring in order that as a group they may exchange views, and have the opportunity to discuss their roles and responsibilities with me, my ministerial colleagues and our advisers. I believe that this exchange of views will be of considerable mutual value.

Nuclear Tests (Compensation)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Defence what procedure the National Radiological Protection Board has developed on circulation of the questionnaire sent to nuclear veterans who served on Christmas Island; and what further questionnaire is sent out when the personnel involved on the nuclear tests are already deceased and the cause of death is identified as cancer.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Ministry of Defence has commissioned the National Radiological Protection Board to carry out a survey on its behalf of the health of United Kingdom participants in the British atmospheric nuclear weapon test programmes both on Christmas Island and in Australia. However, the procedures by which the national Radiological Protection Board carries out the survey are a matter for the board, and I have asked the board to write to the right hon. Member in answer to this question.

Nuclear Duties (Guidelines)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will put in the Library the guidelines he has circulated to service men on nuclear duties.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement to the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) on 18 December 1984, at column 101.

GEC-Plessey (Merger)

Mr. Neil Thorne asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the implications for defence procurement of the proposed merger of GEC and Plessey.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall answer shortly.

Westland Helicopters

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement explaining where and when the recent meeting of national armaments directors of France, Germany and Italy took place at which the decision was made to purchase only helicopters built in Europe; and what steps he took to publicise the decisions made at the meeting and the implications of the decisions for defence policy.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *534*]: The national armaments directors of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom met in London on 29 November 1985. Her Majesty's Government's position on the NADs' recommendation was set out by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the House of Commons on 16 December 1985 and again on 13 January 1986.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government are satisfied that other EEC countries would be willing to supply helicopters to the United Kingdom for use in the Falklands should hostilities recommence.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *533*]: I have no reason to believe that the supply of helicopters would be a problem in these circumstances.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the letter to him, dated 3 January, from Mr. Horne was received; when it was sent; and whether he had prior knowledge of the dispatch of the letter or its terms.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *525*]: The letter from Mr. Horne was received on 3 January, the day it was sent. My right hon. Friend was aware of its terms before the letter was received in the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence, further to his letter, dated 3 January, to Mr. Horne, whether the Italian Government or Agusta have said that in the event of a link-up between Westland and Sikorsky-Fiat they will not proceed with the full development of the 13-tonne (EH 101) helicopter launched in 1984; which other countries would be interested in replacing Westland in this bilateral arrangement; whether any United Kingdom defence procurement interest would be jeopardised; and what claims Westland or the British Government would have under the terms of the agreement against Agusta if the agreement was denounced on the Italian side.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1985, c. *528*]: The EH 101 project was not included in the projects referred to by my right hon. Friend in his letter of 3 January, where he stated explicitly that there were indications available to Her Majesty's Government that a Westland link with Sikorsky-Fiat would be incompatible with participation by that company on behalf of the United kingdom in the collaborative battlefield helicopter and NH90 projects. There have been recent indications that Agusta is content to proceed with full development of the EH 101 helicopter.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the 13-tonne class (EH 101) helicopter being developed by Westland and Augusta; what requirement for each of the armed services in the United Kingdom would be met by this helicopter; how many machines would be purchased by the United Kingdom and Italian Governments and at what cost; whether comparable machines are available or under development in the United States of America; whether the Augusta-Westland machine would be cheaper than a comparable United States machine; and whether the complete machine would be made in the United Kingdom independently of components made in Italy.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *529*]: The EH 101 helicopter is being produced to meet the Royal Navy's requirement to replace

the Sea King and Lynx in an anti-submarine role. Initial orders are expected to amount to about 90 helicopters, including 50 for the United Kingdom. Total programme costs for the United Kingdom are estimated at £1·5 billion at current economic rates. There is no comparable machine currently available or under development in the United States of America. Collaborative production will involve the assembly in both countries of complete helicopters from components some of which will have been made in the United Kingdom and some in Italy.

Tornado Aircraft

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the significance of the Tornado aircraft programme to the defence of the United Kingdom; how much public money has been committed to it; and if he intends to cancel the programme in the light of the disclosure of Libyan part ownership of Fiat.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *534*.]: The Tornado aircraft, in its different versions, will provide a major part of the RAF's front line until well into the next century. Four thousand, six hundred and three million pounds had been spent on the programme up to 31 March 1985. There is no intention of cancelling it.

European Fighter Aircraft

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the significance of the European fighter aircraft to the defence of the United Kingdom; how much public money has been committed to it; and if he intends to cancel the programme in the light of the disclosure of Libyan part ownership of Fiat.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *534*.]: The European fighter aircraft is intended to be the successor to Phantom and Jaguar aircraft currently in service in the air defence and ground attack roles. To date, we have spent or contractually commited some £2 million on the collaborative programme. In addition, the participating nations are committed to the project definition phase of the programme; this is the subject of current contractual negotiation and it would therefore be inappropriate to publish a cost estimate. The question of cancellation does not arise.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 16 January 1986

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Drugs

Mr. Dalyell asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from the British Veterinary Association, the National Farmers Union, and the Consumers Association, about a black market in the growth-boosting drugs, after the European Economic Community hormone ban; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Fenner: I am aware of the concern felt in many quarters on this aspect, and we have drawn it to the attention of the Council of Ministers, although no formal representations have recently been made to me.

Crayfish

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what action his Department has taken under the Import of Live Fish (England and Wales) Act 1980 to prevent the import of American signal crayfish;

(2) what action he is taking following the observations in the 11th report of the Nature Conservancy Council on the spread of crayfish plague in British waters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jopling: Unfortunately, the considerable practical difficulties involved in combating a disease which attacks wild fish in their natural environment mean that efforts now to eradicate crayfish plague would almost certainly be unsuccessful. Moreover, the necessary restrictions on all imports of live crayfish, including those for the table, and controls on their movement throughout England and Wales would be highly disruptive to trade and expensive to enforce. For these reasons we have not taken any action to control imports of signal crayfish or to restrict or monitor their movements in this country.

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why his Department has continued to provide support from public funds for an organisation which markets American signal crayfish in view of the health record of imports of such fish.

Mr. Jopling: In 1981 the Government contributed towards the cost of a feasibility study into the co-operative marketing of crayfish matured in this country. The grant was made under the agricultural and horticultural co-operation scheme which was then administered by the Central Council for Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operation (now Food from Britain). As a result, the British Crayfish Marketing Association was established and in 1982 it received a very small grant towards its formation costs. My Department has made no further payments to the BCMA.

River Mersey (Silt Dumping)

Mr. Wareing asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the current position regarding the issuing of a dumping licence for silt dredged from the River Mersey, its adjacent docks, locks and channels.

Mr. Jopling: The licences issued under the Dumping at Sea Act 1974 for the disposal to sea of dredge spoil from the River Mersey and its environs expired on 31 December 1985. Applications for their renewal were not received until well into the month of December. As it usually takes about two months for applications to be fully considered by our scientific advisers, the old licences were extended until 28 February to allow time for proper assessments to be made.

Under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, which now governs the issue of licences for sea disposal, Ministers are required to have regard to the protection of the marine environment, the living resources which it supports and human health. We shall take full account of these considerations and all other relevant factors in coming to decisions on these applications, which we expect to reach well before the end of February.

Nets

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he plans to seek further controls over the use of nylon monofilament nets in England and Wales.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *579*]: No. I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) on 29 November 1985, at column 702.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Official Secrets Act

Mr. John Morris asked the Attorney-General whether he will refer the apparent breach of any security involved in the disclosure of the contents of the recent letter of the Solicitor-General to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) to the Director of Public Prosecutions for his consideration and advice as to whether a decision to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act should be taken.

The Attorney-General: An internal inquiry has been instituted into the matter to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman refers. When it has been completed — and it is still some considerable way from being completed—I shall be in a position to consider whether it is appropriate to follow the procedure which he suggests.

SCOTLAND

Summerston Shopping Centre, Glasgow

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when the Scottish Development Agency hopes to complete its arrangements with Glasgow district council for landscaping the coup at the Summerston shopping centre, Glasgow.

Mr. Allan Stewart: The agency is re-appraising all proposed new projects and expects to reach decisions by March on the priority to be accorded to this project, and, if it is to go ahead, on the time scale for undertaking it.

Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what further consideration his Department has given to proposals from Greater Glasgow health board for providing a psychiatric day unit at Ruchill hospital, Glasgow and an inpatient unit to serve the north-west of the city.

Mr. John MacKay: Formal proposals for a psychiatric development at Ruchill are still awaited from the health board. I understand, however, that the board is now actively working on these proposals, which will require to be set in the context of an overall strategy for the development of psychiatric services in the area.

Lothian Regional Council (RSG)

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total value of rate support grant paid to Lothian regional council in 1979 and 1985, respectively; and what percentage of the expenditure of the council those figures represented.

Mr. Ancram: Total rate support grant paid to Lothian regional council in respect of 1979-80 was £134·1 million. The grant paid in respect of 1985-86 will not be known until final expenditure information is available. The grant payable for 1985-86 on the basis of the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order 1985 is £182 million. This has already been adjusted for grant penalties and interest rate changes and will be further adjusted for these reasons as necessary. These grant figures are 52·6 per cent. of total expenditure, including loan charges, in 1979-80 and 45·6 per cent. in 1985-86.

WALES

Parrot Corporation

Mr. Grist asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will report the outcome of Mr. Douglas Baker's internal investigation into the Welsh Development Agency's handling of its investment in the Parrot Corporation.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I announced on 28 October, at columns 313-14, that I had invited Mr. Douglas Baker, chairman of Touche Ross and Co., to examine the Welsh Development agency's handling of its investment in the Parrot Corporation and the agency's supervision of its investment, having special regard to the provisions of the WDA Act 1975, the investment guidelines laid down by the Welsh Office and the WDA's own investment manual; and to report to me.

Mr. Baker has now completed his investigation. I have expressed my gratitude to him for the thoroughness with which he has undertaken this task.

As I earlier informed the House, Mr. Baker was asked to undertake an internal investigation. His report contains material that is of a commercially confidential nature. In view of this and the continuing police investigation into the circumstances of the original investment and the conduct of individuals it would not be appropriate to publish his internal advice to me. I undertook to report further to the House.

Mr. Baker found that the transaction between the Parrot Corporation and Northern Trust involving a collateralised deposit was most unusual from a commercial viewpoint and that it could not reasonably have been anticipated by the agency. I have no reason to dispute that finding. Mr. Baker also found that the WDA Act 1975 and the investment guidelines had been followed. However, although Mr. Baker also concluded that even the most elaborate procedures may not have been sufficient to prevent the circumstances that arose, he did find that certain of the procedures followed by the WDA in its handling of the investment and in its subsequent monitoring were deficient.

I have discussed these findings with the chairman of the WDA. It is clear that for the future there must be arrangements to ensure that the deficiencies identified are not repeated. The chairman has informed me that a number of measures have already been taken by the agency: in particular, arrangements with respect to the appointment of non-executive directors and their responsibilities have been substantially clarified and a new system to improve the monitoring of investments has been established within the agency. In the light of Mr. Baker's findings, the chairman has also informed me that steps will be taken to ensure that the agency obtains reports from outside accountants in all appropriate investment cases and to allow closer supervision of the legal aspects of completion deals. By these means the agency has taken or is in the process of taking steps to ensure that the deficiencies identified by Mr. Baker have been dealt with.

Cervical Screening

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what expenditure will be incurred during the current year and for 1986-87, by each health authority in Wales, on the cervical smear programme;

(2) what was the total expenditure incurred by the National Health Service on its cervical smear programme, by health authority, in Wales, for each of the last five years.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The information is not available centrally.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the extent to which the current level of funding of the cervical smear programme in each of the area health authorities in Wales for the current year admits of the completion of the service, tests and follow-up reporting to all patients requesting or referred by their general practitioners for such tests.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The level of funding for this service is essentially a matter for the individual health authorities to determine in the light of other demands on their resources.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of the total expenditure incurred on the cervical smear programme in Mid Glamorgan is accounted for by the laboratory testing of smears; and which centres are used for tests conducted for each of the districts within the Mid Glamorgan area health authority.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Information in respect of expenditure on the cervical smear programme is not available centrally. Pathology laboratories at the following hospitals in Mid Glamorgan conducted cervical cytology tests during 1984: Prince Charles, East Glamorgan general and Bridgend general.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales what arrangements exist in each of the Welsh health authorities for follow-up reporting of results to National Health Service patients who have received cervical smear tests.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Responsibility for the administration of this service lies with the health authorities. The report of the joint NHS-Welsh Office working party which was published last July recommended certain follow-up action and safeguards that should be incorporated into local procedures. Some authorities have commented on the working party's findings and these are being considered prior to the issue of a circular advising authorities on the implementation of the recommendations.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will state for each of the last five years the number of cervical smear tests conducted in each district of the Mid Glamorgan health authority and the total number for each of the other Welsh area health authorities.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The number of cervical cytology tests reported by pathology laboratories for each of the years 1980 to 1984 are given in the table. It is not possible to relate these figures to the district of residence of the patients tested.

Health district/Management Unit	*Number of Tests*				
	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Mid Glamorgan					
Ogwr	7,002	6,688	6,274	6,974	8,317
Taff-Ely	8,606	9,678	9,277	10,948	11,298
Rhondda	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Merthyr Cynon	6,817	7,631	6,830	7,751	10,836
Rhymney Valley	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	22,425	23,997	22,381	25,673	30,451
Clwyd	19,390	20,435	19,144	20,821	22,304
East Dyfed	17,650	18,920	17,974	19,372	16,319
Pembrokeshire*	..	..	Nil	Nil	Nil
Gwent	22,506	23,569	23,241	25,112	27,828
Gwynedd	8,763	9,825	9,684	10,451	12,791
Powys	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
South Glamorgan	28,877	32,036	30,724	31,920	38,632
West Glamorgan	19,495	20,536	18,882	21,026	23,055
Wales	139,106	149,318	142,030	154,375	171,380

* Figures included with East Dyfed for 1980 and 1981.

Local Authority Finance

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the additional capital allocation proposed for local authorities in Wales for 1986-87 compared with 1985-86; and what is his estimate of *(a)* the additional annual loans charges and *(b)* the other revenue cost consequences arising which will arise from this increased capital allocation.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The total of capital allocations available to local authorities in Wales for 1986-87 is £322·8 million, compared with £263·3 million in 1985-86; an increase of some £60 million, or 23 per cent. Additional capital expenditure may increase revenue expenditure in two ways—loan charges to repay any borrowing, and current expenditure, arising from increases in associated manpower and running expenses. Provision for this expenditure increased by £25·7 million and £59·1 million respectively between 1985-86 and 1986-87. The precise effect on current expenditure will depend on the nature of the schemes undertaken. Indeed, in announcing allocations for individual authorities on 16 December I emphasised that authorities should give priority to revenue saving schemes, such as projects to eliminate surplus school places. In the case of housing, a substantial part of the additional resources have been earmarked for public and private sector renovation, which does not, of course, result in increased current expenditure.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will specify the mechanism by which grant moneys which are withheld from local authorities in Wales will be credited back to local authorities in due course, and not redirected for use by other public services in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: If aggregate expenditure by local authorities in Wales exceeds the level of provision in the rate support grant for 1986-87, there will be a net under-claim on block grant. As I indicated in my statement to the House on 18 December, any such surplus grant will be made available for local government spending in Wales. I shall await the budget returns of authorities before determining how this surplus might be distributed.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he proposes to issue the final settlement figures for the rate support grant for local authorities in Wales for the year 1984-85; and why there has been a delay in this matter.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: There has been no delay. In accordance with the timetable agreed with the Welsh local

authority associations, I expect to lay the final supplementary report for 1984-85 in July of this year, after the customary audit of local authorities' accounts has been completed.

Departmental Cash Limits

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he proposes to change any of his Department's cash limits for the current year, in respect of rate support grants, national parks supplementary grants, and transport supplementary grants.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Yes. Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the following amendments are proposed. The cash limit for national parks supplementary grants (class 18, vote 4) will be increased by £29,000, from £2,000,000 to £2,029,000. The cash limit for transport supplementary grants (class 18, vote 10) will be increased by £9,000, from £26,500,000 to £26,509,000. These increases will be matched by a corresponding reduction of £38,000 to the cash limit for RSG (class 18, vote 2), from £828,600,000 to £828,562,000.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Cells (Detained persons)

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last visited remand prisoners in police cells; where; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My noble Friend Lord Glenarthur visited the cells at Horseferry road magistrates court on 30 July 1985.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces outside of the metropolitan area have detained prisoners in police cells in 1985; where they were detained; and what were their age and sex.

Mr. Mellor: The number of prisoners held in police cells by provincial police forces between 18 October 1985 (that is since my reply to a similar question by the hon. Member on 28 October) and 31 December 1985 was as follows:

Counties	*Adult Males*	*Under 21 Males*	*Adult Females*	*Under 21 Females*
Bedfordshire	—	—	2	—
Cambridgeshire	—	—	1	—
Dorset	—	—	6	—
Essex	35	—	2	3
Hampshire	—	—	11	4
Hertfordshire	29	—	—	—
Kent	—	—	3	1
Leicestershire	—	—	—	—
Norfolk	—	—	1	—
Northampton	—	—	—	1
Suffolk	—	—	8	—
Surrey	11	—	—	—
Sussex	54	—	—	1
Thames Valley	—	—	7	—
Wiltshire	—	—	1	—
Total	129	—	42	10

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the longest period of time that a person was detained in police cells in 1985.

Mr. Mellor: Twenty-nine nights.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* juveniles in custody in police cells on each day in 1985 by location.

Mr. Mellor: The number of prisoners held in police cells in 1985 after 18 October, the last occasion on which I answered this question for the hon. Member, was as follows:

	Adult males		*Adult females*		*Males under 21*		
	Metropolitan Police	*Other Forces*	*Metropolitan Police*	*Other Forces*	*Metropolitan Police*	*Other Forces*	*Total*
October							
18-21	36	—	—	—	—	—	36
21-22	6	—	5	—	—	11	22
22-23	20	—	—	—	—	9	29
23-24	5	—	—	—	—	5	10
24-25	—	—	11	—	2	—	13
25-28	—	—	12	3	—	—	15
28-29	3	—	11	2	—	—	16
29-30	—	—	6	—	—	—	6
30-31	12	—	15	1	—	—	28
31-1	5	—	13	—	—	7	25
November							
3-4	12	3	—	3	—	9	27
4-5	3	—	6	—	—	5	14
5-6	6	—	9	2	2	—	19
6-7	7	—	13	1	6	1	28
7-8	—	—	21	—	1	2	24
8-11	24	—	18	3	—	—	45
11-12	2	—	14	1	—	2	19
12-13	3	—	20	—	—	7	30
13-14	1	—	20	1	2	—	24
14-15	—	—	24	1	3	—	28
15-18	27	—	36	—	—	—	63
18-19	19	—	15	1	—	—	35
19-20	24	—	16	4	—	—	44

	Adult males		Adult females		Males under 21		
	Metropolitan Police	Other Forces	Metropolitan Police	Other Forces	Metropolitan Police	Other Forces	Total
20-21	8	—	24	1	—	1	34
21-22	13	—	22	—	—	—	35
22-25	36	—	45	6	—	—	87
25-26	40	—	19	6	—	2	67
26-27	41	—	26	1	—	1	69
27-28	16	5	31	1	3	—	56
28-29	—	—	36	2	3	—	41
29-2	45	—	48	—	—	—	93
December							
2-3	44	3	20	3	—	3	73
3-4	77	16	24	2	4	—	123
4-5	87	21	19	—	6	3	136
5-6	57	26	10	—	—	3	96
6-9	111	9	—	3	—	3	126
9-10	37	—	6	1	—	11	55
10-11	—	—	7	—	—	—	7
11-12	2	—	9	—	—	—	11
12-13	16	—	15	—	—	—	31
16-17	16	—	1	—	—	3	20
17-18	9	—	—	—	—	—	9
18-19	5	—	4	—	—	—	9
19-20	8	—	6	—	—	1	15
20-23	3	—	—	—	—	—	3
23-24	7	—	—	—	—	—	7

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* juveniles in custody in police cells on each day in 1986 by location.

Mr. Mellor: As at 13 January 1986, prisoners have been held in police cells as follows:

	Adult Females		Adult Males		Males under 21		
	Metropolitan Police	Other Forces	Metropolitan Police	Other Forces	Metropolitan Police	Other Forces	Total
January							
1-2	15	—	—	—	—	—	15
2-3	4	—	—	—	—	—	4
7-8	3	—	—	—	1	—	4
10-13	15	—	—	—	—	—	15

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest cost of holding a person in police cells.

Mr. Mellor: The average cost per night of holding a prisoner in police cells based on the latest accounts submitted by the Metropolitan police, is £176.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of police officers deployed in 1985 in guarding persons detained in police cells.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not recorded centrally.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total expenditure on prisoners in police cells in the last financial year.

Mr. Mellor: Total expenditure incurred by the Department in the financial year 1984-85 on holding prisoners in police cells was £3,358,560.

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on conditions in which unconvicted and unsentenced persons are held in police and court cells.

Mr. Mellor: We are conscious of the fact that court cells are not designed to hold prisoners for more than a few hours and that the medical and other facilities leave much to be desired. The police, however, are doing everything they can under difficult circumstances to provide the best possible facilities.

Racially Motivated Attacks

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from each chief of police listing the number of racially motivated attacks that have been recorded in each of the last five years; and what special measures they have taken to deal with this problem;

(2) if he has knowledge of any police force that does not record racially motivated attacks;

(3) what advice or guidelines have been issued to police forces in the recording of and the dealing with racially motivated attacks.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Information on the incidence of racially motivated attacks and on the recording practices of individual police forces is not held centrally. However, in October last year the Association of Chief Police

Officers issued guidance on the handling of racial attacks. The guidance, a copy of which I am placing in the Library, emphasised the importance of a vigorous and sympathetic police response, and drew attention to the need for collecting and collating reliable local information about racial incidents. My right hon. Friend has asked the Chief Inspector of Constabulary to pay particular attention in his annual inspections to the steps taken in each force to record and monitor racially motivated incidents.

Prison Officers (Training Courses)

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many regionally organised training courses for prison officers have been suspended as a result of the prison department's decisions communicated to prison governors in August 1985.

Mr. Mellor: Two hundred and eleven courses, of varying content and duration, have been cancelled.

Holloway Prison

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will list for each prisoner at Holloway prison the number of *(a)* baths or showers allowed per week and *(b)* changes of clothes allowed per week.

Mr. Mellor: The number of baths or showers allowed at Holloway is generally in excess of the statutory requirement of one per week. On average, each inmate is allowed four per week: inmates assigned to certain work parties are allowed a daily bath. All inmates may change their clothes for clean ones each day.

Immigration

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the waiting list as at 1 January for entry clearance at *(a)* Dacca, *(b)* Islamabad and *(c)* Delhi; and what were the comparative figures for 1 January 1985 and 1 January 1984.

Mr. Waddington: Information for end-December 1985 is not yet available; the other information requested and that for end-September 1985 are given in the following table:

*Persons awaiting a decision on their application for entry clearance to the United Kingdom**

Number

	end December 1983	*end December 1984*	*end September 1985*
Dacca	11,400	13,300	12,800
Islamabad	6,400	7,000	7,000
New Delhi	2,000	1,700	1,600

* For immediate settlement or temporary admission, including those who have been interviewed but whose application remains undetermined.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to introduce visa requests for arrivals from Bangladesh.

Mr. Waddington: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) on 5 December, at column *311*.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the visa requests for arrivals from Sri Lanka will be lifted.

Mr. Waddington: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from him on 17 December, at column *132*.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrivals from *(a)* Bangladesh, *(b)* Pakistan, *(c)* India and *(d)* Sri Lanka were held in detention at (i) Harmondsworth and (ii) Ashford during the period 20 December 1985 to 3 January 1986.

Mr. Waddington: The available information relates to passengers detained at Harmondsworth who were citizens of the countries concerned, and is as follows:

(a) 49; *(b)* 83; *(c)* 64; *(d)* 12.

Statistics of persons held in Ashford remand centre do not differentiate between passengers and others held under the powers contained in the Immigration Act 1971.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were denied entry to the United Kingdom at *(a)* Heathrow, *(b)* Gatwick and *(c)* Dover between 20 December 1985 and 3 January 1986; what was the total number of passengers arriving; and what were the comparative figures for 1984-85.

Mr. Waddington: Precise statistics for passengers arriving during the period in question are not yet available. Those given are approximate.

	20 December 1985 to 3 January 1986		*20 December 1984 to 3 January 1985*	
	Passengers arrived	*Refused entry*	*Passengers arrived*	*Refused entry*
Heathrow				
Terminal 1	107,000	74	101,000	69
Terminal 2	117,000	204	109,000	150
Terminal 3	182,000	401	174,000	322
Gatwick	197,000	177	187,000	111
Dover (Eastern docks, Western docks and Hoverport)	145,000	160	143,000	119

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrivals from Bangladesh were stopped at *(a)* Heathrow, *(b)* Gatwick and *(c)* Dover between 20 December 1985 and 3 January 1986.

Mr. Waddington: I assume the hon. Member is referring to the number of Bangladesh citizens who were refused entry at the ports listed during this period.

The information is as follows:

	Number
Heathrow	
Terminal 1	0
Terminal 2	1
Terminal 3	60
Gatwick	5
Dover (Eastern docks, Western docks and Hoverport)	13

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent instructions have been given to the immigration service dealing with the arrival of people from Bangladesh.

Mr. Waddington: Those issued at Heathrow terminal 3 about liaison with the Bangladesh high commission, about falsified documents and about the need for faster handling of representations from right hon. and hon. Members.

Vegan Diets

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is satisfied with the adequacy of the vegan diets being received by inmates of East Sutton Park open prison.

Mr. Mellor: Sentenced prisoners may be allowed a vegan diet at the governor's discretion. On 14 January 1986 a vegan diet was being taken by two prisoners at East Sutton Park and a vegetarian diet by a further four prisoners, all at their own request. I understand that none of the prisoners concerned has complained about her food and that on the basis of his regular inspections the medical officer is satisfied with the nutritional quality of the diets.

Community Radio

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish in the *Official Report* the membership of his advisory committee on community radio.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The members of the advisory panel on community radio are:

Mr. Stephen O'Brien (Chairman), Mr. Ray Beaty, Mrs. Diana Eccles, Mr. Bevan Jones, Mrs. Jill McIvor and Mr. Richard Wade.

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations have been held between representatives of minority community groups and the advisory committee on community radio.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I understand that the advisory panel on community radio has held a number of useful meetings with interested individuals and groups from the ethnic minority communities.

Hong Kong

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement regarding the rights of Hong Kong British Dependent Territories citizens in the light of the motion passed by the Legislative Council of Hong Kong at its session on Wednesday 8 January.

Mr. Waddington: The Government's proposals for the future nationality status of Hong Kong British Dependent Territories citizens and related matters were set out in a White Paper (Cmnd. 9637) published on 17 October 1985. I am aware of the motion passed by the Legislative Council of Hong Kong on 8 January. The House will have an opportunity to consider all these matters when it debates the White Paper later today. The Government will take careful account of the views expressed.

Housing (Fire Safety)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to issue a national code of guidance on means of escape in case of fire from houses in multiple occupation; what representations he has received from local authorities and others on the subject; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My right hon. Friend plans shortly to issue a draft code of guidance on fire safety in certain houses in multiple occupation for consultation. Most representations have inquired about progress on the preparation of the code, which has taken longer than was expected.

BBC

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has as to the amount of money which might be expected to be raised by allowing advertising on BBC television.

Mr. Giles Shaw: A number of recent published studies, including two commissioned by the committee on financing the BBC, have offered various estimates of the potential revenue which might be derived from introducing advertising on BBC television. My right hon. Friend, of course, awaits the committee's own assessment of this evidence and of the financial and other implications of financing the BBC partly or wholly out of advertising revenue or from other sources.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he intends to take to protect the editorial independence of the BBC; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I am not aware that any steps are necessary.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions the Minister has had with the governors of the BBC and the IBA over the introduction of advertising on BBC.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My right hon. Friend's discussion with the chairman of the BBC's board of governors and of the IBA about various broadcasting issues have not included any substantive consideration of the questions now being studied by the committee on financing the BBC, whose report it is well understood he awaits with an open mind.

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the BBC will continue to be allowed to retain any revenues derived from any source other than the licence fee.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The BBC's charter provides for the corporation to receive and use revenue derived from sources other than the television licence fee, and includes no provision for such revenue to be surrendered.

Peacock Committee (Report)

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Peacock committee is expected to report.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I understand that the committee expects to submit its report in the summer.

Mr. Louis Farrakhan

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will use his powers to deny entry to the United Kingdom to Mr. Louis Farrakhan, an American citizen, on the ground that his presence would not be in the public interest or of good race and community relations.

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of his anti-Semitic comments, he will refuse permission for Mr. Louis Farrakhan to enter the United Kingdom on the ground that his presence would not be conducive to the public good; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: I have decided, in the light of Mr. Farrakhan's public statements, that his presence in the United Kingdom would not be conducive to the public good, and have given instructions that he should be refused leave to enter if he seeks admission to the United Kingdom.

Local Government

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement as to his policy towards funding posts within Lancashire under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966.

Mr. Waddington: All applications from local authorities for grant under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 are considered in accordance with the criteria set out in Home Office circular No. 97/1982, a copy of which is in the Library.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

Mr. Pike asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

Mr. Stern asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 16 January.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be giving a dinner for His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan.

Select Committees

Mr. George asked the Prime Minister how many staff are engaged principally in liaison with departmental Select Committees in each Department, and if he will estimate the number of working days spent by each Department on the overall requirements of departmental Select Committees.

The Prime Minister: Liaison with departmental Select Committees forms part of the duties of some staff in all Departments. In 1985 six individuals are reported by Departments to have spent more than half their time solely on this work. A study was carried out in 1980-81 to determine the amount of time spent by all officials on departmental Select Committee work, and a copy of the report on this was placed in the Library on 10 December 1982. It would not be possible to update this information without an extensive new study at disproportionate cost; however, in general the work occasioned by departmental Select Committees in 1985 has not changed markedly from the year on which this study was based.

Mr. Mohammed Fayed

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister why Mohammed Fayed was invited to a Downing street dinner to mark the state visit of President Mubarak of Egypt; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: It is the normal practice to invite prominent nationals of the country represented by a foreign visitor to such occasions.

Mr. Skinner asked the Prime Minister if Mr. Mohammed Fayed attended a function at Downing street in March or April 1985.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister if she has ever met Mr. Mohammed Fayed in an official capacity.

The Prime Minister: I met Mr. Al-Fayed in the context of the visit of the Sultan of Brunei on 25 January 1985, and subsequently at a dinner for President Mubarak of Egypt at Downing Street on 14 March 1985.

Brunei (Sterling Deposits)

Mr. Sedgemore asked the Prime Minister if any members or representatives of the British Government had any meetings with members or representatives of the Government of Brunei in relation to sterling deposists; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The contents of meetings between members or representatives of Her Majesty's Government and other Governments are confidential.

Gifts

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister what gifts the Prime Minister has received from representatives of foreign Governments and overseas Heads of State; and on what dates.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave yesterday to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

Sultan of Brunei

Mr. Sedgemore asked the Prime Minister on what occasions since 1979 she met the Sultan of Brunei.

The Prime Minister: I met the Sultan of Brunei in June 1981 when he was in London studying the structure and operation of British government as part of the preparations for Brunei's independence. I also met the Sultan on three occasions last year: in January, when he was on a visit to London; in April, during the course of my tour of south and south-east Asia; and in October at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

Nuclear Tests (Report)

Mr. Wigley asked the Prime Minister if she has completed consideration of the Australian Royal Commission's report on British nuclear tests; if she has any plans to meet Senator Gareth Evans; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. Officials had preliminary discussions in Canberra last week, which provided a useful opportunity for an initial exchange of views and for clarification of a number of matters. Senator Gareth Evans, Australian Minister for Resources and Energy, is to have discussions with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement and Baroness Young, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, whilst he is in Britain next week.

Energy Conservation

Mr. Speller asked the Prime Minister if she will take steps to harmonise the provisions of financial inducements for household energy conservation throughout the United Kingdom on the basis of the scheme operating in Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Government already provide financial assistance towards household energy efficiency in the rest of the United Kingdom on the same basis as in Northern Ireland.

Westland plc

Mr. Williams asked the Prime Minister if the recent letter from the Solicitor-General to the Secretary of State for Defence about Westland was covered by the Official Secrets Act.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Information Leaks (Inquiries)

Mr Williams asked the Prime Minister how many inquiries into leaks have been initiated since June 1979; on what dates; and with what outcome.

The Prime Minister: As I have made clear on a number of previous occasions, it has not been the practice of successive Governments to disclose information of this kind.

TRANSPORT

Channel Fixed Link

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport what individuals and bodies, including fire authorities, have been consulted about the risk from fire and other emergencies in each of the proposed solutions to the cross-Channel link.

Mr. David Mitchell: During the course of the Government's assessment of the promoters' proposals, views on the risk from fire and other emergencies were obtained from the Chief Inspecting Officer for Railways, the Home Office fire service inspectorate, the chief fire officer for Kent, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's safety and reliability directorate and Lloyd's Register.

Mr. Speed asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the dates when he received the final complete proposals from each of the promoters for the proposed cross-Channel link.

Mr. David Mitchell: Four proposals for fixed link schemes were submitted in accordance with the "Invitation to Promoters" on 31 October 1985. In response to the joint Anglo-French assessment all promoters proposed, or agreed to, adaptations of their schemes to meet the various concerns of the two Governments. No time limit was imposed on such adaptations.

Airport Security

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had on security of United Kingdom airports; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: On 16 July in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State outlined some of the steps that were being taken to enhance the already high standard of security at British airports. Most of the measures to which he referred are now in place (for example, the reconciliation of passengers and baggage is now a legal requirement). We are keeping all aviation security measures continually under review; I am currently involved in discussions on security arrangements at United Kingdom airports following the attacks on EL AL check-in desks at Vienna and Rome.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will undertake an immediate review of recent security lapses at Manchester airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Manchester airport has been asked to report to my Department details of recent lapses in security and the remedial action they are taking. My Department will then consider whether any further action is necessary.

Avon Bridge (Tolls)

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider the introduction of toll charges on the M5 over the Avon bridge.

Mr. David Mitchell: No. I have no power to introduce such tolls. Moreover, I have no wish to risk causing significant volumes of traffic to divert from the M5 to unsuitable local roads in and around Bristol.

Cars

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many private cars were registered in Wales in 1979 and in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The total number of private cars registered in Wales in December 1979 was 726,398. The total as at 30 September 1985 (the last date for which figures are available) was 810,243.

Navigation Lights

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he is satisfied that the navigational beacon at Minsters rock on the Rubha Na Leachaig on the west coast of Scotland is suitable for all weather conditions; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he is satisfied with the efficiency of the navigational lights into Loch Inchard and Kinlochbervie on the west coast of Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley [*pursuant to the reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *580*]: These lights are provided by the Highland regional council in its capacity as a local lighthouse authority. The Northern lighthouse board has a statutory duty to inspect these lights and I understand that it found them to be satisfactory in all respects when examined in August last. This is a matter for the board's judgment.

M1 (Signpost Damage)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 14 November, *Official Report*, column *263*, why the direction signpost at junction 30 of the southbound section of the M1 between Wakefield and London has still not been repaired.

Mr. Ridley: My reply of 14 November referred to the direction sign at the southbound exit to junction 30 which had been reported damaged on 9 October and was repaired on 28 October. I understand, however, that the right hon. Gentleman may have been referring to the one-mile advance warning sign at this junction which has also been damaged. It will be repaired as part of a larger re-signing scheme which I expect to be completed by the end of March 1986. The damage to this sign involves no threat to road safety and I have no information as to when it was damaged.

Motorways (Signs)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Transport what sources of information he uses in replying to parliamentary questions on the state of road signs on motorways; and what checks his Department carries out to confirm the information provided.

Mr. Ridley: Details are obtained from the county councils which maintain the motorways as my agents. My Department's regional offices also periodically carry out their own inspections of motorways.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Manufacturing Production

49. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest available statistics of manufacturing production.

Mr. Butcher: The index of output for manufacturing in the three months up to October 1985 stood at 103, based on 1980 equal to 100.

Airbus

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much launch aid is planned for British Aerospace in connection with development of the European airbus project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: In accordance with the statement to the House on 1 March 1984 by my right hon. Friend, the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, financial provision has been made in the Department's Vote for launch aid of up to £250 million in respect of participation by British Aerospace in the Airbus A320 programme.

Aerospace Industry

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what information he has concerning the share of the total world market which has been held by the United Kingdom aerospace industry in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available;

(2) what information he has concerning the share of the total European aerospace market which has been held by the United Kingdom aerospace industry in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Pattie: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has concerning the percentage of turnover which is represented by exports from the United Kingdom aerospace industry.

Mr. Pattie: The most recent information that I have is for 1983 when 56 per cent. of the value of the United Kingdom aerospace industry's turnover was exported.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has concerning the total value of aerospace exports from the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and what was the percentage change in value on the previous year's figures in each of those years.

Mr. Pattie: According to the information I have, the figures in current money terms are as follows:

	UK aerospace exports £ million	*Per cent. growth over previous years*
1975	801	21·2
1976	903	11·3
1977	1,038	13·0
1978	1,170	11·3
1979	1,269	7·8
1980	1,775	28·5
1981	2,547	30·3
1982	3,110	18·1
1983	3,194	2·6
1984	3,514	9·1

London Commodity Exchange (Exhibition)

Mr. Dykes asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will arrange for an exhibition relating to the London commodity exchange to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Howard: Arrangements have been made for such an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall to take place from 24 February to 28 February 1986.

Materials and Processes

Miss Fookes asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's policy on the wider application of new and improved materials and processes in the light of his Department's review of its support for innovation scheme and the publication of the materials advisory group report.

Mr. Pattie: The materials advisory group drew attention to the very important field of materials technology and identified within it areas of particular opportunity to a wide range of UK industries. This has made a major contribution to my Department's continuing assessment of research priorities. While I am unable to accept that progress in this field can only be made by the provision of additional Government funding on the scale suggested by the group, I consider that there is considerable scope for obtaining greater benefit from the already substantial amount of work in the materials field by the redirection and more efficient use of Government resources.

The Department will therefore be: re-orientating its existing resources towards materials work; seeking to improve awareness of new materials and to develop collaborative projects which will accelerate commercial application; collaborating more closely with the science and engineering research council to guide university research and promote technology transfer; working with the Ministry of Defence with a view to commercial exploitation of military materials developments; seeking the fullest UK participation in European Community and other international collaborative programmes; and working for improved specification standards where these offer opportunities for exploitation of new materials.

In the discussion which has been concluded in the European Community's research council on an extension of the Community's primary raw materials programme I particularly emphasised the importance which the UK attaches to the new section on advanced materials. In the four year research action programme on materials which we agreed, over 40 per cent. of the total budget of £40 million will be devoted to this section, thus providing a useful further stimulus to advanced materials work.

Imperial Tobacco Ltd.

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will refer the takeover bid by Hanson Trust for Imperial Tobacco Ltd. to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: The proposed takeover is currently being considered by the Director General of Fair Trading. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will make his decision on whether it should be referred for further investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the light of that advice.

Airbus Projects (Launch Aid)

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much launch aid Her Majesty's Government proposes to make available to British Aerospace in connection with the development of *(a)* the TA9 airbus project and *(b)* the TA11 airbus project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: The supervisory board of Airbus Industries has yet to make any decision on the launch of these projects. The question put by my hon. Friend is thus premature.

House of Fraser

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why the application by Lonhro to bid for the House of Fraser was delayed by the Secretary of State for three months in November 1984.

Mr. Howard: The extension of the period for the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to report on the merger reference of Lonrho and House of Fraser by three months, to 28 February 1985, was granted in the normal way, in response to a request for an extension from the MMC.

ENERGY

British Gas

50. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what sum he now expects will be received from the sale of British Gas in 1986-87 and 1987-88; and what is his estimate of the total fees and charges which will be received by City institutions involved in the sale.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I cannot speculate on the value the market will place on British Gas. Total fees and charges will depend on the precise structure of the offer, on which decisions have not yet been taken.

Renewable Energy Sources (Research and Development)

Mr. Orme asked the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the annual expenditure on research and development in renewable sources of energy since 1979-80, including the current year and any projected expenditure.

Mr. David Hunt: Information about expenditure between 1975-76 and 1984-85 was given in reply to the question from the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) on 13 June 1985 at columns *533-34*. Actual expenditure in 1984-85 was the same as the estimate provided in that answer. Expenditure on research and development on renewable energy in 1985-86 is forecast to be at a similar level.

Petrol (Lead Content)

Mr. Woodcock asked the Secretary of State for Energy what additional capital investment has been incurred by

the United Kingdom oil industry as a result of the reduction in the maximum lead content of petrol from 0·4 to 0·15g per litre from January.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The United Kingdom oil industry's most recently published figure indicates capital expenditure of the order of £300 million.

Mr. Woodcock asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate the extra energy, in terms of barrels of crude oil, that will be consumed at the refinery each year as a result of the reduction in the maximum lead content of petrol from 0·4 to 0·15g per litre from 1 January and, subsequently from 0·15g per litre to unleaded, when the transition to unleaded petrol is complete.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: For a petrol demand of 20·2 million tonnes, the additional crude oil required per year, when lead levels are reduced, is estimated to be:
From 0·40 to 0·15g per litre (g/l) of lead—some 3·7 million barrels.
From 0·15g/l of lead to unleaded—some 4·9 million barrels.

Mr. Woodcock asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate the increase in price that the United Kingdom oil industry will need to charge for each gallon of petrol as a result of the reduction in the maximum lead content of petrol from 0·4 to 0·15g per litre and, subsequently from 0·15g per litre to unleaded, when the transition to unleaded petrol is complete.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The manufacturing costs incurred in reducing the lead content from 0·40 to 0·15g per litre are believed to be about 2p to 3p per gallon. For the subsequent move to unleaded petrol, the costs are estimated to be in the order of a further 2p to 5p per gallon.

However, the extent to which pump prices may be increased is purely a matter for individual petrol retailers.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND

Law Changes

Mr. Pollock asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland what change will be made to the 1985-86 cash limit for class IX, vote 10, Law Charges, Scotland.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: The outturn for this vote for 1984-85 showed expenditure of £107,000 in excess of that year's cash limit. The overspend arose as a result of insufficient provision necessary to meet greater manpower costs brought about by the increase in serious crime, unavoidable expenditure incurred through the provision of necessary accommodation and the establishment of Crown Office fraud and internal audit units. In accordance with normal practice, the cash limit for this Vote for this financial year is reduced by the amount of the previous year's overspend. The cash limit will therefore be reduced by £107,000 from £13,773,000 to £13,666,000.

EMPLOYMENT

Baking Industry

Mr. Golding asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received on the Baking Industry (Hours of Work) Act 1954; and what response he has given.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Baking Industry (Hours of Work) Act 1954 is currently being considered in the context of the proposal to repeal restrictions on women's hours of work. Consultations with employers' associations and trade unions involved in the industry are in progress. I have received written representations from four employers' associations and two trade unions. Meetings have been held. The Health and Safety Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission have also given their views.

Mr. Golding asked the Paymaster General what exemptions have been granted in North Staffordshire to the Baking Industry (Hours of Work) Act 1954; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Information relating to North Staffordshire is not available. In Staffordshire as a whole, 11 employers are recorded as being exempted from the Act's provisions.

Since 1980, there have been very few inquiries about the operation of the Act, no formal complaints requiring investigation have been received and no exemptions have been granted.

Aerospace Industry (Manpower)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Paymaster General how many people have been employed in the United Kingdom aerospace industry in each of the last 20 years for which figures are available; and what percentage of the total numbers employed in manufacturing industry this figure represents in each of those years.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following table gives, for the dates specified, the estimated number of employees in employment in the aerospace equipment manufacturing and repairing industry in Great Britain (figures are not available for the United Kingdom for some of the years). The Department's employment statistics are analysed according to the Standard Industrial Classification. The figures for June 1966 to June 1981 are for minimum list heading 383 of the 1968 SIC, while those for June 1982 to June 1985 are for activity heading 3640 of the 1980 SIC. The figures for September 1981 are given on both bases.

Employees in Employment—Aerospace equipment manufacturing and repairing
Great Britain

	1968 SIC MLH 383	*1980 SIC AH 3640*	*As a percentage of employees in employment in manufacturing industries per cent.*
June 1966	239,000	*	2·8
June 1967	244,000	*	3·0
June 1968	239,000	*	3·0
June 1969	237,000	*	2·9
June 1970	227,000	*	2·8
June 1971	211,400	*	2·7
June 1972	201,000	*	2·6
June 1973	195,400	*	2·5
June 1974	203,400	*	2·6
June 1975	204,400	*	2·8
June 1976	197,300	*	2·8
June 1977	186,300	*	2·6
June 1978	183,900	*	2·6
June 1979	187,600	*	2·6
June 1980	190,100	*	2·8
June 1981	184,800	*	3·0
September 1981	184,300	185,000	3·1

	1968 SIC MLH 383	1980 SIC AH 3640	As a percentage of employees in employment in manufacturing industries per cent.
June 1982	*	173,200	3·0
June 1983	*	161,700	2·9
June 1984	*	155,200	2·9
June 1985	*	152,300	2·8

* Not available

Community Programme (Finance)

Mr. Gould asked the Paymaster General if he will approve sufficient increases in the operating costs of community programmes in their training budgets and in the wages of their employees to take account of the inflation rate since the inception of the community programmes.

Mr. Alan Clark: We keep under review the maximum levels of approved costs which can be reimbursed under the community programme and make changes whenever this would improve the cost-effective use of taxpayers' money.

Community Programme (Ex-Service Men)

Mr. Wareing asked the Paymaster General if he will review the regulations governing the community programme to ensure that ex-service men who are in receipt of service pensions are not denied the right of entrance to jobs funded under the programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Ex-service men in receipt of service pensions are already able to participate in the community programme if their circumstances accord with the criteria for priority entry. We keep these criteria under review but have no present plans for change.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the number and percentage of jobs lost by regional area between June 1979 and June 1985 in (i) all manufacturing industries, (ii) service industries, (iii) all industries, (iv) shipbuilding and (v) engineering industries and (b) the numbers of long-term unemployed by regional area in June 1979 and June 1985.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information about job gains and job losses is not available from the Department's statistics, but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Tables 1 and 2 give, for the areas, dates and categories specified, the net numerical and percentage changes in the numbers of employees in employment.

Separate estimates of employees in employment in the shipbuilding and engineering industries are not available for regions, and the figures are combined with other activities within the metal goods, engineering and vehicles division of the 1980 standard industrial classification.

Table 1: Employees in employment: changes between June 1979 and June 1985

	All industries and services	Manufacturing Industries	Service Industries	Metal Goods Engineering and Vehicles
South East	−213,000	−337,000	200,000	−151,000
East Anglia	4,000	−29,000	48,000	−10,000
South West	−57,000	−71,000	31,000	−39,000
West Midlands	−312,000	−289,000	13,000	−182,000
East Midlands	−137,000	−116,000	14,000	−50,000
Yorkshire and Humberside	−263,000	−199,000	−7,000	−71,000
North West	−309,000	−295,000	33,000	−102,000
North	−220,000	−125,000	−31,000	−60,000
Wales	−133,000	−110,000	8,000	−39,000
Scotland	−163,000	−171,000	54,000	−77,000

Table 2: Employees in Employment: percentage changes between June 1979 and June 1985

	All industries and services per cent.	Manufacturing industries per cent.	Service industries per cent.	Metal Goods Engineering and Vehicles per cent.
South East	−3	−18	+4	−16
East Anglia	+1	−14	+12	−11
South West	−4	−16	+3	−18
West Midlands	−14	−29	+1	−30
East Midlands	−9	−19	+2	−21
Yorkshire and Humberside	−13	−28	−1	−29
North West	−12	−31	+2	−26
North	−18	−31	−5	−33
Wales	−13	−35	+1	−32
Scotland	−8	−28	+4	−30

The following table shows the requested information in respect of unemployed claimants at July 1985 (not available for June 1985) and for unemployed registrants at July 1979 (not available for June 1979). The figures for July 1979 and July 1985 are not comparable because of the change in the basis of the count in October 1982, the 1983 Budget provisions which mean that some men, mainly

aged 60 or over, no longer need to sign on at unemployment benefit offices to receive benefit, and the change to the new ward-based system.

Table 3: Persons unemployed for over 12 months

Region	*Registrants—July 1979*	*Claimants—July 1985*
South East	59,850	279,206
East Anglia	7,210	27,366
South West	23,349	68,318
West Midlands	33,753	162,576
East Midlands	19,934	79,114
Yorkshire and Humberside	30,475	126,246
North West	61,612	201,431
North	32,521	106,502
Wales	23,043	75,882
Scotland	48,796	142,645

TUC Education Service

Mr. Bidwell asked the Paymaster General how much grant the Trades Union Congress education service receives; and what were the figures for 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Trades Union Congress education service estimates that it will take up £1·599 million of the £1·704 million grant made available to it by the Government for education and training by the TUC and affiliated unions in 1985-86. In the years 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85, the totals of grant paid were £1,598,571, £1,545,726 and £1,532,962 respectively.

Jobcentre Registrations

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Paymaster General how many people are registered with jobcentres in England and Wales at the latest available date.

Mr. Alan Clark: On 3 January 1986 there were 379,385 persons registered at jobcentres in England and Wales.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Mr. Janner asked the Paymaster General whether he will seek to amend section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes.

Departmental Office (North Stockport)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Paymaster General what steps he is taking to ensure the health and welfare of staff and claimants using the Department of Employment unemployment benefit office at Wellesley house, Wellington road, North Stockport, in view of the problems being faced in that office.

Mr. Alan Clark: I am not aware of any particular problems facing the unemployment benefit offices in Wellesley house at the moment.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

India (British Citizens)

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his latest estimate of the number of British overseas citizens in India.

Mr. Renton: There are an estimated 36,000 British overseas citizens resident in India.

Entry Clearance

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the estimated cost of administering entry clearance at overseas posts in 1986-87.

Mr. Renton: The estimated cost of administering entry clearance at overseas posts in 1986-87 is £17·4 million. This includes the cost of local support staff and services.

Special Quota Vouchers

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what provision exists to ensure that, where special quota vouchers in India are not taken up by those to whom they are allocated, the full number of 600 is issued.

Mr. Renton: In order to ensure that the quota of vouchers is issued a greater number of vouchers is offered to applicants. The non take-up rate has remained steady in recent years at around 25 per cent.

Staff Statistics

Mr. George asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many permanent staff are engaged principally in work related to *(a)* foreign and Commonwealth affairs and *(b)* specifically relating to the Overseas Development Administration; and whether this has changed since 1979.

Mr. Renton: The average estimated provision for permanent United Kingdom-based staff employed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1985-86 is 9,885. Of these, 8,330 are principally engaged in Foreign and Commonwealth affairs, and 1,555 in Overseas Development Administration. The overall reduction in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff provision since 1979 is 14 per cent.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Shared Scholarship Scheme

Mr. Peter Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of the 50 additional scholarships made available under the Overseas Development Administration shared scholarship scheme have been applied for by polytechnics or other local authority higher education colleges; and if he will make a statement on the level of response.

Mr. Raison: Only two polytechnics applied to join with the ODA in offering awards under the scheme for study to begin in the academic year 1986-87. They requested and were allocated one award each. All universities and polytechnics (central institutions in Scotland) were invited to participate in the scheme. The overall response was good but that from the polytechnics and central institutions was disappointing. We are considering ways of encouraging a better response from them in future.

DEFENCE

Select Committee on Defence

Mr. George asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many permanent staff are engaged primarily in work related to the Defence Committee; and whether this has changed *(a)* since 1979 and *(b)* since the situation pertaining during the period of the Expenditure Sub-committee on Defence and External Affairs 1970 to 1979.

Mr. Younger: Two of my Department's permanent staff's duties are primarily related to the Defence Select Committee. The corresponding figure for the number of staff so engaged prior to early 1983, including the period of the Defence and External Affairs Sub-Committee of the Select Committee on Expenditure, was three.

Merchant Shipping

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether it was on his authority that the Royal Navy has expressed to the official *Broadsheet* concern about the decline of British merchant shipping; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: The Government expressed their concern about the possible defence implications of the decline of the United Kingdom's merchant fleet continuing for several more years at the present rate in paragraph 459 of volume I of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1985" (Cmnd. 9430).

Broadsheet 85, which is published annually by the Royal Navy, reflects this concern.

HMS Challenger

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if any major repairs or refit work is due for HMS Challenger; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Improvements are required to be made in the diving system of HMS Challenger. Following competitive tendering the contract has been awarded to Thorn-EMI and the work will take place, under subcontract, at Humber Shiprepairers.

During 1986 HMS Challenger is also due to undergo a short docking period for routine maintenance.

Low-flying Aircraft

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-flying sorties were flown by military aircraft over land in the United Kingdom during the Christmas and new year period in 1985-86.

Mr. Lee: Between 24 December 1985 and 2 January 1986 inclusive, military low flying took place in the United Kingdom on 30 and 31 December, and 2 January. The total number of sorties flown was 356.

Submarines

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he made of the implications for the maintenance of competition in the market for United Kingdom built conventional submarines of the placing of the orders for three follow-on Upholder class patrol submarines with a single yard; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Three yards tendered for the recent order. We fully expect to be able to place future Upholder class submarine orders by competition.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the next tenders will be sought for further Upholder class patrol submarines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: No decisions have yet been taken on the size and timing of future orders for this class, but I would expect that these orders would be placed in the early 1990s.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will indicate the discounts offered for a batch order of three follow-on Upholder class patrol vessels recently offered by *(a)* Cammell Laird-Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering, *(b)* Scott Lithgow and *(c)* Yarrows, respectively;

(2) if he will estimate the saving to public funds of placing the three recent orders for Upholder class patrol vessels with a single yard as against dividing them between yards.

Mr. Lee: Details of individual tenders are commercially confidential. The overall cost is, however, some £20 million below the figure which my Ministry was expecting to have to pay for these submarines, about one half due to competition and one half to batch ordering.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the manner in which the Cammell Laird-Vickers tender for three follow-on Upholder class patrol submarines represented significantly the best value for money to his Department.

Mr. Lee: Competition was strong, but after full assessment of all the tenders received we concluded that the Cammell Laird-Vickers bid offered substantially the best value for money to the defence budget.

Scott Lithgow (Shipping Orders)

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when he currently plans to place with Scott Lithgow the orders for *(a)* the range mooring vessel and *(b)* each of the powered mooring lighters; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make it his policy to place the orders with Scott Lithgow for the range mooring vessel and the two powered mooring lighters not later than the spring of 1986; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what account he has taken of the work currently available to the Scott Lithgow yard in deciding the timing of placing there of orders *(a)* for the range mooring vessel and *(b)* each of the powered mooring lighters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: In view of the wider and more relevant factors the Government have decided to place an order for a range mooring vessel with Scott Lithgow later this year, followed by two lighters, subject to the negotiation of satisfactory terms and conditions. This timing reflects our operational requirements. Scott Lithgow will continue to be invited to tender for all MOD new construction and refit work which it is capable of undertaking. But it must be competitive if it is to win future orders.

Departmental Staff (Holiday Vetting)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any employees in his Department have to be vetted by the American Central Intelligence Agency before they are allowed to go on holiday to Warsaw pact or other countries.

Mr. Lee: No.

Fife Region (Civil Servants)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list for each office or establishment of his Department in the Fife region the number of Civil Service posts at the following grades *(a)* clerical assistant, *(b)* clerical officer, *(c)* executive officer, *(d)* higher executive officer, *(e)* senior executive officer, *(f)* principal, *(g)* deputy principal and *(h)* senior deputy principal; and what is the current rate of turnover in staff.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 December 1985, c. *380*]: I regret that the information requested is not held centrally in the form requested; and refer the hon. Member to the information supplied to him in a letter from my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Treasury dated 7 January 1986.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

School Meals

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the average cost of a school meal in each local education authority in England.

Mr. Dunn: The Department does not have the information from which to calculate the average cost of a school meal.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the nutritional standard of school meals provided by local education authorities with particular reference to the provisions of the Education Act 1980.

Mr. Dunn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State to the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) on 17 December 1985 at column *113*.

University Applicants

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many university applicants there were in each year since 1978-79; and how many candidates were finally accepted in each of those years.

Mr. Walden: Applicants and acceptances through the Universities' Central Council on admissions scheme for universities in the United Kingdom were as follows:

Academic year of entry	*Applicants*	*Acceptances*
1978	157,506	80,530
1979	166,362	82,398
1980	168,354	84,695
1981	167,096	80,341
1982	171,496	77,752
1983	172,738	74,860
1984	173,674	77,431
1985	176,553	82,889

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will provide figures relating to the percentage distribution of parents of children participating in the assisted places scheme according to the contributory scales used by the Department, for the latest three years for which figures are available.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested is as follows:

Relevant income bands (at 1984 prices) £	*Percentage distribution* *1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Up to 6,046	38·3	36·2	39·7
6,047-6,390	2·7	3·0	3·4
6,391-6,910	5·2	6·2	5·1
6,911-7,950	11·2	12·0	10·4
7,951-9,550	17·7	17·9	16·9
9,551-11,630	17·0	17·4	16·2
11,631 upwards	7·9	7·3	8·3

REPLAN Programme

Mr. William Powell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement about the future of the REPLAN Programme.

Mr. Walden: The programme now known as REPLAN, which seeks to encourage the development of educational opportunities for unemployed adults, was announced on 5 March 1984 at column *411*, initially as a three-year programme. The programme, which covers England and Wales, is jointly funded by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office, with the Manpower Services Commission contributing to the cost of certain projects. REPLAN's main elements so far have included the appointment of a team of advisory field officers employed by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education; programmes of development projects (64 approved so far) managed by NIACE and the further education unit; staff development programmes organised by NIACE in collaboration with the regional advisory councils and the Welsh joint education committee; and an associated programme of education support grants under which 80 local education authorities have received approval for projects concerned with the planning, co-ordination and development of provision for the unemployed.

My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales have now reviewed REPLAN's work to date. They are satisfied that the programme has already provided valuable support for those seeking to develop educational provision for the unemployed, and is helping the development of co-ordinated local responses between the many institutions and agencies involved.

My right hon. Friends have agreed that the duration of REPLAN should be extended, in the first instance, to December 1988. In the light of a further review of progress, a decision will be taken during 1986 on whether to extend the programme to December 1989; and the case

for further 12 month extensions will be considered annually thereafter in the same way. Under this arrangement, the REPLAN Programme will be assured of a three-year planning horizon for so long as the annual reviews suggest that a continuing need for the programme can be foreseen.

Research Funding

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he is taking on the Science and Engineering Research Council report about the current level of funding of research into *(a)* new alloys and ceramics and *(b)* optical computers.

Mr. Walden: These areas of research were included amongst the growth points mentioned in the Science and Engineering Research Council's corporate plan published in December.

On the advice of the ABRC the Secretary of State has increased the funds available to the SERC for strategic research in science and technology for 1986-87 by £8 million and increases have also been made to the Council's planning figures for 1987-88 and 1988-89. The precise distribution of these additional funds between competing priority areas is a matter for decision by the council but I understand that the two areas raised in the question are among those likely to benefit.

Higher and Further Education (Statistics)

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has regarding the numbers of schoolchildren in *(a)* Derbyshire and *(b)* Amber Valley who went on to higher/further education in 1985, compared with 1979.

Mr. Walden: Figures for the academic year 1984-85 are not yet available. Information for 1978-79 and 1983-84 for Derbyshire is as follows. Data are not available centrally for areas smaller than local education authorities.

Leavers from maintained schools in Derbyshire intending to pursue full-time courses of further or higher education

Academic year	*Number (000s)*	*Percentage of total leavers*
1978-79	2·63	19·0
1983-84	3·75	26·7

Secondary Education Certificates (Examination Results)

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has regarding the recent trend in the proportion of pupils in *(a)* Derbyshire and *(b)* Amber Valley gaining A-levels, O-levels and certificate of secondary education.

Mr. Dunn: Information for 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84 for Derbyshire is as follows. Data are not available centrally for areas smaller than local education authorities.

Examination achievements of leavers from maintained schools in Derbyshire
Percentage of total leavers

	Academic year 1981-82	*1982-83*	*1983-84*
1 or more A level	12·3	13·2	11·9
No A level 5 or more higher grade passes at O level or CSE	9·7	11·3	11·4
1-4 higher grade passes at O level or CSE	27·9	26·2	28·1
No higher grades, but 1 or more other grade	41·6	39·4	41·0
No graded result	8·5	9·9	7·5

Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, Upminster

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will approve the expenditure which is necessary for the enlargement of the Sacred Heart of Mary girls' school at Upminster; and if he will state when the decision will be taken and announced.

Mr. Dunn: Allocations under the 1986-87 education capital expenditure programme were announced on 18 December 1985. Unfortunately it did not prove possible, within the resources available, to include an amount for the project at the Sacred Heart of Mary girls' school.

Refugees (Grants)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to extend mandatory educational grants to refugees in the United Kingdom who are not granted refugee status but given exceptional leave to remain in the United Kingdom because of the dangers they might encounter in their own country.

Mr. Walden: There is no intention to exempt those granted exceptional leave to remain from the requirement that all students, except those granted refugee status, must be resident in this country for three years in order to be eligible for a mandatory award.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Income Tax

13. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his poiicy towards the taxation of families.

Mr. Moore: We shall be putting forward our views on this issue in the Green Paper in due course.

21. **Mr. Michael Forsyth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the effective marginal tax rate on earnings of those in the lower tax band; and how this compares with other major industrialised countries.

Mr. Moore: The marginal income tax rate on earnings for those in the lowest tax band in this country is 30 per cent. This is the second highest rate amongst the OECD countries.

24. **Mr. Nicholls** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received in the last six months on the level of income tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: We have received a wide range of representations on this issue in the last six months.

27. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the effect on the net disposable income of a single man earning £100 per week gross of the Government devoting £1,200,000,000 to *(a)* raising income tax thresholds uniformly or *(b)* reducing the basic rate of income tax.

Mr. Moore: A single man would get an increase in net income of 69p and 55p per week, respectively, based on the illustrative allowances shown in the autumn statement.

30. **Mr. Hannam** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what increase in take-home pay would be received by a person earning £140 a week if the basic rate of income tax were reduced from 30 per cent. to 28 per cent.

46. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what increase in take-home pay would be received by a person earning £140 a week if the basic rate of income tax were reduced from 30 to 28 per cent.

Mr. Moore: £1·90 per week for a single person or working wife and £1·39 for a married man in 1986-87, based on the illustrative allowances shown in the autumn statement.

Mr. Forman asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of tax units do not pay any income tax; what were the equivalent figures for each year since 1978-79; and what was the average income of each tax unit in this group in each year at constant prices.

Mr. Moore: Estimates of the proportion of tax units who do not pay income tax are as follows. The figures exclude young people aged under 16 and those over 16 still at school. I regret that there is insufficient information to provide reliable estimates of the average income of this group.

Year	*Percentage of tax units* who do not pay income tax*
1978-79	26·5
1979-80	26·5
1980-81	29·4
1981-82	31·0
1982-83	31·4
1983-84	33·1
1984-85	34·0
1985-86	34·5

* Counting married couples as one.

Companies (Government Holdings)

14. **Mr. Kenneth Calisle** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how those companies in which Her Majesty's Government retain a minority shareholding but previously had a majority shareholding have performed since the disposal by Her Majesty's Government of their majority stake.

Mr. Moore: The recent results of privatised companies have generally been excellent.

United States (Budget Deficit)

17. **Dr. Mawhinney** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with United States officials, since he last answered questions, about the United States budget deficit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lawson: I welcome the moves made by the United States Administration to reduce their budget deficit, but it is clear that further progress is necessary.

Economic Strategy

18. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the effect of recent changes in oil prices on his economic strategy.

Mr. MacGregor: I have nothing to add to what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor said in answer to an earlier question.

Taxation

19. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the proportion of gross domestic product taken in taxation compared with that in the United States of America and in Japan.

Mr. Moore: The latest available data, published by OECD, for 1983 are as follows:

Percentage of GDP at market prices

	Total tax revenue and social security contributions	*Total tax revenue excluding social security contributions*
United Kingdom	37·8	31·1
United States of America	29·0	20·7
Japan	27·7	19·4

Source: OECD "Revenue Statistics of OECD Member Countries 1965-1984" page 82.

Inflation Restraint

20. **Mr. Forth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the implications of his policy on restraining the rate of inflation for his policies towards the levels of other economic indicators.

Mr. Brooke: The Government's success in reducing inflation, together with their supply-side policies, has led to a sustained expansion of output and employment.

Value Added Tax (Evasion)

22. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated loss of revenue from value added tax evasion.

Mr. Brooke: By the very nature of tax evasion, it is not possible to give a reliable estimate. Customs and Excise has, however, indicated that the VAT revenue lost may total between £300 million and £500 million a year.

Free Ports

23. **Mr. Foulkes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the progress of the experimental free ports.

Mr. Brooke: Six experimental free zones were designated on 6 August 1984. Four — Liverpool, Southampton, Belfast and Prestwick — are already operational, and another—Birmingham—is expected to be operational later this year.

Johnson Matthey Bankers

25. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what study he has made of the latest set of accounts from Johnson Matthey Bankers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My hon. Friend has read them with interest.

29. **Mr. Strang** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, when he next meets the Governor of the Bank of England, he will raise with him the latest annual report of Johnson Matthey Bankers Limited; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Chancellor and the Governor meet regularly and discuss a wide range of matters, but it is not the practice to disclose them.

43. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the proposed sale of Johnson Matthey Bankers by the Bank of England.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The proposed sale of JMB is a matter for the Bank of England.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many statutory returns were submitted by the Johnson Matthey Bank in the 12-month period preceding its collapse and rescue.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *594*]: I assume the hon. Member has in mind returns submitted to the Bank of England, although the White Paper "Banking Supervision" (Cmnd. 9695) explained that such returns are not strictly statutory. I understand from the Bank of England that in the 12 months preceding 1 October 1984 about 100 returns of about 23 different types were submitted by JMB for a variety of purposes including the preparation of monetary and economic statistics as well as banking supervision.

Johnson Matthey Metals

26. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has had from the Governor of the Bank of England regarding Johnson Matthey Metals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: None.

Inflation

28. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on the likely trend of inflation in 1986.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Most outside forecasts are broadly in line with the autumn statement which forecasts the annual rate of increase in the RPI declining to 3¾ per cent. by the fourth quarter of 1986.

37. **Mr. Stern** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he makes as to the relative impact of inflation on those of *(a)* below average and *(b)* above average incomes.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Apart from the pensioner price indices, measures of inflation for separate income groups are not compiled.

39. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the inflation rate for 1986.

Mr. Ian Stewart: A forecast of 3¾ per cent. for the rate of inflation, as measured by the increase in the retail prices index, in the fourth quarter of 1986 was given in the autumn statement.

42. **Mr. Portillo** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he will make a statement on the current factors affecting the rate of inflation.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Many factors affect inflation, but further progress on reducing it requires the maintenance of sound financial conditions. The prospects for inflation are set out in the autumn statement.

45. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current inflation rate.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Over the 12 months to November 1985, the retail prices index increased by 5·5 per cent.

Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency

31. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Chancellor of the Excehequer what are the objectives of the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency; how he monitors its effectiveness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I refer my hon. Friend to the publications "Information Technology in the Civil Service", IT series Nos. 8 and 11, copies of which are in the Library.

Job Creation

32. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what tax measures he has taken to encourage the creation of new jobs.

Mr. Moore: The whole thrust of our tax policy has been to promote the creation of new job opportunities and to improve incentives to work.

Shareholders

33. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to the number of individual shareholders in 1979 and at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Moore: According to Inland Revenue data, the number of individual shareholders in 1979 was about 1½ million. This number has probably at least doubled since then although recent market research suggests that the figure may now be much higher.

Exchange Rates

34. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the present exchange rate between the pound sterling and the deutschmark.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The deutschmark/sterling exchange rate was 3·5432 at close of business on 15 January.

41. **Mr. Janner** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes there have been over the past two months in the value of the pound on the foreign exchange.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The sterling index closed at 79·5 on 15 November and 78·0 on 15 January.

Local Authorities (Capital Receipts)

35. **Sir David Price** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the Treasury reasons for seeking to ensure that local authorities are not allowed to spend their capital receipts as they see fit.

Mr. MacGregor: The Government are committed to tight control of public expenditure of which capital expenditure by local authorities forms part. In order to be able to plan expenditure and to ensure these plans are met, the Government must ensure that receipts are drawn down and spent at an orderly rate. There is no restriction on the investment of the cash or its use to repay debt, or on the services for which receipts can be used to justify additional spending, within local authorities' normal powers.

Economic Growth

36. **Mr. Forman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest projections for the growth of demand in the economy over the coming year.

47. **Mr. Knox** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of total demand in the economy.

Mr. MacGregor: The Government's latest projections for growth in the economy are as in the autumn statement, where the forecast for 1986 growth in output is 3 per cent.

Bradford

38. **Mr. Madden** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when a Treasury Minister last paid an official visit to Bradford; and for what purpose.

Mr. Moore: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor visited Bradford on 7 December 1984 during a regional tour in Yorkshire.

Personal Allowances

40. **Mr. Watts** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to establish transferability of personal allowances between husband and wife.

Mr. Moore: This is one of the subjects which will be discussed in the Green Paper on personal taxation.

Bank of England

44. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Governor of the Bank of England; and what topics were discussed.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor meets the Governor regularly for confidential discussions about a wide range of matters.

Privatisation

48. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has revised the sum he expects to raise from sales of assets during 1986-87 quoted in the autumn statement.

Mr. Moore: No.

Business Expansion Scheme

Mr. Dewar asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total spent in Scotland under the business expansion scheme and the number of applicants from Scotland who benefited for the last year for which figures are available; and if he will give the Scottish totals in each case as a percentage of those for the United Kingdom as a whole.

Mr. Moore: The table gives the final estimates for investments made in 1983-84. Information for 1984-85 is not yet complete and the figures are based on the information currently available.

Business Expansion Scheme Investments

	1983-84		*1984-85**	
	Number of companies	*Amount invested £ million*	*Number of companies*	*Amount invested £ million*
Scotland	59	4·8	37	2·6
United Kingdom total	715	105·0	507	100·1
	Per cent.	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*
Scotland as percentage of United Kingdom total	8	5	7	3

* Incomplete.

Mr. Rooker asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy towards the use of the business expansion scheme for the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families; and whether the use of the scheme for this purpose is limited to people designated as homeless under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act.

Mr. Moore: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Select Committees (Reports)

Mr. George asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many copies of each of the departmental Select Committees' reports have been sold to the public, distributed to Government Departments and distributed via the Vote Office in the current Parliament to date.

Mr. Brooke: The information is as follows:

Select Committee	Number of Reports Published	Average Number of each Report Sold	Average Number of each Report Supplied to Vote Office
Agriculture	14	385	125
Defence	13	653	148
Education Science & Arts	6	553	125
Employment	14	394	140
Energy	24	570	130
Foreign Affairs	16	611	145
Home Affairs	10	560	137
Trade & Industry	17	507	125
Social Services	16	867	136
Transport	14	498	125
Treasury & Civil Service	32	506	136
Scottish Affairs	7	479	125
Welsh Affairs	5	376	125
Environment	19	556	125
Parliamentary Commissioner For Administration	8	437	125

Note:
All copies are regarded as sold except those provided to the Vote Office on initial publication.

Productivity Statistics

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the level of output per man hour in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and Sweden for each year since 1955; and what has been the percentage change each year for each country.

Mr. MacGregor: Figures of hours worked and hence of output per man hour for the whole economy are not available for the United Kingdom. Index numbers of output per man are compiled and published in *Economic Trends*, with information on percentage changes given in the national accounts Blue Book. Index numbers of output per man hour for manufacturing industry are published in *Economic Trends*.

Information of the kind requested for the other countries is not available in the main international statistical publications. However, the most recent (December 1985) issue of the OECD "Economic Outlook" provides some information on productivity developments in manufacturing since the 1960s for the countries requested (table 18, page 47.)

All the publications referred to are available in the Library of the House.

New Cross Building Society

Mr. McCrindle asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in the light of subsequent events, he has any reason to modify the statement in Cmnd. 9033 on the New Cross building society that in a matter of months the society might not have been able to repay investors; if he plans to publish evidence if the statement remains justified; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The passage to which my hon. Friend refers (paragraph 4 "New Cross building society", Cmnd. 9033) summarised fairly the conclusions which the Chief Registrar had reached in his decision on the proposed statutory orders against the New Cross Building Society (reprinted as appendix 5 to Cmnd. 9033, specifically in paragraph 15.5). Subsequent events have done nothing to cast doubts on the Chief Registrar's assessment.

Orphans (Taxation)

Mr. Hancock asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will seek to amend sections 16 to 18 of the Finance Act 1973 so as to reduce tax payable by orphaned children who receive low incomes from their parents' estate.

Mr. Moore: I am not sure what the hon. Member has in mind. Under sections 16 to 18 Finance Act 1973 the income of certain discretionary or accumulation trusts is subject to tax at the additional rate of 15 per cent. as well as the basic rate of 30 per cent. A payment to a beneficiary is treated as having suffered tax at 45 per cent., but where the beneficiary is not liable to pay tax, or is liable at less than 45 per cent., he or she can then reclaim all or part of the tax paid by the trustees.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Gorst asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what amounts included within the totals shown in the 1985 annual report of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise of under declarations of tax discovered on control visits represent no loss to the Exchequer because the value added tax charged would have been recoverable by another.

Mr. Brooke: Exact figures are not available since it is impracticable to classify precisely underdeclarations of tax discovered on control visits in order to identify with certainty the tax which would have been recoverable by another registered trader. However, a statistical sampling exercise conducted by Customs and Excise in 1983-84 suggests that the figure is probably of the order of 10 per cent. (£40 million). The total of underdeclarations shown in the annual report (£409 million) does not include the preventive effect of control visiting which is estimated to provide additional revenue of at least an equivalent value.

Unleaded Petrol

Mr. Woodcock asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston on 14 May 1985, *Official Report*, column *86*, the Government have yet decided whether to tax unleaded petrol, when it is available, at the same rate as leaded petrol; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: No decision has yet been taken on the tax treatment of unleaded petrol. This was one of the points on which the Government invited comment in the discussion paper issued last year, and the responses to this paper are still being examined.

Diorama

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Crown Estate Commissioners have for the redevelopment of the Diorama; and what representations he has received from those opposed to the scheme.

Mr. MacGregor: I understand that the Crown Estate Commissioners have made a planning application to redevelop the Diorama. Their intention is to restore and preserve the remaining original features whilst converting much of the interior to high quality residential accommodation. Provision will be made for an exhibition area, with public access, and two proposed atria will give a view of part of the interior of the building.

I have not received any representations on the Commissioners' proposals.

EC (Budget Contributions)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total net payment made by the United Kingdom to the EEC since 1 January 1973; if he will express this as a net amount per day of membership; and what estimate he has made of the comparable net daily cost in 1987.

Mr. Peter Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1986, c. *511*.]: The latest available figure for the United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget is for the period 1 January 1973 to 30 September 1985. It is £6,527 million. This represents an average net payment of £1·40 million a day since accession. These figures do not take into account the United Kingdom's 1,000 mecu (£604 million) abatement paid over the period 31 December 1985 to 6 January 1986.

Projections of our net contribution to the Community budget for future calendar years are not published. Information on our net contribution in the financial year 1987-88 is contained in the public expenditure White Paper published on 15 January.

ENVIRONMENT

Sensory Handicap

Mr. Golding asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what study is taking place on the needs of the sensory handicapped regarding the appropriation of incorporating special requirements in building access regulations, and the provision of telephones which can be used by the hearing-impaired; and if he will make a statement.

Sir George Young: No formal study is under way on the incorporation in building access regulations of special requirements for people with sensory handicaps.

Building regulations apply only to buildings when they are constructed or structurally altered and they contain no powers of continuing control over buildings in use. The regulations are principally concerned therefore with the structure. The access regulations which came into force last year require certain structural measures such as ramps which will help disabled people gain access to and within buildings. The British Standard code of practice, BS5810 which supports these provisions does, however, also contain general design recommendations for additional nonstructural features which will assist people with sensory impairments.

In my earlier replies to the hon. Member of 2 July, 1985 at column *98* and 1 October, 1985 at column *88* I explained that licensing arrangements already exist to ensure that emergency telephones in lifts can be inductively coupled to hearing aids. In addition, British Telecom require that telephones in all public call boxes, should be capable of being inductively coupled to hearing aids.

Water Supplies

Miss Maynard asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate the geographical area of the five water supplies in Lincolnshire in respect of which action has had to be taken to reduce the concentration of nitrates and if he will make a statement on the progress made to date by the Anglian water authority to comply with the relevant European Community directives.

Mr. John Patten: The geographical areas are as follows:

two areas in and around Sleaford;
the Potterhanworth supply area;
the Wareham Bridge-Saltersford supply area;
the Horbling supply area in South Kesteven.

Action has been taken by the Anglian water authority to reduce the nitrates content of water supplies to these areas below 80mg per litre on a three-monthly average. This is considered by our medical advisers to be an acceptable level. A small supply in Norfolk was taken out of use recently because the nitrate level was unacceptable.

Miss Maynard asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will furnish details of the geographical areas covered by those water supplies in respect of which applications for derogations from the maximum admissible concentrations have been made by the Anglian water authority and the Yorkshire water authority; and if he will indicate which of these applications for derogations were refused.

Mr. John Patten: Details of the relevant areas are attached. No applications have been refused but a number have been modified or withdrawn as a result of discussions with the Department. Applications have also been approved subject to conditions. Programmes of improvement have accompanied many of the applications including all those relating to the microbiological parameters.

Supply Area	*Parameter*
Anglian water authority	
Dersingham and Snettisham	Nitrate

Supply Area	Parameter
Docking	Nitrate
East Wretham	Nitrate
Heacham and Hunstanton	Nitrate
Moulton and Kennet	Nitrate
Wisbech	Nitrate
Habrough	Nitrate
Aswarby-Saltersford	Nitrate
Barrow	Nitrate
Binbrook	Nitrate
Bully Hill-Barnoldby	Nitrate
Bully Hill-Otby	Nitrate
Clay Hill-Drove Lane Sleaford	Nitrate
Drove Lane Sleaford	Nitrate
Potterhanworth	Nitrate
Saltersford	Nitrate
Waneham Bridge-Saltersford	Nitrate
Bucklesham	Nitrate
Grundesburgh-Ufford-Melton	Nitrate, Iron, Nitrite
Horbling	Nitrate
Ely and Littleport	Nitrate
Habrough-Covenham	Nitrate
Halstead-Urban	Potassium
Braintree	Iron
Braintree-Northern Rural	Iron
Braintree-Kelvedon-Tiptree	Iron
Colchester-Lexden	Ammonia, Potassium
Colchester-Greenstead	Odour, Taste, Trihalomethanes
Colchester-South	Odour, Taste, Trihalomethanes
Colchester-West Bergholt	Iron, Potassium
Colchester-North	Iron, Potassium
Bures	Iron, Potassium
Baylham-Kirby Rise	Iron
Baylham-Winston	Iron
Bowthorpe	Nitrate
Belstead	Trihalomethanes
Heigham-Kirby Cane	Iron, Manganese
Heigham-Thorpe	Nitrate
Mattishall	Iron, Manganese
Mundesley	Manganese
Pettistree	Nitrite, Iron
Raydon, Belstead, Alton and Great Wenham	Odour, Taste, Trihalomethanes
Rushall-Bunwell	Iron
Stowmarket	Iron, Manganese
Tuddenham-Bucklesham	Nitrate
West Bradenham	Iron, Manganese
King's Lynn	Odour, Trihalomethanes
Alford-Driby	Iron
Elkesley-Grove-Newton-Ordsall Road	Iron
Everton	Iron
Gainsborough	Iron
Grove-Ordsall Road	Iron
Ordsall Road	Iron
Scarle	Iron
Winterton Holmes	Sulphate
Winterton Holmes-Barrow	Sulphate
Yorkshire WA Bulk	Iron
Maltby-Le-Marsh	Manganese
Mumby-Fordington	Iron, Manganese
Driby-Fordington	Iron, Manganese
Otby	Nitrate
Otby-Waddington	Nitrate
Yorkshire water authority (southern division)	
Dunford Bridge Spring Source	Colour, Iron, Manganese
*Ewden Treatment Works Supply System	Colour, Aluminium, Manganese
*Ingbirchworth Treatment Works (Barnsley rural)	Aluminium, Manganese
*Ingbirchworth Treatment Works (Barnsley urban)	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Loxley Treatment Works Supply System	Colour, Aluminium, Manganese
Mossley Borehole Supply System	Iron, Manganese
Racecommon Borehole Supply System	Iron, Manganese
Rivelin Treatment Works Supply System	Aluminium, Manganese
Royd Moor Treatment Works	Colour, Aluminium, Iron, Manganese

Supply Area	Parameter
Wilson Treatment Works Supply System	Manganese
*Agden Ram Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Cranworth Service Reservoir Supply System	Total Coliforms
*Kimberworth (No. 1) Service Reservoir Supply System	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Moonshine Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Sandtoft Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Stannington Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Wadsley Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Wickersley Service Reservoir Supply System	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Yorkshire water authority (central division)	
Eccup Supply System	Manganese
Hanger Lane Supply System	Manganese
Headingley Supply System	Colour, Iron
Jaw Hill Supply System	Aluminium, Iron, Fecal Coliforms
Gypsey Lane Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Hazelwood Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
John O'Gaunts Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Middleton Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Moortown East Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Calverley Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Garforth (1) Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms
Garforth (2) Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Park Hill (2) Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Tins Hill (1) Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Tinshill (3) Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Yorkshire Water Authority (North and East division)	
Boltby Treatment Works Supply Area	Colour, Aluminium, Manganese
Stalling Busk Spring Supply System	Colour, Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Mickley Borehole Supply Area	Manganese
Harlow Hill/Irongate Bridge Treatment Works	Iron, Manganese
Baldersby Borehole Supply Area	Nitrates
Countersett Spring Supply Area	Colour, Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Kirby Malzeard Supply Area	Iron, Manganese
Yorkshire Derwent Grid Supply System	Total Hardness
Filey Borehole Supply Area	Iron
*Norwood Treatment Works Supply Area	Colour, Turbidity, Aluminium, Iron, Manganese, Fecal Coliforms
Crumma Spring Supply Area	Colour, Fecal Coliforms
Fossdale Spring Supply Area	Colour, Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Marsett Spring Supply Area	Colour, Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Middlesmoor Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Gayle Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Lofthouse Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Carperby Spring Supply Source	Total Coliforms
Cranehow Bottom Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Ellingstring Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Newbiggin Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Feldom Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Horsehouse Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Sowden Beck Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
West Burton Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Ganton Wold Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms
*Cockmoor Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms
*North Coates Road Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms
*Dunnington Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Kexmoor Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Sicklingham Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Green Hammerton Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms
*Gallowate Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Osmotherley Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Yorkshire water authority (western division)	
Addingham Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
High Bentham Spring Supply Area	Iron
*Brownhill Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium
Burnsall Spring Supply Area	Iron
Carr Bottom Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese, Fecal Coliforms

Supply Area	Parameter
Graincliffe Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
Fixby Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium
Helwith Bridge Spring Supply Area	Colour
Digley Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
Holmstyes Treatment Works Supply Area	Manganese
*Longwood Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Iron, Manganese
Moor Top Borehole Supply Area	Manganese
*Oldfield Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Iron
Panorama Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Fecal Coliforms
Reva Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium
Thornton Moor Treatment Works Supply Area	Colour, Iron
March Ghyll Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
*Thornton Pressure Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium
Blackmoorfoot North Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese, Fecal Coliforms
Blackmoorfoot South Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese, Fecal Coliforms
Deerhill Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Iron, Manganese
Haugh Top Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
Withens Clough Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
Embsay Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
Hollin Hall Treatment Works Supply Area	Colour, Aluminium, Manganese
Ogden Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
Thrum Hall Treatment Works Supply Area	Aluminium, Manganese
Austwick Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Bentham High Level Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Bentham Low Level Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Blackhouse Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Burnsall Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Chapel le Dale Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Grassington Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Hawkswick Spring Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
Ingleton Low Level Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Langcliffe Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Baw Head Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Oughtershaw Spring Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Blackhill Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
*Moor Lane-Menston Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Clough Head-Goldcar Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Cowersley Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Gledhill Service Reservoir Supply Area	Fecal Coliforms
Kirkburton Service Reservoir Supply System	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms
*Star Inn Service Reservoir Supply Area	Total Coliforms, Fecal Coliforms

* Application submitted but no decision yet given.

London Borough of Greenwich (GLC Finance)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out details of each payment to the London borough of Greenwich for which the Greater London council has sought his consent under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1985, indicating which have received his approval.

Mr. Tracey: The following applications have been received from the GLC for consent under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1985 in respect of payments to the London borough of Greenwich:

Scheme	Value £
Parks and Open Spaces	1,262,507
Playgrounds and Fixed Equipment	348,140
Library/Community Centre building and Lake edge treatment	335,517
Homelessness initiative	184,507
Tramshed Theatre	18,720
Environmental Improvements, Woolwich High Street	9,386
Manager for Thistlebrook Traveller Caravan Site	7,475

Consent has been given in each case.

Empty Dwellings

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the length of time the numbers of empty dwellings in the answer of 19 December, *Official Report*, columns *263-4*, have been empty.

Mr. John Patten: Estimates based on local authorities' 1985 housing investment programme returns indicate that, of the 116,500 local authority dwellings vacant as at 1 April 1985, 26,100 had been vacant for more than a year and, of these, 13,500 had been vacant for more than two years. I do not have information about the length of time other dwellings have been empty as this is not collected centrally.

Hainault Forest

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements have been made for the management and ownership of Hainault forest in the wake of the Greater London council's abolition; and if he is satisfied that the arrangements will safeguard the forest's role and character.

Mr. Tracey: Failing agreement on a single successor authority among the local authorities in whose areas Hainault forest lies, the draft general property transfer order provides for its ownership to be transferred to the London boroughs of Redbridge and Havering and to Essex county council. Management arrangements for the forest are for the three authorities to develop. A supplementary transfer order could be considered before 1 April making different provision if the authorities concerned are agreed.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he proposes to issue a departmental circular in respect of the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 before the Act comes into force on 1 April.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Yes. My Department has now received comments from the local authority associations and other bodies on a draft of the circular sent to them on 29 November 1985. This was the subject of a departmental news release (No. 592 of 1985) a copy of which is available in the Library.

Housing Revenue Account Dwellings

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the value of Exchequer subsidies and rate fund contributions, separately, to local authorities' housing revenue account dwellings, on a per dwelling basis, for the years 1978-79 to 1985-86, and the estimate for 1986-87, and the number of local authority housing revenue account dwellings on which these figures are based.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The available information is as follows. It is based on information provided by local authorities in their housing subsidy claim forms. The 1985-86 figures are estimates; estimates for 1986-87 are not yet available.

Year	*Housing subsidy per dwelling* £	*Net rate fund contribution per dwelling* £
1978-79	198·27	40·73
1979-80	253·10	65·43
1980-81	281·36	86·77
1981-82	175·96	82·06
1982-83	90·61	88·47
1983-84	69·04	85·88
1984-85	83·00	92·06
1985-86	95·89	95·19

Housing Revenue Account Surpluses

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the local authorities in England which showed a surplus on their housing revenue account in each year since 1981-82, giving the figures in each case.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The available information is as follows. It is based on information provided by local authorities in their housing subsidy claim forms:

	1981-82	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Greater Manchester					
Bury	0	0	0	138,700	0
Merseyside					
St. Helens	0	887,000	0	0	0
South Yorkshire					
Tyne and Wear					
South Tyneside	0	0	0	2,841,278	1,327,550
West Midlands					
Birmingham	0	0	0	273,300	0
Dudley	0	0	1,000,000	1,750,000	0
West Yorkshire					
Kensington and Chelsea	0	0	0	0	247,540
Barking and Dagenham	0	1,138,713	2,840,000	2,544,000	4,323,500
Barnet	0	428,492	0	0	0
Bexley	0	0	0	1,268,100	8,000
Bromley	48,064	69,855	159,080	2,294,956	0
Ealing	0	218,349	183,974	682,892	983,700
Havering	216,660	1,651,025	1,917,311	1	329,960
Hillingdon	1,129,757	693,033	954,514	1,112,610	1,902,180
Kingston-upon-Thames	0	1,894,601	1,321,994	1,884,789	2,445,200
Merton	0	0	1,030,903	1,313,855	0
Redbridge	0	0	12,000	90,000	90,000
Sutton	0	191,169	321,408	367,360	347,600
Avon					
Wansdyke	0	0	464,500	1,926,800	1,366,200
Woodspring	300,784	1,060,398	809,979	635,723	683,390
Bedfordshire					
South Bedfordshire	0	0	30,517	65,646	76,485

	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Berkshire					
Bracknell	168,900	60,000	14,000	91,345	295,700
Newbury	0	0	0	0	143,700
Reading	0	0	0	437,924	445,000
Slough	300,000	300,000	300,000	0	0
Windsor and Maidenhead	137,190	111,692	521,044	817,145	1,030,000
Wokingham	9,484	40,436	0	0	0
Buckinghamshire					
Beaconsfield	76,330	71,333	809,678	611,539	167,265
Wycombe	1,109,000	0	0	400,000	420,000
Cambridgeshire					
East Cambridgeshire	453,560	735,240	590,965	450,000	625,000
Fenland	206,800	0	0	393,120	421,660
Cheshire					
Congleton	345,000	217,685	222,500	272,500	461,500
Cleveland					
Stockton on Tees	48,344	0	0	0	0
Cornwall					
Carrick	0	72,460	86,520	12,800	12,940
Kerrier	0	0	0	13,451	18,450
Penwith	0	0	99,306	113,442	114,000
Restormel	108,059	72,195	75,682	68,263	73,400
Cumbria					
Barrow in Furness	0	0	65,611	69,430	0
South Lakeland	8,561	267,541	503,862	730,462	546,500
Derbyshire					
Devon					
East Devon	0	89,556	101,036	200,568	202,470
Exeter	92,881	142,704	160,718	157,106	182,850
North Devon	0	79,879	90,737	139,020	95,470
Plymouth	0	0	0	79,590	125,770
South Hams	0	78,144	77,470	70,980	68,210
Mid Devon	0	0	0	1	332,600
Torbay	0	299,650	445,007	230,710	580,000
Dorset					
Bournemouth	200,970	798,642	174,770	350,000	400,000
Christchurch	0	0	0	30,000	50,000
North Dorset	29,177	4,796	738	1,890	1,500
Poole	0	0	499,705	610,769	133,805
Purbeck	0	0	0	64,400	50,000
West Dorset	0	0	100,000	200,000	210,000
Wimborne	105,027	85,842	80,247	109,378	119,290
Durham					
East Sussex					
Brighton	26,244	21,562	15,411	20,000	0
Eastbourne	48,841	227,926	230,339	262,250	0
Hove	39,420	88,606	87,080	115,497	124,335
Lewes	0	0	0	0	150,000
Rother	0	0	5,921	53,000	0
Essex					
Brentwood	2,835	77,565	232,492	137,000	0
Castle Point	32,692	31,310	347,171	171,770	0
Colchester	533,857	548,596	850,960	1,163,280	1,153,000
Epping Forest	1,380,000	660,540	0	40,000	1,500,000
Maldon	0	0	100,000	120,000	100,000
Rochford	158,999	169,551	182,789	218,335	340,900
Southend on Sea	0	0	0	199,453	207,250
Tendring	118,255	194,748	0	44,174	40,540
Thurrock	0	158,095	0	0	0
Gloucestershire					
Cheltenham	86,308	500,000	540,000	570,000	570,000
Gloucester	115,476	117,526	0	500,000	0
Tewkesbury	0	93,891	156,836	143,350	98,384

	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Hampshire					
Basingstoke and Deane	613,032	0	0	0	0
Eastleigh	0	0	0	0	20,000
Gosport	106,000	0	0	0	0
Havant	468,249	0	312,893	391,203	399,200
Portsmouth	0	0	0	12,000	395,360
Hereford and Worcester					
Hereford	4,273	9,535	3,375	0	0
Leominster	0	0	181,586	0	0
Redditch	0	0	0	0	115,430
Worcester	0	0	0	94,930	101,360
Hertfordshire					
Broxbourne	0	14,178	922,629	1,233,887	1,071,230
Dacorum	1,000,000	559,000	324,000	324,000	324,000
East Hertfordshire	272,765	0	0	0	0
North Hertfordshire	400,000	0	0	0	61,410
Three Rivers	219,830	130,376	162,979	167,638	202,550
Welwyn Hatfield	0	0	0	250,000	0
Humberside					
Glanford	8,365	25,000	0	0	0
North Wolds	0	0	0	0	94,630
Isle of Wight					
South Wight	0	47,000	60,500	95,286	78,400
Kent					
Ashford	0	29,810	0	0	0
Canterbury	300,000	0	0	0	0
Dartford	0	79,109	0	0	109,365
Shepway	0	50,000	50,000	52,300	70,000
Tonbridge and Malling	861,330	861,330	900,000	850,000	850,000
Tunbridge Wells	0	80,999	0	0	0
Lancashire					
Blackpool	85,573	0	0	0	0
Hyndburn	0	0	0	82,240	99,705
Lancaster	0	220,111	124,106	138,343	188,976
Rossendale	0	0	190,000	0	0
West Lancashire	0	20,000	200,000	122,235	266,430
Leicestershire					
Charnwood	0	0	0	0	472,960
Harborough	53,000	63,000	68,000	97,672	71,500
Hinckley and Bosworth	0	298,633	82,429	69,044	51,421
Melton	0	0	350,000	215,000	251,000
Oadby and Wigston	0	0	0	30,000	100,000
Rutland	0	0	0	100,000	100,000
Lincolnshire					
Boston	300,000	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	240,000	0	0	0	0
South Holland	0	0	0	0	182,579
South Kesteven	0	0	0	100,000	200,000
Norfolk					
Breckland	34,198	0	0	150,000	150,000
North Norfolk	28,015	0	0	111,770	0
South Norfolk	0	0	16,770	14,250	14,400
Northamptonshire					
Northampton	0	0	0	0	87,690
South Northampton	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	60,000
Northumberland					
Castle Morpeth	0	0	52,060	0	0
North Yorkshire					
Hambleton	0	0	63,271	76,461	76,740
Harrogate	0	0	0	0	258,000
Ryedale	0	0	0	85,000	85,000
Scarborough	0	0	116,495	151,551	132,270
Nottinghamshire					
Mansfield	0	343,103	249,991	0	0

	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Rushcliffe	0	105,405	0	0	0
Oxfordshire					
Cherwell	0	140,000	18,970	214,690	0
South Oxfordshire	448,015	506,884	736,011	1,234,799	1,203,300
Vale of White Horse	167,270	91,900	109,450	82,778	80,510
West Oxfordshire	0	0	0	1,000,000	0
Salop					
North Shropshire	48,186	64,731	72,739	64,978	65,000
Shrewsbury and Atcham	149,525	0	0	0	0
Somerset					
Sedgemoor	87,048	0	0	0	0
West Somerset	0	0	0	3,004	0
Staffordshire					
East Staffordshire	150,000	172,800	0	0	0
Lichfield	114,000	0	0	0	0
Newcastle under Lyme	206,795	66,358	0	0	0
Staffs. Moorlands	850,000	600,000	450,000	450,000	0
Suffolk					
Forest Heath	47,935	0	0	0	0
Ipswich	229,776	0	0	0	0
Suffolk Coastal	0	0	0	0	100,000
Surrey					
Elmbridge	0	220,871	259,306	248,961	220,070
Epsom and Ewell	8,720	86,947	157,516	265,011	202,000
Guildford	154,902	0	150,000	0	50,000
Reigate and Banstead	0	0	26,387	521,989	9,000
Runnymede	46,021	81,011	125,602	274,536	322,645
Spelthorne	109,000	410,683	443,000	116,590	0
Surrey Heath	247,250	79,090	484,885	452,116	93,440
Tandridge	0	499,430	499,430	999,430	999,430
Waverley	103,205	121,486	177,003	154,025	196,870
Woking	0	60,000	139,084	124,940	0
Warwickshire					
Stratford-on-Avon	835,260	88,000	176,320	27,793	30,800
West Sussex					
Adur	0	0	0	0	120,435
Arun	0	0	0	50,000	100,000
Chichester	0	250,000	143,575	476,438	465,900
Horsham	253,900	605,506	298,840	0	0
Mid Sussex	17,500	0	200,124	19,174	19,137
Worthing	0	20,000	57,857	55,456	60,600
Wiltshire					
West Wiltshire	119,751	130,769	162,955	210,480	209,412

Property Services Agency (Berkshire)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current acreage and location of sites and properties in Berkshire at the disposal of or administered by the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The information requested is as follows:

Address	Acreage (Hectares)	ALA (M^2)
Crown		
Reading		
Crown Buildings, Coley park	8·620	11,050
Bennett Road	0·200	33
35 Ardler Road	0·910	58
South Street	0·121	522
Newbury		
Land Adjoining Eastfield	0·200	300
Reading		
Land for Skill Centre	1·720	5,410
Artillery House	0·635	2,386
Bradfield		
UKWMO	0·031	11
Newbury		
UKWMO	0·030	11
Streatley		
UKWMO	0·030	11
Statfield Targis		
UKWMO	0·030	11
Newbury		
Reception Centre	0·730	1,225
HGVTS Turnpike Lane, Shaw	1·246	2,524

Address	Acreage (Hectares)	ALA (M^2)
33 Chandros Road	0·070	80
Reading		
Met Office Training School	20·581	10,333
Donnington		
Donnington Castle	2·158	
Slough		
MSC Skill Centre	5·900	
Sub District Works Office (ACO)		73
Holdings from other Government Departments (MOD)		
Hermitage		
PSA Works Office SMS		254
Arborfield		
District Works Office		638
Leased		
Slough		
Upton Lodge		2,504
64 Stoke Road		112
Chalfont House 1st Floor		483
Prudential Buildings		397
72 High Street		307
172-177 Buckingham Avenue	0·911	4,314
Windsor Road Slough		680
Garth House		279
Bracknell		
Fitzwilliam House		1,800
29 Charles Square		365
Western Road	0·702	3,929
Maidenhead		
Marlow House		705
Thames House		2,328
3 Park Street		1,111
Wokingham		
13 Peach Street		100
37 Broad Street		124
Reading		
Reading Bridge House		2,149
Fountain House Butts Centre		6,012
79-81 Basingstoke Road		694
BSM (Ground and 1st Floor)		1,107
Market Place House		4,540
1 Station Road 22 Friar Street		517
Sun Alliance House 60 Oxford Road		449
30-31 Friar Street		360
76 School Road Tilehurst		70
Barn and 2 Garages		206
Wessex House		1,699
Terrapin Building		298
Atlas House Silver Street		787
Scottish Life House		430
Premier House		1,451
20 The Butts Centre		136
21-23 Valpy Street—1-12 Beaconsfield Buildings		3,723
Quebec House, 3 Silver Street		714
161-163 Friar Street		2,205
47-57 Queens Road		5,613
26-30 Kings Road		1,915
City wall House 26-30 West Street		1,161
Abbey Hall, Kings Road		639
10 Friars Walk		2,690
Monarch House, 77-79 Caversham Road		731
Units A-F The Butts Centre		686
Slough		
24 Farnham Road	0·327	395
Crown Building 2 Farnham Road	0·89	3·282
Hurworth House London Road	4·650	8·699
Newbury		
15 Kings Road West		63
Bracknell		
London road	0·204	15,604
Met Office Eastern Road	1·399	5,477
Met Office East Hampstead	33·259	3,381
Crowthorne		
TRRL Crowthorne	103·765	43,080
Sunningdale		
Sunningdale Park	42·177	10,020
Holdings from other Government Departments		
Bracknell		
Sub District Works Office PSA		42
Broadmoor		
Sub District Works Office PSA		531
Reading		
Sub Depot PSA		1,787
Thatcham		
Sub Depot PSA		43
Newbury		
22 Oxford Street Cromwell House		622
1-3 The Broadway		407
Elizabeth House 41 West Street		1,335
Hillview House West Street		1,503
County Court Offices Kings Road		141
Reading		
10 Cremyll Road		961
New Warehouse		1,640
8A St. Mary's Butts		157
Heron House 41-45 Queens Road		7,282
Old Shire Hall The Forbury		762
Balmore House		599
Windsor		
Crown House Victoria Street		991
Shinfield Cattle Breeding Centre	1·363	672
MOD held for disposal		
The Meadows Sandhurst	76·290 (acres)	
Maywood Avenue White Waltham Maidenhead (39 Houses)	5·480 (acres)	
Whitley Wood Reading (12 Houses)	2·992 (acres)	
60 Houses at various locations in Newbury Thatcham and Reading		

Grant-related Expenditure

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table showing *(a)* grant-related expenditure per head *(b)* actual expenditure per head in 1985-86, *(c)* proposed block grant per head in 1986-87 and *(d)* the difference in block grant per head proposed compared with 1985-86 in the 10 shire metropolitan or London authorities with (i) the highest and (ii) the lowest grant-related expenditure per head proposed for 1986-87.

Mrs Rumbold: The available information is shown in the following table: the amount of grant to be paid in 1986-87 will depend on authorities own spending decisions.

	GRE per head* 1986-87 settlement £	Expenditure per head* 1985-86 2nd Supplementary Report £	Grant per head† 1985-86 2nd Supplementary Report £
Highest GRE per head			
City of London	4,369·25	10,703·85	−8,653·72
Isles of Scilly	761·50	645·62	377·92
Newham	674·25	628·06	299·34
Tower Hamlets	662·19	448·35	169·23
Haringey	632·54	664·62	214·38
Brent	603·32	584·08	179·32
Manchester	576·83	548·16	283·22
Islington	570·89	526·88	172·75
Hackney	566·49	522·70	256·80
Camden	542·50	670·14	80·26
Lowest GRE per head			
Wandsworth	364·66	247·72	209·00
Hertfordshire	364·42	342·51	59·65
Avon	362·91	349·47	97·72
Suffolk	357·77	322·92	120·30
Dorset	352·63	310·51	95·53
East Sussex	352·43	306·86	82·49
West Sussex	347·38	298·21	77·06
Oxfordshire	337·78	317·04	70·35
Surrey	333·39	307·42	32·72
Greenwich	316·58	308·36	167·11

Footnotes:

* Comparisons of GRE and expenditure per head between different classes of authorities are misleading because functions differ between classes.

† Includes payments to and receipts from the London Resource Equalisation Scheme.

Council House Sales

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to refuse permission to local authorities seeking powers to prevent home owners personalising their homes.

Mr. Tracey: As reflected in the provisions of the town and country planning general development order, our policy is that many types of alteration to the appearance of dwellings do not need to be subject to specific planning control.

Water Catchment Areas (Sales)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received critical of his proposal that regional water authorities should offer for sale water catchment areas; what steps he is taking to preserve for sport and recreational use such land holdings as would be affected; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I have received representations from local authorities, and sport and recreation interests in the North West, mostly through hon. Members. I expect water authorities to consult sporting and recreational interests when considering the disposal of land in their catchment areas. I have commended to them some guidelines which show how such interests can be given due consideration.

Home Insulation Grants

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those councils that have applied for supplementary grant under the 1985-86 home insulation grant programme; and what proportion of the £7 million allocated to the reserve programme has been distributed.

Sir George Young: The information is as follows:

To date, the following local authorities have applied for additional allocations from the Home Insulation Scheme.

Northern
- Langbaurgh
- Middlesbrough
- Stockton-on-Tees
- Tynedale
- Alnwick*
- Chester-le-Street
- Darlington

Yorkshire and Humberside
- Beverley
- Cleethorpes
- East Yorkshire
- Glanford
- Holderness
- Scunthorpe
- Hambleton
- Scarborough
- Selby
- Barnsley
- Doncaster
- Sheffield*
- Bradford
- Calderdale*
- Kirklees*
- Wakefield
- Kingston upon Hull
- Craven
- Harrogate
- Ryedale
- York

East Midlands
- Amber Valley
- Erewash*
- North-East Derbyshire
- West Derbyshire
- Blaby
- Charnwood
- Melton
- North West Leicestershire
- Oadby and Wigston
- North Kesteven
- West Lindsey
- Corby
- Kettering
- Northampton
- Wellingborough
- Ashfield
- Bassetlaw
- Broxstowe
- Gedling
- Mansfield
- Newark
- Nottingham
- South Northamptonshire
- Bolsover
- Chesterfield
- Derby
- High Peak
- Harborough*
- Rutland
- Boston
- East Lindsey*
- South Kesteven
- Daventry
- East Northamptonshire
- Rushcliffe

Eastern
- Luton
- North Bedfordshire

South Bedfordshire
Mid Bedfordshire
Chiltern
South Buckinghamshire
Wycombe*
Fenland
Basildon
Brentwood
Castle Point
Colchester
Harlow
Maldon
Southend on Sea
Tendring
Uttlesford
Broxbourne
Dacorum
St. Albans
Stevenage
Welwyn, Hatfield
Breckland
Broadland
Great Yarmouth
Norwich
South Norfolk
Babergh*
Forest Heath
Ipswich
Mid Suffolk
St. Edmundsbury
Suffolk Coastal
Waveney
North Hertfordshire
Aylesbury Vale
Huntingdon
Chelmsford
Thurrock
Hertsmere
North Norfolk*

Greater London

Bromley
Ealing
Havering
Lambeth
Redbridge
Brent

South Eastern

Bracknell
Windsor and Maidenhead
Wokingham
Eastbourne
Rother
Wealden
Basingstoke and Deane
East Hampshire
Eastleigh
Fareham
Havant
New Forest

South Eastern

Southampton
Test Valley
Winchester
Medina
Ashford
Canterbury
Dartford
Dover*
Gillingham
Maidstone
Sevenoaks
Thanet
Tunbridge Wells
South Oxfordshire
Vale of White Horse
West Oxfordshire*
Elmbridge
Epsom and Ewell
Guildford
Mole Valley*
Reigate and Banstead
Runnymede
Spelthorne
Surrey Heath
Waverley
Woking
Adur
Arun
Chichester
Horsham
Mid-Sussex
Worthing
Lewes
Portsmouth
South Wight
Tonbridge and Malling
Tendridge
Hove*

South West

Woodspring
Carrick*
Mid Devon
North Devon
Torridge
Christchurch
North Dorset
Poole
West Dorset
Wimborne
Stroud*
Taunton Deane
Kennet
Wansdyke
Caradon
Kerrier
East Devon
South Hams*
Bournemouth*
Thamesdown

West Midlands

Bromsgrove
Hereford
Leominster
Malvern Hills
Redditch
Worcester

West Midlands

Wychavon
Wyre Forest
Bridgnorth
Shrewsbury and Atcham
South Shropshire
The Wrekin
Cannock Chase*
Lichfield
Newcastle under Lyme
South Staffordshire
Nuneaton and Bedworth
Stratford on Avon*
Warwick
Coventry*
Dudley
Sandwell*
North Shropshire
East Staffordshire
Stafford
Tamworth
North Warwickshire
Rugby

North West
Congleton
Crewe and Nantwich
Ellesmere Port and Neston
Halton
Warrington
South Lakeland
Fylde*
Hyndburn
Rossendale*
Wyre
Bolton
Rochdale
Bury*
Salford*
Wigan
Sefton
Macclesfield
St. Helens
Wirral
Oldham

* These authorities have not received any additional allocation as a result of applications they have made. They have however been invited to re-apply when it is clearer that their existing allocations will soon be exhausted.

Some 83 per cent. of the reserve has been allocated.

Background note

Mr. Speller asked an identical question in June 1985 (PQ 2824/84/86) and this draft answer simply updates the information previously provided in reply.

Service Charges

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to complete consideration of the Nugee report; and if he will introduce legislation on the subject of service charges at an early date.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend and I are still considering the many recommendations in the Nugee report in consultation with colleagues in other Departments which have an interest. I will make a statement as soon as possible, but I cannot say at this stage when it will be possible to introduce legislation on this subject.

Merseyside Residuary Body

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he is satisfied with the progress being made by the Merseyside Residuary Body; and if he will make a statement;

(2) why he dismissed Mr. Leslie Pocock as chairman of the Merseyside Residuary Body.

Mr. Tracey: I shall answer these quesions shortly.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table of the latest estimate of financial gains or losses likely to be incurred by each London borough arising out of the abolition of the Greater London council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: Savings following the abolition of the GLC will depend on decisions by each of the successors.

London Residuary Body (Interim Budget)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will issue to all hon. Members in London the interim budget statement for 1986-87 of the London Residuary Body; if he will publish in the *Official Report* the impact on each London borough of the interim budget; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: No. The London Residuary Body is continuing to modify its budget in the light of discussion with boroughs and others directly concerned.

Mary Rose

Mr. Terry Fields asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list, by subsection and paragraph, the powers under which he acted in providing funds towards the cost of recovering the Mary Rose;

(2) if he will list, by subsection and paragraph, the powers under which he acted in designating the Mary Rose as an ancient monument;

(3) how many protected wrecks have also been designated as ancient monuments; and if he will list them;

(4) what is his policy regarding the payment of public funds to private charities in connection with the preservation of ancient monuments; and if he will make a statement;

(5) if he will list, by subsection and paragraph, the powers under which he paid grants to the Mary Rose trust;

(6) whether any grant was actually paid to the Mary Rose trust prior to the designation of the Mary Rose as an ancient monument taking effect; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The grant offered by my predecessor to the Mary Rose trust was within the powers of section 24(2) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 which enables contributions to be made towards the cost of removing ancient monuments to another place for the purposes of preservation. Section 61(12) defines an "ancient monument" as either a scheduled monument (section I of the 1979 Act) or "any other monument which in the opinion of the Secretary of State is of public interest by reason of the historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching to it". The Mary Rose fell within the definition of "monument" in section 61(7)(a) and the exclusion in section 61(8)(b) concerning protected wrecks does not apply to this subsection. The Mary Rose was clearly of public interest and a grant could thus lawfully be made. This conclusion was reached before the grant was offered; payments were not made until 1982. No protected wrecks have been scheduled.

The responsibility for making grants was transferred to the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission on 1 April 1984 and the present policy on aid to private charities is a matter for the Commission.

Local Government Bill

Mr. Straw asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the Audit Commission about the implementation of part 2 of the Local Government Bill.

Mr. Waldegrave: Informal discussions about the Local Government Bill were held between officers of my Department and the Audit Commission last December.

Docklands Light Railway

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total number of local people currently employed on the construction of the Docklands light railway.

Sir George Young [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 November 1985, c. *61*]: The number of people currently employed on the construction of the London Docklands railway at December 1985, based on postal areas, is shown in the table:

Postal Area	*Numbers Employed*
London East	232
London South East	14
London South West	6
London West	13
London North	31
London North West	38
Home Counties	69
Elsewhere	37
Total	440

London east and London south-east would include all those living in the Docklands boroughs.

Water Authorities

Mr. Dixon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the organisations which commented on the document titled "Water Privatisation A Discussion Paper", indicating which supported privatisation and which opposed it.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *573*]: Responses have been received from the following:

The Water Authorities Association
Anglian Water Authority
North West Water Authority
Northumbrian Water Authority
Severn Trent Water Authority
South West Water Authority
Southern Water Authority
Thames Water Authority
Welsh Water Authority
Wessex Water Authority
Yorkshire Water Authority
The Water Companies Association
British Water Industries Group
National Joint Industrial Committee for the Water Industry (Trade Union Side)
Institute of Water Engineers and Scientists
British Effluent and Water Association
Association of Chief Technical Officers
Association of Consulting Engineers
Association of District Councils
Association of Metropolitan District Engineers
Basildon Council
Camden District Council
Confederation of British Industry
Countryside Commission
Deloitte Haskins and Sells
Food Manufacturers Federation
Institute of Directors
John Laing Construction Ltd/Société Lyonnaise des Eaux
London Boroughs Association
London Borough of Merton
Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley
National Anglers Council
National Consumer Council
National Farmers Union
Salmon and Trout Association
South Derbyshire District Council
Southern Water Retirement Association
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
United Kingdom Petroleum Industry Association Ltd Environmental Group

In addition, responses have been received from four private individuals.

Of the total of 43 responses, seven supported the principle of privatisation and eleven opposed it. The remaining 25 commented on practical issues, without expressing a view on the merits of privatisation itself.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Select Committees

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal how many Divisions have taken place in each Session on reports for each departmental Select Committee; and how many reports have been approved unanimously, for each year since their appointment.

Mr. Biffen: The number of divisions which have taken place on reports for each departmental Select Committee in each Session is as follows:

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86 to date*
Agriculture	6	10	2	0	1	5	—
Defence	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Education	39	0	46	28	0	0	0
Employment	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Energy	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Environment	8	131	20	0	4	0	0
Foreign Affairs	31	13	50	0	24	12	0
Home Affairs	15	12	15	8	0	3	0
Scottish Affairs	8	0	7	2	93	72	0
Social Services	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Trade and Industry	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Transport	0	6	10	0	55	49	0
Treasury and Civil Service	2	22	18	*6	6	37	3
Welsh Affairs	0	1	0	29	0	7	3

* This figure does not include 69 divisions on a report which was not in the event made to the House.

The number of reports which have been approved unanimously by each Committee are as follows:

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86 to date
Agriculture	1	4	1	1	2	8	0
Defence	2	3	2	4	3	6	1
Education	4	3	7	2	2	1	0
Employment	2	3	6	0	2	3	0
Energy	2	3	6	3	12	9	0
Environment	0	1	0	5	7	7	0
Foreign Affairs	4	6	4	6	5	4	2
Home Affairs	4	3	7	3	1	5	0
Scottish Affairs	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Social Services	3	5	3	2	4	8	0
Trade and Industry	4	9	16	6	9	7	2
Transport	3	9	6	6	3	7	0
Treasury and Civil Service	5	7	6	5	7	10	2
Welsh Affairs	1	1	1	0	1	0	1

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal what is the percentage attendance rate and percentage turnover of members of each departmental Select Committee and their Sub-Committees for each Session since their appointment; what is the overall attendance rate; and what is the total number of members who have served on each Select Committee.

Mr. Biffen: The attendance percentages for each departmental Select Committee and their Sub-Committees for each Session since their appointment are as follows:

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Agriculture	84	77	75	72	68	62
Defence	72	72	75	73	69	74
Education	71	68	72	63	76	68
Employment	74	69	70	70	81	82
Energy	72	73	53	63	73	67
Environment	69	67	68	68	76	64
Foreign Affairs	87	69	84	78	66	75
Sub-Committee Overseas Develpment*	45	75	84	83	—	—
Home Affairs	92	84	75	73	82	75
Sub-Committee Race Relations and Immigration	89	89	87	92	83	80
Scottish Affairs	85	78	74	71	72	67
Social Services	73	66	70	71	72	66
Trade and Industry	84	81	71	67	63	57
Transport	73	69	74	65	73	67
Treasury and Civil Service	92	88	85	85	77	78
Sub-Committee	75	73	61	71	79	92
Welsh Affairs	81	75	76	79	83	80

Note:

* Where a Member ceases to be able to attend a Committee, but until his replacement technically remains a Member, the above attendances are thereby depressed.

The turnover percentages for each departmental Select Committee and their Sub-Committees for each Session since their appointment are:

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86 to date
Agriculture	0	33	11	0	18	9	†18
Defence	0	9	27	18	0	0	0
Education	0	0	11	0	9	18	0
Employment	0	22	22	22	0	0	0
Energy	9	9	9	18	0	27	9
Environment	18	18	64	9	9	18	0
Foreign Affairs	0	18	18	36	9	0	0
Sub-Committee on Overseas Development‡	25	17	33	40	—	—	—
Home Affairs	0	18	0	18	9	9	0
Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration	20	0	0	20	20	20	0
Scottish Affairs	0	30	25	15	30	0	0
Social Services	11	22	11	22	0	27	†18
Trade and Industry	0	9	9	9	27	9	0

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86 to date
Transport	0	9	9	0	0	9	0
Treasury and Civil Service	0	18	27	0	9	0	0
Sub-Committee	14	14	57	0	*	*	*
Welsh Affairs	12	0	18	9	9	0	0

Notes:

* Membership of the Sub-Committee has varied in size and composition in these Sessions.

† This figure does not take account of members who have resigned their seats and have not yet been replaced.

‡ The Overseas Development Sub-Committee was not re-appointed in the 1983-84 Session.

¶ One member died; vacancy was not filled.

The overall attendance rate for the departmental Select Committees and Sub-Committees and the total number of members who have served on each Committee are:

	Overall Attendance	Number of Members
Agriculture	73	25
Defence	72·5	17
Education	71·5	22
Employment	74	23
Energy	66·1	27
Environment	69·2	26
Foreign Affairs	74	24
Sub-Committee		
Overseas Development	72	16
Home Affairs	80	28
Sub-Committee		
Race Relations and Immigration	80	12
Scottish Affairs	74·5	27
Social Services	69·8	24
Trade and Industry	70	24
Transport	70	19
Treasury and Civil Service	81	22
Sub Committee	76	16
Welsh Affairs	79	23

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal which reports of departmental Select Committee and their sub-committees, where appropriate, have been debated; when they were debated; what percentage of the total number of reports this represents; and which reports have been mentioned on the Order Paper as relevant to debate.

Mr. Biffen: Information requested is as follows: The following reports of departmental Select Committees and their Sub-Committees have been debated on substantive motions:

Second Report (1979-80) from the Home Affairs Committee on 'Race Relations and the 'Sus' law' debated 5 June 1980.

Second Report (1979-80) from the Social Services Committee on 'Perinatal and Neonatal Mortality' debated 5 December 1980.

Fourth Report (1980-81) from the Social Services Committee on 'Medical Education' debated 18 June 1982.

Fifth Report (1984-85) from the Employment Committee on 'Wages Councils' debated 6 June 1985.

This represents 0·9 per cent. of the total number of reports.

The following reports have been mentioned on the Order Paper as relevant to debate:

Agriculture

First Report (1980-81) on 'Animal Welfare in the Poultry, Pig and Veal Calf Industries' debated 19 November 1982.

Defence

Second Report (1979-80) on 'Statement on the Defence Estimates 1980' debated 28 and 29 April 1980.

Second Report (1980-81) on 'Statement on the Defence Estimates 1981' debated 19 and 20 May 1981.

First Report (1983-84) on 'Statement on the Defence Estimates 1984' debated 18 and 19 June 1984.

Third Report (1983-84) on 'Ministry of Defence Reorganisation' debated 22 October 1984.

First Report (1984-85) on 'The Use of Merchant Shipping for Defence Purposes' debated 12 and 13 June 1985.

Third Report (1984-85) on 'Defence Commitments and Resources and the Defence Estimates 1985-86' debated 12 and 13 June 1985.

Education

Eighth Report (1981-82) on "Public and Private Funding of the Arts" debated 14 June 1984.

First Report (1982-83) on "Prison Education" debated 4 July 1984.

Second Report (1983-84) on "Observation on the Government Reply to the First Report of the Education, Science and Arts Committee 1982-83" debated on 4 July 1984.

Employment

First Report (1983-84) on "GCHQ" debated 27 February 1984.

Energy

Second Report (1983-84) on "Department of Energy Supplementary Estimate in Respect of the Coal Industry" debated 8 March 1984.

Fourth Report (1984-85) on "Department of Energy Winter Supplementary Estimate in respect of the British National Oil Corporation" debated 18 December 1984.

Fifth Report (1984-85) on "Government Oil Price Policy and the Department of Energy Spring Supplementary Estimate in respect of the British National Oil Corporation" debated 14 March 1985.

Environment

Second Report (1983-84) on "Department of the Environment Main Estimates 1984-85" debated 4 July 1984.

Third Report (1983-84) on "Property Services Agency Main Estimates 1984-85" debated 17 July 1984.

Fourth Report (1983-84) on "Acid Rain" debated 11 January 1985.

Third Report (1984-85) on "Department of the Environment Main Estimates 1985-86" debated 11 July 1985.

Fourth Report (1984-85) on "Property Services Agency Main Estimates 1985-86" debated 11 July 1985.

Foreign Affairs

Fifth Report (1980-81) on "Mexico Summit: the British Role in the light of the Brandt Commission" debated 24 July 1981.

First Report (1980-81) on "British North American Acts: Role of Parliament" debated 17 February 1982.

Second Report (1980-81) on "British North America Acts: Role of Parliament" debated 17 February 1982.

First Report (1981-82) (1980-81) on "British North America Acts: Role of Parliament" debated 17 February 1982.

Second Report (1982-83) on "Turks and Caicos Islands: Airport Development on Providenciales" debated 14 March 1983.

Second Report (1983-84) on "Grenada" debated 17 July 1984.

Fourth Report (1984-85) on "FCO/ODA Estimates 1984-85" debated 17 July 1984.

Fifth Report (1983-84) on "Falkland Islands" debated 14 March 1985.

Fifth Report (1984-85) on "United Kingdom Membership of UNESCO" debated 22 November 1985.

Second Report (1984-85) on "Famine in Africa" debated 17 December 1985.

First Report (1985-86) on "Winter Supplementary Estimates 1985-86" debated 17 December 1985.

Social Services

Third Report (1981-82) on "Age of Retirement" debated 25 November 1983.

First Report (1983-84) on "Griffiths NHS Management Enquiry Report" debated 4 May 1984.

Second Report (1984-85) on "Community Care" debated 11 July 1985.

Trade and Industry

Third Report (1984-85) on "Trade with China" debated 18 July 1985.

Transport

First Report (1984-85) on "Road Safety" debated 15 November 1985.

First Report (1985-86) on "The Channel Link" debated 9 December 1985.

Treasury and Civil Service

Second Report (1979-80) on "The Budget and the Government's Expenditure Plans 1980-81 to 1983-84" debated 7 May 1980.

Fifth Report (1980-81) on "The 1981 Budget and the Government's Expenditure Plans 1981-82 to 1983-84" debated 9 April 1981.

Third Report (1981-82) on "Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service" debated on 28 October 1983.

Fourth Report (1981-82) on "The 1982 Budget" debated 6 April 1982.

Fifth Report (1981-82) on "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1982-83 to 1984-85" debated 21 April 1982.

Second Report (1982-83) on "The Spring Supplementary Estimates" debated 14 March 1983.

Third Report (1982-83) on "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1983-84 to 1985-86" debated 9 March 1983.

Fourth Report (1982-83) on "International Monetary Arrangements: International Lending by Banks" debated 18 April 1983.

Fifth Report (1982-83) on "The 1983 Budget" debated 14 April 1983.

First Report (1983-84) on "The Government's Economic Policy: Autumn Statement" debated 6 March 1984.

Third Report (1983-84) on "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1984-85 to 1986-87" debated 6 March 1984.

Fourth Report (1983-84) on "The 1984 Budget" debated 10 April 1984.

Seventh Report (1983-84) on "The Fontainebleau Summit Agreement" debated 10 July 1984.

First Report (1984-85) on "The Government's Economic Policy: Autumn Statement" debated 6 December 1984.

Third Report (1984-85) on "Special Supplementary Estimates Class II, Vote 10 (Budget of the European Community)" debated 22 January 1985.

Sixth Report (1984-85) on "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1985-86 to 1987-88" debated 4 March 1985.

Eighth Report (1984-85) on "The 1985 Budget" debated 29 April 1985.

Second Report (1985-86) on "The Government's Economic Policy: Autumn Statement" debated on 12 December 1985.

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal what is the number of formal evidence sessions for each of the departmental Select Committees for each year since their establishment, together with the total figure for 1979 to 1985; and if he will give similar data for Sub-Committees since their appointment.

Mr. Biffen: The following table shows the number of formal evidence sessions held by each departmental Select Committee and their Sub-Committees, with a total for the years 1979-85:

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*Total*
Agriculture	0	19	16	14	9	17	19	94
Defence	0	29	20	26	17	34	24	150
Education	0	20	40	30	14	22	21	147
Employment	0	22	27	23	12	16	20	120
Energy	0	16	23	19	14	17	25	114
Environment	0	11	4	14	14	30	29	107
Foreign Affairs	1	22	15	22	9	29	30	128
Sub-Committee Overseas Development	0	16	13	13	5	—	—	47
Home Affairs	2	16	11	17	5	16	10	77
Sub-Committee Race Relations and Immigration	2	26	20	16	7	15	11	97
Scottish Affairs	1	18	17	19	12	19	8	94
Social Services	0	19	38	23	19	29	17	145
Trade and Industry	0	26	20	15	10	23	25	119
Transport	0	30	25	18	16	30	28	147
Treasury and Civil Service	1	22	14	25	11	18	22	113
Sub-Committee	0	11	13	14	0	14	12	64
Welsh Affairs	0	27	26	21	8	14	9	105

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will list the occupations at appointment of specialist advisers who have assisted the various departmental Select Committees since their appointment, together with the number in each occupation.

Mr. Biffen: The information is as follows:

	Number
Academics	120
Consultants	18
Journalists	3
Headmasters	2
Businessmen	3
Arts Administrators	2
Retired Civil Servants	18
Retired LEA Inspector	1
Retired College Principal	1
Education Officer	1
Retired Her Majesty's Inspector	1
Director of Administration (London Zoo)	1
Consulting Engineers	6
Retired	2
Authors	2
Non-Government Organisation	2
Buildings Officer	1
Doctor	1
Regional Nursing Officer	1
Solicitor	1
Director of Social Services	1
Social Scientists	4
Accountants	4
Economists	22
Adviser on GEEC Affairs	1

	Number
Director CIPFA	1
Director NIESR	1
Director of Studies RIIA	1
Local Government Officer	1
Director-General RIPA	1
Research Analyst	1
Administrative Sub-Dean	1
Administrator	1
Other	5

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will name the advisers appointed by each Select Committee since their appointment; what was the total cost of *(a)* remuneration and *(b)* expenses to each Select Committee of advisers for each Session; and if he will indicate those advisers who are currently appointed to advise each committee.

Mr. Biffen: The information requested is given in the following tables.

The following people have been appointed as specialist advisers by the departmental Select Committees since their establishment. Those advisers currently appointed are indicated with an asterisk.

Agriculture
Professor J. Ashton.
*Professor D. K. Britten.
Mr. E. Neville-Rolfe.*
Professor C. R. W. Spedding.
Professor A. J. F. Webster.
Mr. I. Sturgess.

Defence
Mrs. Valerie Adams.*
Colonel Jonathan Alford.*
Air Vice Marshal Anthony Caillard, CB.*
Professor Lawrence Freedman.*
Rear Admiral E. F. Gueritz, CB, CBE, DSC.*
Air Vice Marshal R. Harding.
Dr. Keith Hartley.*
Brigadier K. Hunt.
Mr. S. Jenkins.
Major General Patrick Kay.
Sir Peter Matthews.
Major General Sir Jeremy Moore, KCB, OBE, MC.*
Mr. Chapman Pincher.
Mr. Anthony Preston.
Mr. Keith Thomas.

Education
Mr. M. Lightfoot, *Mr. J. Myerscough, Professor W. Brammer, Mr. B. Hanson, Dr. J. Crichton Campbell, Mr. A. Travers, Mr. A. C. Morris, Mr. M. Shattock, *Mr. S. Heaven, Dr. J. F. Harbinson, Dr. S. Worrall, Mr. P. Shea, Mr. J. Dawson, Professor Vickery, Mr. C. Rainbow, Dr. P. Andrews, Mr. P. Mann, Mr. A. Garrett, Mr. D. Dougan, Dr. C. Andrew, Professor R. Floud, *Mr. N. Thomas.

Employment
Mike Hanson, Roy Lewis, Dr. Charles Hanson, Paul McCormick, Hubert Scholes, Dr. Keith Ewing, Ian Hudson, Professor Bryan Harvey, Gilmour Warnock, *Professor Charles Handy, Frank Wilkinson, Roger Tarling, Andrew Likierman, *Professor Richard Layard and *Professor David Metcalf.

Energy
Professor D. Burn, *Mr. J. Chesshire, Mr. H. Gott, Dr. N. Dombey, *Professor A. Kemp, *Professor G. Manners, *Professor W. Murgatroyd, *Professor P. O'Sullivan, *Mr. W. Orchard, *Professor J. Surrey and *Mr. S. Lumby.

Environment
Mr. V. Watts: Senior Partner in Arthur Anderson & Co.,
Mr. J. Stevenson: Director of Economic Affairs, National Federation of Building Trades Employers,
Mr. A. Murie: Academic, University of Bristol,
Mr. D. Webster: Principal Scientific Officer, Centre for Environmental Studies,
Mr. A. Bovaird: Lecturer in Economics, University of Aston in Birmingham,
Dr. Christine Whitehead: Lecturer in Economics, London School of Economics,
Mr. M. Harloe: Academic, University of Essex,
*Dr. Ken Young: Academic, Policy Studies Institute,
*Mr. A. J. Rosenfeld CB: Civil Servant (retired), Principal Finance Officer,
*Dr. J. N. Bell: Academic, Department of Botany, University of London,
*Professor A. Williams: Academic, Department of Fuel and Energy, Leeds University,
*Dr. J. Mather: Academic, Natural Environment Research Council (NERC),
*Mr. W. Patterson: Consultant and author on nuclear physics,
Mr. M. Grant: Academic, Southampton University.

Foreign Affairs
Mr. David Watt, *Mrs. Jocelyn Statler, Mrs. Carol Geldart, Dr. Karen Darwisha, Mrs. Nancy Crawshaw, Brigadier Frank Henn CBE, Dr. John Finnis, *Mr. E. G. White, Dr. George Hills, Dr. A. J. Payne, Dr. Colin Clarke, Dr. David Browning, Dr. Walter Little, Professor E. D. Brown, Professor Charles Elliott, Dr. Paul Howell, Mr. Anthony Bottrall, Mr. John Cathie, Mr. John Mitchell, Dr. Paul Mosley, Mr. J. D. Stephen, Dr. C. L. Colclough, Mr. Gordon Bridger, Sir Melvyn Rosser, Professor J. M. Hirst, Dr. N. Clark, Mr. Rupert Bristow, Mr. S. Jones, Mr. G. Hunter, Professor Rosalyn Higgins, *Sir Curtis Keeble, *Mr. Michael Kaser, *Mr. Phil Williams, *Mr. Richard Pollock.

Home Affairs
Dr. S. D. McConville, Dr. D. Williams.

Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration
Dr. D. Smith

Scottish Affairs
Professor T. Carbery, Dr. Tony Cockerill, Diane Dawson, Ian Falconer, David Heald, Professor L. Hunter, Jim Ross, *Charlotte Lythe, Professor D. Mackay, Tony Mackay, Malcolm Maclennan, Alan McGregor, John More

Social Services
Mr. K. Shuttleworth, Professor E. O. R. Reynolds, Professor R. Beard, Professor E. Alberman, Professor R. Klein, *Mr. M. O'Higgins, Professor T. Clark, Professor J. Parkhourse, Mr. N. Hendry, Mr. S. Engleman, Mr. M. Fogarty, Mr. H. Billing, Mrs. B. Kahan, Mrs. D. Rawstron, Mr. D. Allen, Professor J. Wing, Mr. D. Plank, Miss J. Young, Dr. M. Mitcheson, *Mr. R. Berthoud, *Mr. J. Kay, *Professor J. Bradshaw, *Professor J. Gunn, *Dr. J. MacKeith, *Professor R. Bluglass.

Trade & Industry
Mr. A. G. Thorne, Mr. J. M. Jamieson, Mr. J. J. B. Barrett, Mr. G. Firth, Mr. T. A. J. Cockerill and *Professor D. Garel Rhys.

Transport
Mr. C. D. Brown, Mr. A. Muir Wood (later Sir Alan Muir Wood), Mr. W. R. Shirrefs, Mr. A. Likierman, Dr. S. Glaister, Mr. A. Bull, Professor A. D. May, *Professor K. M. Gwilliam.

Treasury and Civil Service
Professor M. Artis, Professor A. B. Atkinson, Professor M. Beesley, Dr. D. Begg, Mr. A. J. C. Britton*, Dr. A. Budd, Professor W. Buiter, Mr. P. J. Butler, Mr. A. Doig, Mr. J. Ermisch*, Mr. J. E. Hansford, Mr. D. Heald, Professor D. Hendry, Mr. S. G. B. Henry, Mr. N. Hepworth, Mr. C. Johnson*, Mr. A. J. Jones, Mr. J. Kay, Mr. G. G. Leighton-Boyce, Mr. A. Likierman*, Mr. M. Marks, Mr. W. E. Martin*, Mr. R. Matthews, Professor M. Miller, Dr. P. Neild, Mr. P. Ormerod, Mrs. Hermione Parker, Mr. W. Plowden*, Mr. J. Redwood, Dr. W. Robinson*, Professor H. Rose, Mr. H. C. Salter, Mr. D.

Savage*, Mr. S. Stewart, Mr. M. F. Stonefrost, Professor B. Tew, Mr. W. J. L. Wallace, Mr. T. Ward*, Professor J. Williamson.

Welsh Affairs

Mr. B. Moore, Mr. J. Rhodes, Mr. D. R. Thomas, Mr. J. J. Boyd Barrett, Mr. F. H. Wise, Mr. J. Lloyd, Professor R. Mace, Mr. W. Dyfri Jones, Professor D. Morris, Professor R. E. Thomas, Mr. R. R. MacKay, Mr. W. S. Cole*, Dr. D. Stickler, Professor B. Archer*, Dr. S. Wanhill, Mr. D. Jones, Mr. P. Algar.

Special advisers—Fees and Expenses by Session

Committee	*1979-80*		*1980-81*		*1981-82*		*1982-83*		*1983-84*		*1984-85**		*1985-86**	
	Fees £	*Expenses* £	*Fees* £	*Expenses* £	*Fees* £	*Expenses* £	*Fees* £	*Expenses* £	*Fees* £	*Expenses* £	*Fees* £	*Expenses* £	*Fees* £	*Expenses* £
Agriculture	4,330	3,883	2,820	929	2,800	963	1,750	386	1,282	463	1,640	882		
Defence	3,387	321	6,667	628	10,069	942	7,147	938	10,007	1,111	10,429	1,172	830	109
Education, Science and Arts	8,594	3,269	10,302	2,951	16,916	3,052	10,212	1,644	2,988	54	3,453	84		
Employment	2,198	357	5,607	1,185	2,783	199	1,054	437	1,560	106	4,398	60		
Energy	6,696	648	11,926	2,593	13,553	3,109	5,900	1,075	7,829	1,262	11,343	3,636	1,026	93
Environment	10,950	1,322	6,611	1,415	6,563	1,030	3,589	79	3,832	184	4,952	280		
European Legislation	1,480	62												
Foreign Affairs	8,598	2,713	17,430	2,402	17,987	3,733	10,512	3,522	2,295	130	2,548	586		
Home Affairs	1,769	261	1,882	256										
House of Commons (Services) Computer Sub-committee	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,050	446	200	27		
Industry and Trade	3,355	961	6,187	2,041	6,660	2,653	3,350	1,589	2,499	1,311	3,960	1,773		
Scottish Affairs	1,755	1,378	2,025	1,753	2,070	2,737	2,337	1,461	1,367	1,965	1,557	2,165		
Social Services	9,442	1,813	14,936	12,296	4,704	1,104	4,669	828	4,671	623	4,002	649		
Sound Broadcasting	800	125	495	29	2,000	288	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transport	1,975	700	4,635	674	4,920	479	1,860	355	400	66	2,680	1,237	—	—
Treasury and Civil Service	8,557	1,777	9,686	2,178	9,690	2,193	12,953	4,645	10,515	1,693	11,351	2,431	652	5
Welsh Affairs	2,652	969	300	23	3,430	1,175	3,358	1,346	4,031	1,758	4,616	1,104	522	141

* The Accounts for 1984-85 and 1985-86 are not yet complete

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal how many memoranda have been submitted by Government Departments to Select Committees other than those appointed to examine their activities for each Session since their appointment.

Mr. Biffen: The number of memoranda submitted to departmental Select Committees in each Session since 1979 by Government Departments other than that which they were appointed to examine is as follows:

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Agriculture	2	0	2	1	0	1	0
Defence	7	0	2	0	0	2	2
Education	2	1	2	0	0	2	2
Employment	1	3	1	1	1	2	0
Energy	0	3	3	0	5	6	0
Environment	0	1	2	7	9	4	—
Foreign Affairs	3	6	2	1	1	7	1
Sub-Committee Overseas Development	4	1	5	1	—	—	—
Home Affairs	1	1	1	1	2	3	0
Sub-Committee Race Relations and Immigration	0	14	10	5	8	17	3
Scottish Affairs	0	1	1	0	0	2	—
Social Services	1	2	9	3	2	3	1
Trade and Industry	6	0	13	7	2	20	—
Transport	0	3	0	0	1	1	—
Treasury and Civil Service	2	9	26	4	24	8	0
Welsh Affairs	1	2	1	0	2	1	—

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal how many memoranda have been presented by Government Departments to each departmental Select Committee and Sub-Committee for each Session since their appointment.

Mr. Biffen: The number of memoranda presented to the departmental Select Committees and their Sub-Committees in each Session since 1979 by Government Departments is as follows:

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Agriculture	18	7	19	10	7	14	6
Defence	32	30	18	12	54	65	14
Education	21	24	35	21	5	6	2
Employment	4	5	4	1	4	4	1
Energy	18	11	17	21	19	11	2
Environment	2	6	9	11	32	29	—
Foreign Affairs	51	53	49	48	41	62	8

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Sub-Committee Overseas Development	25	37	28	32	—	—	—
Home Affairs	8	11	9	7	6	5	1
Sub-Committee Race Relations and Immigration	2	24	23	12	18	9	4
Scottish Affairs	3	3	3	11	4	7	—
Social Services	17	10	20	15	17	12	1
Trade and Industry	65	34	54	19	10	32	—
Transport	9	12	18	14	13	11	—
Treasury and Civil Service	33	43	71	26	55	44	5
Sub-Committee Welsh Affairs	*	*	*	*	8	5	1
Welsh Affairs	5	5	11	2	8	12	—

*It is not possible to apportion memoranda between the Committee and the Sub-Committee for this period.

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal how many committee temporary assistants are employed by each of the Select Committees; how many have been appointed since the new committees were established; what is the cost each year; and how many have had their appointments extended beyond the initial two years.

Mr. Biffen: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal what is the average period that has elapsed from publication of reports of departmental Select Committees to receipt of the Government response; and what is the average period elapsing relating to each of the committees.

Mr. Biffen: The average period elapsing between the publication of reports of departmental Select Committees and the receipt of the Government response is 109 days. The average period elapsing for each individual Committee is as follows:

	Average No. of Days for each Committee
Agriculture	112
Defence	88
Education	184
Employment	89
Energy	80
Environment	84
Foreign Affairs	74
Home Affairs	123
Scottish Affairs	89
Social Services	145
Trade and Industry	83
Transport	158
Treasury and Civil Service	81
Welsh Affairs	182

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal what is the total number of witnesses who have appeared before each of the Select Committees and their sub-committees since 1979 *(a)* from Government Departments, *(b)* from associated public bodies and *(c)* from others.

Mr. Biffen: The information is as follows:

	Government Departments	Associated Public Bodies	Others
Agriculture	118	68	266
Defence	348	0	224
Education	170	75	666
Employment	51	92	372
Energy	130	106	196
Environment	111	63	364
Foreign Affairs	170	29	163
Sub-Committee Overseas Development	78	22	69
Home Affairs	77	5	245
Sub-Committee Race Relations & Immigration	141	88	405
Scottish Affairs	127	81	267
Social Services	114	0	856
Trade and Industry	122	162	250
Transport	96	83	481
Treasury and Civil Service	107	14	112
Sub-Committee	78	5	101
Welsh Affairs	78	118	218

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal how many full-time staff are engaged principally in work for each of the departmental Select Committees; what is the number within each grade; and what is the total staff employed within the Committee Office.

Mr. John Biffen: The permanent staff working for the departmental Select Committees, and their grades, are shown in the following table:

Committee	Full-time staff	Clerks	Higher Executive Officers/Chief Office Clerks	Office Clerks	Secretaries	Specialist Assistants
Agriculture	3	2	—	—	1	—
Defence	5	3	—	1	1	—
Education, Science and Arts	4	1	1	—	1	1
Employment	3	1	1	—	1	—
Energy	4	2	1	—	1	—
Environment	*6	*3	1	—	1	1
Foreign Affairs	5	2	1	1	1	—
Home Affairs	4	2	1	—	1	—

Committee	Full-time staff	Clerks	Higher Executive Officers/Chief Office Clerks	Office Clerks	Secretaries	Specialist Assistants
Scottish Affairs	3	2	—	—	1	—
Social Services	4	2	1	—	1	—
Trade and Industry	4	2	1	—	1	—
Transport	5	2	1	—	1	1
Treasury and Civil Service	6	2	1	—	1	2
Welsh Affairs	3	1	1	—	1	—
Total	59	27	11	2	14	5

Total staff employed within the Committee Office is 77½*.
* Includes one working four days a week.
† Includes three secretaries working part-time.

Mr. George asked the Lord Privy Seal which reports of departmental Select Committees have been noticed on the Order Paper as relevant to debate on the Estimates days provided for in Standing Order No. 19(1).

Mr. Biffen: The information is as follows:

First Report, Session 1982-83 of the Education, Science and Arts Committee, "Prison Education" together with the Second Report of the Committee Session 1983-84 "Observation on the Government Reply to the First Report for the Education, Science and Arts Committee, Session 1982-83". Debated on 4 July 1984.

Second Report from the Energy Committee on the Department of Energy's Supplementary Estimate for £230 million in respect of the Coal Industry—8 March 1984.

Fourth Report from the Energy Committee on the Department of Energy's Winter Supplementary Estimate for £45 million in respect of the British National Oil Corporation—18 December 1984.

Fifth Report from the Energy Committee on Government Oil Price Policy and the Department of Energy's Spring Supplementary Estimate for £20 million in respect of the British National Oil Corporation—14 March 1985.

"Department of the Environment's Main Estimates, 1984-85" (Second Report, Session 1983-84, HC 414)—4 July 1984.

"Property Services Agency Main Estimates 1984-85" (Third Report, Session 1983-84, HC 444)—17 July 1984.

"Department of the Environment's Main Estimates, 1985-86" (Third Report, Session 1984-85, HC 414)—11 July 1985.

"Property Services Agency Main Estimates 1985-86" (Fourth Report, Session 1984-85, HC 415)—11 July 1985.

Second Report (1982-83) Turks and Caicos Islands: Airport Development on Providenciales (HC 112) (Est).

Second Report (1983-84) Grenada; and Fourth Report (1984-85) FCO/ODA Estimates 1984-85 (HC 226, 421) (Est).

Second Report (1984-85) Famine in Africa; and First Report (1985-86) Winter Supplementary Estimates 1985-86 (HC 123) (Est).

Community Care, Second Report 1984-85, from the Social Services Committee.

Third Report 1984-85: Trade with China, from the Trade and Industry Committee.

Second Report, Session 1982-83, Spring Supplementary Estimates, from the Treasury and Civil Service Committee.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Claimants

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many claimants were the responsibility of the Harlesden office of his Department as at May 1979, December 1984 and the latest available date; and how many staff there were in the office for the same period;

(2) how many claimants were the responsibility of the Neasden office of his Department as at May 1979, December 1984 and the latest available date; and how many staff there were in the office for the same period;

(3) how many claimants were the responsibility of the Cricklewood office of his Department as at May 1979, December 1984 and the latest available date; and how many staff there were in the office for the same period;

Mr. Major: I shall let the right hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide the figures, for all the cases analysed in tables P1 to P6 of the technical annex to the "Reform of Social Security", published 16 December 1985, for an unmodified state earnings related pension scheme on the same basis as those quoted for a modified state earnings related pension scheme.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* figures similar to those given in tables P1 to P6 of the technical annex of the "Reform of Social Security" on the basis of a rate of return of 1½ per cent., 2 per cent. and 2½ per cent.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) on 20 December at columns *435-436*.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures, for all categories listed in the technical annex to the "Reform of Social Security", for changes in disposable income following the White Paper proposals by comparison with current benefit levels in 1985-86.

Mr. Newton: The figures in the technical annex already illustrate these changes.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on what basis the rate of return figures quoted in tables P1 to P6 of the technical annex to the "Reform of Social Security" are calculated.

Mr. Newton: The rate of return figures used in tables P1 to P6 of the technical annex to the White Paper "Reform of Social Security" are calculated in real terms net of increases in prices.

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services at what levels of gross income entitlement to family credit will cease for a family with one, two, three and four children.

Mr. Newton: These levels would depend on the ages of the children and would, therefore, vary between families of the same size. They would be determined by the actual decisions about benefit rates to be taken nearer the time of implementation in April 1988. However, using the illustrative figures contained in the technical annex to the social security White Paper, some examples would be as follows:

	Level of gross income at which entitlement to family credit ceases* £
Family with one child aged 3	129
Family with two children aged 4 and 6	141
Family with three children aged 3, 8 and 11	165
Family with four children aged 3, 8, 11 and 16	197

* Excluding child benefit.

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements are planned under the family credit scheme to deal with *(a)* those who move in and out of short-term or temporary jobs, *(b)* lay-offs, *(c)* those employed in more than one part-time job, *(d)* those whose employers are not liable to pay tax and national insurance contributions and *(e)* cases of marriage break-up where the parent in receipt of family credit is not the parent who has care of the child or children.

Mr. Newton: Detailed procedures have not been finalised. On *(a)*, to be entitled to family credit a person will have to be engaged and normally engaged in remunerative work. If a person in a short-term or temporary job fulfils the "normally engaged" condition and family credit is payable, he will be subject to the rule in paragraph 3.83 of the White Paper "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691) that an award will end if the payee loses his job or moves to a new employer. The situations in *(b)*, *(c)* and *(d)* all concern payment of family credit through employers, and the detailed procedures in this area are to be the subject of further consultations with employers. On *(e)*, the intention is that there will be provision for family credit to be withdrawn in this sort of situation.

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will be consulting interested voluntary organisations as well as local authorities on the unresolved housing benefit questions listed in paragraph 3.64 of Cmnd. 9691.

Mr. Newton: Many of the matters which we will be discussing with local authority interests involve very detailed questions of administrative practice and procedure. But where it seems appropriate, we will certainly consider seeking the views of other organisations on an informal basis.

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what procedures will be used to calculate family credit where a claimant is on emergency tax coding.

Mr. Newton: Detailed procedures have not been finalised, but as family credit will be based on normal net earnings it is anticipated that there will be provision for an estimate to be made of what the normal tax deduction would be.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide a breakdown by gross income level of the totals illustrated in the bottom line of tables 3(i)B, 3(ii)B, and 12(ii)B of the technical annex to the White Paper on the reform of social security, distinguishing, where possible, between couples and single parents, using the following or similar gross weekly income bands: under £50, £50-£74, £75-£99, £100-£124 and £125 plus.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide estimates of the numbers of losers resulting from the changes to standard housing benefit proposed in the White Paper on the reform of social security, Cmnd. 9691, including the suggested 20 per cent. rate contribution; how many of these would lose entitlement to housing benefit altogether; and if he will break the above estimate down into the following categories: *(a)* pensioners, *(b)* working households with children, distinguishing between couples and single parents, *(c)* working households without children, *(d)* others with children, distinguishing between couples and single parents and *(e)* others without children.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many households currently claiming housing benefit will lose entitlement to *(a)* rent rebate and *(b)* rate rebate, under the proposals in Cmnd. 9691; and, in each case, what is the number of pensioner households and the number of working households with and without children.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *596*]: Using the illustrative assumptions in the technical annex to the White Paper*, including a minimum contribution to domestic rates of 20 per cent., the estimated numbers losing entitlement are shown below. In the case of working households with children, the loss of entitlement would often arise because of increased income through the proposed family credit, and would be more than offset by the increased entitlement in that respect.

Thousands

	Rent Rebate/Allowance	*Rate Rebate*
Total	460	810
—pensioners	140	330
—working households with children	170	290
—working households without children	80	70

Note: *Cmnd. 9691.

Maternity Allowance

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what savings are expected to accrue from the proposed changes in maternity allowance; and what estimate Her Majesty's Government have made of income arising as a result of taxation of the statutory maternity allowance.

Mr. Newton: These estimates will depend on decisions to be taken following the outcome of the consultations on

maternity allowance currently under way with employers' and other interested organisations. I shall write to my hon. Friend when these decisions have been taken.

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many women eligible for the maternity allowance under current arrangements are expected to lose by the proposed changes; and how many women currently ineligible are expected to gain under the new arrangements.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide estimates of the numbers of gainers and losers resulting from the proposed changes to the maternity allowance.

Mr. Newton: Provisonal estimates are that some 75,000 to 85,000 women will no longer qualify for the allowance. These will almost entirely be women who were not in fact working when their pregnancies began, and who therefore do not come within the category for whom such an earnings-replacement benefit was intended. We estimate that between 5,000 and 10,000 will be entitled to the allowance for the first time.

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide an estimate of the public expenditure saving as a result of the changes proposed to the maternity benefits including the abolition of the maternity grant *(a)* in total and *(b)* for each benefit.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether, following his reply of 25 July 1985 to the hon. Member for Hornchurch, *Official Report*, column *742*, he is now in a position to clarify whether non-dependent deductions made from the housing benefit of households with non-dependent income support claimants living with them will be abolished.

Mr. Newton: We are still considering the future arrangements for non-dependent contributions.

Hospital Fires

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services to what factors he attributes the increase of 9 per cent. in the number of fires in hospitals and nursing homes between 1981 and 1983.

Mr. Whitney: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Visually Handicapped Persons

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he intends to publish his Department's fact-finding exercise on services for the visually handicapped.

Mr. Newton: I cannot yet add to my reply to the hon. Member on 20 December at column *411*.

School Nurses

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services to what factors he attributes the decrease in the number of children seen by school nurses in 1984 as compared with 1980.

Mr. Whitney: The decrease of 2 per cent. between 1980 and 1984 in the number of children seen by school nurses in England coincided with a fall of 10 per cent. in the maintained school population. The percentage of pupils seen by nurses rose from 54 per cent. in 1980 to 59 per cent. in 1984.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the figures for the number of children seen by school nurses in 1979 in his answer of 18 December 1985, *Official Report*, column *237*, is strictly comparable with those for the succeeding years.

Mr. Whitney: 1979 was the first year for which this information was collected centrally and reporting was less complete than in later years. I am sorry that an explanatory note to this effect was not included in my previous reply.

Radiation (Studies)

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the studies being undertaken by the committee on the medical aspects of radiation in the environment particularly relating to the incidence of leukaemia and lymphatic cancer in young people living close to the royal ordnance factory Burghfield and Atomic Weapons Research Establishment Aldermaston will be made public; and when he expects the committee to report.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Prescription Charges

Mr Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will introduce legislation to provide that prescription charges should be set at £2 or the actual cost of the prescribed drug, whichever is the lower; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hayhoe: No. On average the total cost to the National Health Service of each item dispensed in 1984 was £4.39p.

Kidney Transplants

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of kidney transplants in 1985; if he has now completed his consideration of the provision of a national computer register; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Whitney: According to information supplied by the United Kingdom transplant service, the provisional number of kidney transplants performed in the United Kingdom in 1985 was 1,338. Although this is 8 per cent. lower than the record level in 1984, it still shows a 17 per cent. increase on the 1983 figure and we are confident that the overall trend is still rising. Further initiatives to publicise the organ donor card scheme are being prepared.

We have studied estimates of the costs of establishing a free-standing national computer register of potential organ donors, and we are not convinced that at the present time the benefits would justify the large expenditure required. We are, however, exploring other methods of using computer facilities to identify potential donors, but do not expect to be able to make an announcement in the immediate future.

Consultants

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases of prima facie evidence of the failure of a consultant to meet the terms of a contract have been referred by him to the employing authority in each year since 1979.

Mr. Hayhoe: I am not aware of any such cases and do not believe that an extensive search of records would be justified.

Cervical Screening

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to his answer of 19 December 1985, *Official Report*, column *324*, which health authorities are running call and recall schemes for cervical cancer screening.

Mr. Hayhoe: In my reply to the hon. Member on 19 December at columns *324-325* I listed those health authorities that in June 1985 either had implemented computerised call and recall systems or had firm plans to do so by the end of 1985. Health authorities will next be asked to report their progress towards implementing such systems in June 1986, as part of the normal planning and accountability process.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish such information as is held by his Department on the times taken by pathology laboratories to process cervical smears.

Mr. Hayhoe: The information available to the Department is in general neither comprehensive nor in a publishable form. Furthermore, such information rapidly becomes out of date. Limited information from the British Society of Clinical Cytologists gave the result of a survey of 25 laboratories in one of its regions, which indicated that in the first half of 1985 it took less than four weeks to process a cervical smear in 10 laboratories, and between four and nine weeks in 15.

All health authorities are to be asked to give priority to improving their cervical cancer screening programmes including ensuring that laboratories can meet demand and avoid backlogs, which should not regularly exceed one month's work.

Surgery Attendances

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information is held by his Department about the number of patients attending doctors' surgeries.

Mr. Hayhoe: None, but information is available from the general household survey about the number of consultations.

Kidney Patients

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the basis of his statement that the incidence of chronic renal failure has not changed since 1978.

Mr. Whitney: The basis of the statement was that we have no evidence, either from general discussion with clinicians in the field or from scientific literature that the incidence has changed. If the hon. Member is aware of any evidence of a change I should be grateful if he would draw it to my attention.

Adopted Children

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, if he will introduce legislation to allow natural parents access to information about their children which have been adopted.

Mr. Whitney: No. It is entirely up to the adopted person to decide whether he wishes his new identity to be disclosed to his natural parents.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he proposes to reply to the two letters of 2 October and 29 November 1985 from Mr. and Mrs. Crawley of Hawthorn Crescent, Portsmouth, on the subject of access by natural parents to information about their children who have been adopted.

Mr. Whitney: Mr. and Mrs. Crawley have written a number of letters on this issue since 1983. Their letter of 29 November to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary was transferred to this Department and a brief reply in acknowledgement was sent to them although there was nothing further that could usefully be added to previous correspondence.

Growth Hormone

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to make available within the National Health Service for all those lacking sufficient human growth hormone the new genetically engineered growth hormone which came on the market in October 1985.

Mr. Whitney: Biosynthetic growth hormone is available to any patient in the NHS diagnosed as requiring treatment of short stature caused by decreased or absent secretion of pituitary growth hormones by a specialist medical practitioner.

NHS (General Managers)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many general managers so far appointed in the National Health Service at (i) regional, (ii) district and (iii) unit level, were in their previous jobs *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses, *(c)* businessmen, and *(d)* other occupations; and if he will give a breakdown of the last category.

Mr. Hayhoe: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish the number of families with children with additional requirements included in their supplementary benefit assessment, by type and average amount of additional requirement;.

(2) if he will provide estimates for November 1985 of the number of standard housing benefit recipients, in total and according to the following household types *(a)* pensioners, *(b)* working households with children, distinguishing between couples and single parents, *(c)*

working households without children, *(d)* others with children, distinguishing between couples and single parents and *(e)* others without children.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Single Payments

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the number and average amount of single payments made in the latest period for which figures are available to families with children, distinguishing between couples and single parents, in total and by type of single payment.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Income Support Scheme

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if it is proposed that 16 to 17-year-olds should be entitled to claim benefit in their own right once the income support scheme has come into effect.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 13 January at column *495*.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements are being made to deal with the claims made by married or cohabiting women for invalid care allowance since Mrs. Drake was awarded invalid care allowance by a tribunal on 1 March 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) on 26 July at column *943*.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many married and cohabiting women have submitted claims for invalid care allowance pending the European Court of Justice ruling on the Drake case, since 1 March 1985 *(a)* before 1 October 1985 and *(b)* before 1 December 1985.

Mr. Newton: 4,588 and 7,632, of which 348 and 567, respectively, have been disallowed because qualifying conditions other than marital status were not satisfied.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the current cost of extending invalid care allowance to married and co-habiting women (i) gross, (ii) net of savings on other national insurance benefits and (iii) net of savings on both means-tested and national insurance benefits.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to her on 24 July at column *603*. This is the latest estimate made. There is insufficient information available to break the figures down further in the way requested.

Mrs. Beckett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if all claims for invalid care allowance by married or co-habiting women will be back-dated either to the date of claim or 22 December 1985 when the EEC directive 7/79 came into force, if the European Court upholds the Drake case decision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The date from which an award of a benefit is made is a matter for the independent statutory authorities, subject to the overriding time limits laid down in legislation. A claim for invalid care allowance can be valid for a period of up to three months before the date of claim or, if the adjudicating authorities are satisfied that there was good cause for claiming late, for up to 12 months before the date of claim.

NHS (Private Contractors)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why he treats as confidential the names of companies who have fallen down on privatised contracts.

Mr. Hayhoe: When standards achieved in a contract are unsatisfactory, it is necessary for both the health authority and the contractor to examine what steps need to be taken to put things right. I do not consider this would be helped by publishing the name of the company concerned. If, despite these efforts, a contract has to be terminated, then the name of the contractor will become public.

Mentally Handicapped Children

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children have been admitted for *(a)* long-term care and *(b)* short-term care of less than three months duration, to mental handicap hospitals in the last full year; and if he will name the hospitals and their locations.

Mr. Whitney [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1985, c. *759-64*]: I regret that the table in my reply contained a number of typing errors.

The heading to the last column should have read "Children admitted during 1984 but not discharged by the end of 1984".

Under South Western regional health authority the entry against Plymouth district health authority should have read "Tamar House" and in the last column the entry should have read "1".

Under Mersey regional health authority the second entry against Crewe district health authority should have read "Cranage Hall".

Primary Care Package

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the district health authorities areas in which the £9 million primary care package awarded in 1983 has been spent.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *602*]: Money is being spent from the £9 million primary care package within the following district health authority areas:

Mersey RHA
Liverpool
St. Helen's and Knowsley
South Sefton
Wirral

Northern RHA
Gateshead
Newcastle
North Tyneside
South Tees
South Tyneside
Sunderland

North Western RHA
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley

Blackpool Wyre and Fylde
Bolton
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale
Bury
Chorley and South Ribble
Lancaster
Central Manchester
North Manchester
Oldham
Preston
Rochdale
Salford
Stockport
Tameside
Trafford
West Lancashire
Wigan

Trent RHA
Leicestershire
Nottingham
Sheffield
Southern Derbyshire

West Midlands RHA
Central Birmingham
East Birmingham
North Birmingham
South Birmingham
West Birmingham
Coventry
Sandwell
Walsall
Wolverhampton

Yorkshire RHA
Airedale
Bradford
Hull
Leeds Eastern
Leeds Western

South Western RHA
Bristol and Weston

North East Thames RHA
Haringey
Newham
Tower Hamlets
City and Hackney
Islington
Hampstead
Bloomsbury

North West Thames RHA
Brent
Hammersmith and Fulham
Paddington and North Kensington
Victoria

South East Thames RHA
Greenwich
West Lambeth
Camberwell
Lewisham and North Southwark

South West Thames RHA
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton
Wandsworth

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much of the £9 million primary care package was spent centrally.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *602*]: Extra provision for primary health care services in inner cities is spread over the period 1983-84 to 1988-89. In the first two years £85,000 has been spent on centrally funded initiatives. It is estimated that about £1·4 million will be spent on such projects over the whole period.

Income Support

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), how many claimants who currently receive supplementary benefit will receive no help under the new income support scheme;

(2) using the assumptions in paragraph 2·4 of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), how many claimants who now receive housing benefit will receive no help under the new income support scheme;

(3) using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical appendix to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), how many claimants who now receive family income supplement will not be entitled to family credit;

(4) how many families currently receiving family income supplement will not be entitled to family credit, on the basis of the structural reforms proposed in Cmnd. 9691.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people will lose all benefit under the White Paper structural reforms taking 20 per cent. rates contribution into account; what is their client group and family status.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his replies*, 19 December 1985, c. *318*, 20 December, c. *434* and 15 January c. *596*]: Using the illustrative assumptions in the technical annex to the White Paper, the information is as follows:

Decreases in the number receiving income-related benefits ('000 rounded to 10,000)

	Housing benefit	*Supplementary benefit/income support*
Client group		
Pensioners age 80+	20	10
Pensioners age 60-79	290	60
Sick or disabled	10	*
Lone parent	70	*
Couples with children:		
—in full-time work	260	—
—not in full-time work	10	*
Others:		
—in full-time work	100	—
—not in full-time work	50	20
Total	820	90
Family status		
Pensioners:		
—single	130	30
—couples	180	40
Non-pensioners with children:		
—lone parents	70	*
—couples	280	*
Non-pensioners without children		
—single age 25†	90	10
—single age 25	20	10
—couples	50	10
Total	820	90

* Under 5,000.

The figures in the table do not show the net effects of the changes. They take no account of the people — broadly estimated to number more than 150,000 — not now getting supplementary benefit who will qualify for income support, nor of the number—broadly estimated to be rather under 50,000—not now receiving housing benefit who would do so under the new arrangements. Nor do they take account of the fact that, in the case of working families with children, loss of entitlement to housing benefit would often arise because of increased income through the proposed family credit, and would be more than offset by the increased entitlement in that respect.

The number of families now getting family income supplement (FIS) who would not receive family credit is so small — probably under 1,000 — that no reliable estimate is possible. We expect family credit to help about twice as many families as now receive FIS.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 17 January 1986

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers' Pay

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total annual expenditure on wages and salaries of *(a)* primary and secondary teachers, *(b)* university teachers and *(c)* other higher education teachers; and what are the total numbers employed in each group.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is given in the following table. The figures are for 1983-84, the latest year for which data on all the categories is generally available.

	1983-84 (England)	
	*Teacher Numbers ('000's, full-time equivalents)**	*Annual expenditure on wages and salaries†‡ (£ million)*
(a) Primary and secondary teachers	408·8	4,500
(b) University teachers‖ (GB)	30·2	583
(c) Other higher education teachers¶	25·9	426

* Teacher numbers as at January 1984.

† All figures include the cost of employers' national insurance and superannuation contributions.

‡ Expenditure figures are on a financial year basis for *(a)* and *(c)*, and on an academic year basis for *(b)*.

‖ Includes research staff wholly financed by universities, not full-time equivalent.

¶ Polytechnic lecturers and lecturers undertaking advanced further education work in other major establishments of further education.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the net recurrent cost per pupil in nursery schools, nursery classes and primary schools; and what proportion of that cost is attributed to teachers' salaries.

Mr. Chris Patten: The information is as follows:

Schools (Morning Worship)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he proposes to take to ensure that local education authorities comply with their obligations under the Education Act 1944 on morning worship in schools.

Mr. Chris Patten: We have already made it clear in the White Paper, "Better Schools" (Cmnd. 9469) that we look to local education authorities and to the schools to ensure that the statutory requirements are met.

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the extent of non-observance in some schools of the statutorily required daily act of worship; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Information about such matters is not collected centrally; but where complaints are made to my right hon. Friend that the requirements of the Education Act 1944 on collective worship are not being met in a particular school, he obtains details of the circumstances of the individual case.

Pupil Costs

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what is the average cost per pupil of children in (i) maintained primary schools, (ii) maintained secondary schools, (iii) maintained sixth forms, (iv) assisted places pupils up to school leaving age and (v) asisted places pupils after school leaving age for the last five years for which data is available;

(2) what is the average cost per pupil in *(a)* nursery schools, *(b)* nursery classes, *(c)* primary schools, *(d)* secondary schools, *(e)* sixth form colleges and *(f)* special schools for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Dunn: The latest available information is as follows:

Average cost per pupil	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	**1981-82*	**1982-83*	**1983-84*
			(£ Cash England)		
Maintained Schools					
Nursery schools	815	990	1,110	1,140	1,230
Primary schools					
—age classes	430	545	620	680	730
—Nursery classes	520	640	725	795	855
—Ordinary classes	430	545	615	675	725
Secondary schools					
—all pupils	610	770	870	945	1,015
—11-16 pupils	580	730	825	895	965
—16+ pupils	1,025	1,240	1,320	1,435	1,545
Special education	1,930	2,455	2,760	3,060	3,265
Assisted Places					
—all pupils	n/a	n/a	1,098	1,267	1,303

* The maintained school data relate to Financial Years and the assisted places to Academic Years.

(1983-84 £ cash) England

	Total net recurrent cost per pupil	*Teachers' salaries as per cent. of total cost*
	£	£
Nursery schools	1,230	44
Primary schools		
—age classes	730	69
—Nursery classes	855	52
—Ordinary classes	725	70

School Meals

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will publish figures or estimates for each of the last 10 years showing the revenue raised from school meal charges, the subsidy paid on school meals, and the expenditure on free meals at *(a)* cash prices, *(b)* 1984-85 prices and *(c)* indexed, using 1975-76 as the base;

(2) what was *(a)* the total Government expenditure on school meals and *(b)* expenditure on free school meals for each year since 1978-79 to the latest available date, expressed in cash terms, real terms using 1984-85 prices, and indexed using 1978-79 as the base; what was the proportion of the school population receiving school meals during the period; and what was the proportion receiving free school meals.

Mr. Dunn: The information that is available is as follows:

	Total net expenditure (total subsidy)				*Income from charges*			*Estimated subsidy on free meals†*				*Pupils receiving meals*	
	Cash	**Real terms*	*Index*		*Cash*	**Real terms*	*Index*	*Cash*	**Real terms*	*Index*		*Total*	*Free*
	£ *million*	£ *million*			£ *million*	£ *million*		£ *million*	£ *million*			*per cent.*	*per cent*
1975-76	318·4	810·8	100	—	135·1	344·0	100	58·2	148·2	100	—	70·3	9·2
1976-77	382·0	859·6	106	—	129·1	290·5	84	70·6	158·9	107	—	69·4	9·8
1977-78	364·5	720·2	89	—	154·4	305·1	89	96·8	191·3	129	—	61·7	11·8
1978-79	388·4	693·7	86	100	185·3	331·0	96	118·3	211·3	143	100	65·9	13·9
1979-80	421·7	644·5	80	93	205·7	314·4	91	113·9	174·1	117	82	64·1	11·9
1980-81	397·4	511·3	63	74	217·5	279·8	81	124·7	160·4	108	76	48·2	9·9
1981-82	396·6	463·6	57	67	214·0	250·1	73	147·4	172·3	116	82	49·0	11·9
1982-83	411·3	449·1	55	65	210·4	229·7	67	174·8	190·8	129	90	49·4	13·9
1983-84	426·6	445·8	55	64	200·5	209·5	61	199·8	208·8	141	99	51·4	15·9
1984-85	n.a.	—	—	—	n.a.	—	—	n.a.	—	—	—	51·3	17·4

Notes:

* Real terms are the cash figures adjusted to 1984-85 prices using the GDP deflator at market prices.

† The gross expenditure on all meals has been apportioned to free meals for pupils in the ratio of free meals for pupils to total pupil meals.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science which local education authorities do not provide a schools meals service to pupils other than those entitled to a free school meal.

Mr. Dunn: Only three of the 97 LEAs in England do not provide a full primary and secondary school meals service. These are Dorset and Lincolnshire, who supply paid meals only in secondary and special schools; and Hereford and Worcester, whose paid meal service is restricted to special schools.

All three also have self-help groups operating in some primary schools, and in Hereford and Worcester some schools are supplied by commercial catering firms.

Higher Education (Non-standard Entrants)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the proportion of students entering higher education who can be classified as non-standard entrants in each year since 1979.

Mr. Walden: The proportions of home students entering university undergraduate courses in Great Britain and CNAA first degree courses in England who did not have two or more A-level passes or Scottish highers were as follows:

	Percentage
1979	17
1980	17
1981	17
1982	19
1983	18
1984	19

Overseas Students

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the number of overseas students in *(a)* universities, *(b)* maintained sector advanced education, and *(c)* non-advanced further education, for each year since 1974; what was the continental distribution of the intake; and how many completed their course.

Mr. Walden: The numbers of overseas students are given below.

Students from abroad: Great Britain

Thousands

	1974	*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Universities	29·5	32·9	35·6	37·2	38·5	37·7	35·8	34·6	33·3	33·8	34·6
Public sector higher education	12·2	16·8	21·2	22·4	22·1	21·0	19·7	18·6	15·3	13·8	13·6
Non-advanced further education	21·6	26·8	27·7	27·5	27·1	26·6	19·5	11·1	8·1	7·8	7·3

Statistics of the continental distribution of these students could only be provided at disproportionate cost, but figures for individual countries are published by the British Council in its booklet "Statistics of Overseas Students in the United Kingdom" copies of which are in the Library. Statistics for advanced and non-advanced level students from each continent in the maintained sector in England are published in my Department's annual volume "Statistics of Education Further Education" which is also in the Library.

Information on the numbers completing their course is not available.

Open University

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* the value of the Government grant to the Open University for each year since 1971 in *(a)* cash terms, *(b)* at 1984-85 prices and *(c)* using 1971-72 as a base, including and excluding Government loans to the institution.

Mr. Walden: The information is as follows:

Financial year	*Recurrent grant* £ *million*	*Recurrent grant in 1984-85 real terms* (£ *million*)	*Recurrent grant indexed in real terms 1971-72=100*
1971-72	6·63	29·19	100·0
1972-73	7·90	32·23	110·4
1973-74	9·78	37·23	127·5
1974-75	13·86	44·22	151·5
1975-76	16·38	41·57	142·4
1976-77	23·57	52·86	181·1
1977-78	24·15	47·56	162·9
1978-79	29·96	53·33	182·7
1979-80	36·71	55·92	191·6
1980-81	47·13	60·45	207·1
1981-82	51·27	59·79	204·8
1982-83	54·21 (55·21)*	59·07 (60·16)*	202·4 (206·1)*
1983-84	55·72 (56·42)*	58·11 (58·84)*	199·1 (201·6)*
1984-85	58·25 (59·05)*	58·25 (59·05)*	199·6 (202·3)*

* Figures in brackets are based on the inclusion of loans of £1 million, £0·7 million and £0·8 million in 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85 respectively, whereby the Open Universtity could develop its professional industrial and commercial updating (PICKUP) activities.

Class Sizes

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage change there has been in class sizes in the period since 1975 in all types of schools.

Mr. Dunn: The average size of class as taught by all teachers in maintained primary schools in England has decreased by 8·4 per cent. between January 1977—the earliest date for which this information is available—and January 1985. Between January 1975 and January 1985, the corresponding average size of class for secondary schools decreased by 5·7 per cent.

Information about class sizes in nursery, special and independent schools is not collected centrally.

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the latest pupil to teacher ratios for England and for each local education authority including and excluding headteachers, in *(a)* nursery schools, *(b)* primary schools, *(c)* secondary schools, *(d)* special schools and *(e)* sixth form colleges.

Mr. Dunn: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Nursery Education

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the age participation rate in education for the under fives expressed as a percentage of the two, three and four-year old age group.

Mr. Dunn: The percentage of children aged two, three and four years in January 1985 attending maintained nursery and primary schools were 4 per cent., 32 per cent. and 75 per cent. respectively.

Academic Staff (Promotions)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the incidence and nature of promotions of academic staff in universities in the last year for which data are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: The latest information available is of the numbers of full-time, wholly university financed, non-clinical academic staff at universities in Great Britain, who moved to higher grade posts in 1983, as follows:

Post at 31 December 1982	*Post at 31 December 1983*		
	Lecturer or assistant lecturer	*Senior lecturer or reader*	*Professor*
Senior lecturer or reader	—	—	164
Lecturer or assistant lecturer	—	520	9
Other	103	—	—

The number and timing of promotions and questions concerning academic career structures generally are matters for the universities.

Education Support Grants

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about present and planned expediture on education support grants.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend's reply to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) on 19 December 1985 at columns *289-90*.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Overseas Students

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what countries have ceased to receive aid provided for overseas students, in each of the last five years for which data are available.

Mr. Raison: The only country for which aid programme expenditure on overseas students ended during the period 1981 to 1985 was El Salvador, in 1983. No new training awards have been made for the Lebanon since 1984 but expenditure has continued on existing awards.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

R. *v.* Pain, Jory and others

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Attorney-General what was the cost to public funds of the recent case of R. *v.* Pain, Jory and others.

The Attorney-General: The total cost to public funds of an individual trial cannot be ascertained. It comprises numerous elements, some which may be part of the general running costs of the various Government Departments concerned. It is not the practice to publish individual fees payable to counsel or solicitors from public funds, which in any event cannot be ascertained until after taxation of bills of costs.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Probation Statistics

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the average costings of probation orders and community service orders published in the Home Office probation statistics include an appropriate proportion of probation officers' salaries, office costs and other related expenditure.

Mr. Mellor: Yes. The estimation of the average costings is described in paragraph 12.4 on page 115 of "Probation Statistics, England and Wales, 1984", published on 16 January 1986. They include a proportion of all expenditure on the probation service, other than that on the Home Office sponsorship scheme, probation and bail hostels and salaries etc. of probation officers seconded to prison department establishments.

Community Radio

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce the successful applicants for experimental community radio licences.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My right hon. Friend expects to receive a report from the advisory panel on community radio within the next few weeks, and to announce the successful applicants thereafter.

Royal Observer Corps

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is satisfied that in the event of national emergency adequate police protection could be provided for monitoring posts of the Royal Observer Corps.

Mr. Giles Shaw: We are satisfied that the arrangements which have been made and which are regularly exercised would provide adequate police protection.

Registration and Naturalisation

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for *(a)* registration and *(b)* naturalisation he expects to receive in 1986-87.

Mr. Waddington: On present estimates we expect to receive 40,400 applications for registration and 21,600 applications for naturalisation in 1986-87.

Asylum

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to conduct the experiment referred to in paragraph 88 of his response to the report of the Home Affairs Committee on refugees and asylum seekers.

Mr. Waddington: We regret that the pressures on the refugee unit have not yet permitted this experiment to take place, but we hope that it may be possible to conduct it later in the year. In the meantime the necessary preparatory work is in hand.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many decisions on applications for asylum were made in each month since the beginning of 1984;

(2) how many initial applications for asylum have been decided in each month since January 1985; and how many such cases are outstanding at the end of each month;

(3) how many decisions on applications for asylum have been made since his Department's arrears unit was established.

Mr. Waddington: I am arranging for this information to be obtained and shall write to the hon. Member when it is available. It will take some time before the statistics for 1985 are compiled.

Registration and Naturalisation

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria he uses in deciding whether or not to grant registration as a British citizen under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981.

Mr. Waddington: In considering applications under section 4(5) a number of factors are taken into account principally the quality of an applicant's relevant service and his or her personal connections with the United Kingdom.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications under section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 have been *(a)* received, *(b)* granted and *(c)* refused in each year since 1983.

Mr. Waddington: Following is the information requested:

	1983	*1984*	*1985*
Applications received	0	237	221
Applications granted	0	0	1
Applications refused	0	0	1

Special Quota Vouchers

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of heads of households granted special quota vouchers in India in 1985 did not use those vouchers.

Mr. Waddington: Information on special voucher holders accepted for settlement on arrival in the United Kingdom, analysed by the place of issue of the voucher, is not available. The latest available information is for the first three quarters of 1985, when 820 special vouchers were issued worldwide—of which 450 were issued in India—and 840 voucher holders were accepted for settlement on arrival in the United Kingdom. The vouchers are valid for six months and some of those who arrived in 1985 will have had vouchers issued in 1984 and some of those issued with vouchers in 1985 will not arrive until 1986.

Foreign Visitors

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many visitors who were refused entry to Britain in the latest 12 months lodged appeals after removal; and what proportion of these appeals were successful;

(2) how many appeals by husbands and male fiancés from *(a)* India, *(b)* Bangladesh and *(c)* Pakistan against refusals of entry clearance were allowed in the year September 1984 to September 1985;

(3) how many *(a)* wives and *(b)* children from (i) India, (ii) Pakistan and (iii) Bangladesh have had an appeal against refusal of entry clearance to join their husbands or fathers upheld during the year September 1984 to September 1985.

Mr. Waddington: I regret that the statistics available about appeals and their outcome do not enable this precise information to be provided.

Remanded Prisoners

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to end the routine use of police cells to hold remand prisoners.

Mr. Mellor: Police cells are used to accommodate only those prisoners for whom places cannot be found in the appropriate establishments because of industrial action, transport or logistical difficulties or because of a mismatch of prisoners and places causing overloading of one part of the prison system. We do not accept that police cells are used as a matter of routine.

Police Statistics

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total annual expenditure on wages and salaries of the police, and the numbers employed in the police service.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The information requested, in respect of expenditure planned for the financial year 1986-87 in England and Wales, is as follows:

	Expenditure planned for 1986-87 £ million	*Average manpower assumptions*
Police pay and allowances	2,016·7	121,661
Civilians' pay	315·1	*39,882
Traffic Wardens' pay	34·5	4,994
Police cadets' pay	1·8	450

Note

* The civilian figure includes part-time staff on a 2 for 1 basis

On 30 November 1985 there were 120,629 police officers, 39,176 civilians, 4,791 traffic wardens and 374 cadets in the police service in England and Wales.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Apples (Refreshment Department)

Sir John Wells asked the Lord Privy Seal why virtually no English apples were on sale in the Refreshment Department's outlets between October 1985 and January 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Biffen: English apples are always available. The Refreshment Department also buys apples from other countries in its constant quest to satisfy the varied demands of Members.

Photocopying Paper

Sir John Wells asked the Lord Privy Seal why no A4 papers have been available in the main photocopying room below the Chamber of the House for the first two days after the return of the House on 13 January; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: I regret that no stocks of A4 photocopying paper were available on 13 January for the copying machines below the Chamber. I understand that stocks were checked on Wednesday 8 January and found to be adequate; but between then and Friday 10 January the total reserve of some 20 boxes was removed from the store by persons unknown. A fresh supply was ordered as soon as possible after the loss was discovered, and became available on Tuesday 14 January. The Deliverer of the Vote is reviewing the security of photocopying paper stocks as a result of this incident.

ENERGY

Yelland Power Station

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the future of the decommissioned Yelland power station in north Devon.

Mr. Goodlad: I am advised by the Central Electricity Generating Board that work is in hand to ensure the safety of the former power station buildings, and that the possible future development of the site is under active examination.

National Coal Board

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about the current levels of productivity being achieved in the National Coal Board.

Mr. David Hunt: The NCB has recently for the first time in its history achieved average deep-mined productivity in excess of 3 tonnes per man shift. This major improvement since the ending of the strike is a clear demonstration of what can be achieved with determined effort by all those in the industry.

Manley Report

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish in full the Manley report before legislation on the Atomic Energy Authority is debated in the House.

Mr. Goodlad: No—the report itself is a classified internal departmental document, and it is not normal practice to publish confidential advice to Ministers. The conclusions and recommendations of the AEA review report were, however, summarised fully in the press notice issued by the Department on 3 October 1984, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House.

NCB (Compensation Payments)

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) how much has been paid in compensation to Lothian estates/Lothian coal company in each year in relation to pits taken over by the National Coal Board;

(2) what was paid as compensation to Lothian estates/Grange estates/Newtongrange estates and any other interested body when the National Coal Board lease expired in 1982, as a result of the conditions imposed at the time of nationalisation of the coal industry not having been fulfilled.

Mr. David Hunt: These are matters for the National Coal Board, I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

DEFENCE

Captain of the Port (Portsmouth)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he has any plans to privatise the Captain of the Port's facility at Portsmouth;

(2) what investigations have been carried out into the feasibility of privatising the Captain of the Port's facility at Portsmouth.

Mr. Lee: The scope for contracting out marine services tasks generally is under examination as the result of a recent management audit. Our principal aim must be to improve efficiency, while maintaining the operational effectiveness of the services provided. If specific proposals for contractorisation are developed, in respect of Portsmouth or elsewhere, there will be full consultation before decisions are taken.

No specific studies in respect of the Captain of the Port's department at Portsmouth have yet been completed.

HMS Otter

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is satisfied with the progress being made with the refit of HMS Otter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: HMS Otter's refit is proceeding as planned and is on course to complete within the scheduled time.

Royal Dockyards

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the companies which are visiting or have visited the royal dockyards with a view to tendering for commercial management.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Representatives of the following companies are visiting or have visited one or both of the royal dockyards in pursuit of their interest in tendering for the management contracts:

A&P Appledore
Babcock International
Balfour Beatty
British Aerospace
Foster Wheeler
GEC
Hawker Siddeley
Northern Engineering Industries
Plessey
Press Offshore
Seaforth Welding
Taylor Woodrow
Thorn-EMI
Trafalgar House
Tyne Ship Repair
The Weir Group

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Defence what talks have taken place with British Aerospace over the commercial management of the royal dockyards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Discussions on a wide range of issues related to the introduction of commercial management into the royal dockyards have taken place between my Department and all the companies, including British Aerospace, which has expressed an interest in tendering for the management contracts.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those companies originally named as interested in the franchise for the royal dockyards and which have indicated they no longer wish to pursue their interest.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In his statement on 23 July at columns 867-868 my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) the former Secretary of State for Defence gave the names of some companies which had expressed interest in the Government's proposals to introduce commercial management into the royal dockyards. I gave the names of further such companies on 2 December during the Second Reading debate on the Dockyard Services Bill at column 34. Of these companies, Costain and STC have indicated that they no longer have an interest in bidding for the contract to manage the dockyards.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has had any discussions with management at Rosyth dockyard about the possibility of a bid for the franchise management of the dockyard; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have had no substantive or formal discussion with the Rosyth dockyard management on this issue. During my visit to Rosyth on 9 December 1985 I drew the management's attention to developments at Devonport.

GEC–Plessey (Merger)

Mr. Neil Thorne asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the implications for defence procurement of the proposed merger of GEC and Plessey.

Mr. Norman Lamont: [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *610*]: An analysis of the implications for defence procurement of the proposed merger has been made available to the Director General of Fair Trading, who is responsible for providing advice to my right hon. and learned Friend, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on this matter.

WALES

Co-operatives (Job Creation)

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to the number of jobs generated by co-operatives in Wales over the last six years and as to the average cost to public funds of each job.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: My Department does not collect information on a basis that would enable me to answer the question in the form asked. I understand that the Wales Co-operative Centre has data on current employment provided by co-operatives.

Heating and Insulation (Government Funding)

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received calling for additional Government funds to improve heating and insulation in council homes in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Since 1 April 1984 11 representations have been received.

Jobcentres

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many Jobcentres in Wales are open less than five days per week in areas of *(a)* over 20 per cent. unemployment, *(b)* between 15 per cent. and 20 per cent. unemployment and *(c)* up to 15 per cent. unemployment; and if he will specify, in each case, the number of days per week each Jobcentre is open.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Sixteen of the 98 Jobcentres in Wales are open less than 5 days per week. Following is the detailed information.

Job centre	*Days of opening*
TTWA over 20 per cent. unemployment	
Pontlottyn	Tuesday and Thursday
Treharris	Monday to Wednesday
Fishguard	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
Prestatyn	Monday to Wednesday
TTWA 15-20 per cent. unemployment	
Ferndale	Monday, Tuesday and Friday
Caldicot	Tuesday
Blaenavon	Wednesday
Kidwelly	Wednesday
Cymmer*	Tuesday and Thursday
Resolven	Wednesday
Glyn Neath	Tuesday
Garnant	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
Tumble	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
Dolgellau	Wednesday
Abergele	Tuesday and Friday
TTWA under 15 per cent. employment	
Ruthin	Wednesday

* Temporarily closed due to premises difficulties.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Trade Union Representatives (Government Departments)

Mr. Forth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the latest estimates of the numbers of elected representatives in each of the main Government Departments and of the cost of providing paid time off.

Mr. Brooke: The estimates as at 1.6.85 are shown in the following tables. Compared with the position as at 1.6.84, the total amount of paid time off for union business shows a reduction by 35 man years (2·8 per cent.) with a consequential saving (in real terms) of £0·36 million reflecting for the third consecutive year the tighter control and accountability measures introduced by the revised national facilities agreement in 1982.

Civil Service Non-Industrial Union Representatives
Estimates of Numbers and Cost of Paid Time Off for Industrial Relations Duties and Trade Union Activities (as at 1 June 1985)
Table 1—Percentage of Time Off

Department	*Under 5*	*6-10*	*11-20*	*21-30*	*31-40*	*41-50*	*51-60*	*61-70*	*71-80*	*81-90*	*91-99*	*Full Time*
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food	569	54	32	13	4	3	3	1	—	2	—	7
Customs and Excise	357	186	100	16	16	9	11	15	6	7	—	39
Ministry of Defence	904	131	102	37	6	14	12	2	12	1	8	10
Department of Employment Group	1,604	430	199	40	23	11	8	—	—	1	1	11
Department of Environment/Transport	345	93	57	9	4	3	5	5	3	—	—	10
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (inc. Overseas Development Administration)	38	3	21	1	5	—	1	4	1	—	—	8
Department of Health and Social Security	1,480	463	225	83	53	36	28	19	20	43	29	66
Home Office (inc. Prison Department)	812	200	122	43	12	1	5	5	2	4	3	11
Department of Trade and Industry	367	62	48	13	4	3	6	2	2	2	1	6
Inland Revenue	1,808	333	174	41	31	22	5	4	6	2	1	6
Lord Chancellor's Department	49	28	27	10	5	5	2	2	1	—	—	9
Department for National Savings	154	7	5	7	4	1	2	1	1	1	—	13
Property Services Agency (inc. Crown Suppliers)	351	61	27	4	3	1	1	1	—	—	—	3

Department	Under 5	6-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-99	Full Time
Scottish Office (inc. General Register Office (Scotland), Scottish Record Office and Scottish Prison Service)	183	50	17	7	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	8
Other Government Departments	499	127	79	24	11	10	4	4	2	1	3	25
Total	9,520	2,228	1,235	348	181	121	93	65	56	64	46	232

Table 2 Numbers and Cost

Department	Total Number involved	Total Number expressed as whole time equivalent	Cost in Salaries wages and direct benefit (£ million)	Cost as percentage of wage bill*	Total number of non-industrial staff at 1 July 1985
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	688	33	0·40	0·29	10,582
Customs and Excise	762	117	1·31	0·43	25,204
Ministry of Defence	1,239	118	1·27	0·11	94,431
Department of Employment Group	2,328	103	1·17	0·20	53,456
Department of Environment Transport (excluding Property Services Agency)	534	48	0·54	0·22	19,710
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (inc. Overseas Development, Administration)	82	18	0·16	0·07	9,440
Department of Health and Social Security	2,545	316	2·88	0·32	91,825
Home Office (including Prison Department)	1,220	116	1·11	0·21	33,535
Department of Trade and Industry	516	42	0·49	0·29	12,230
Inland Revenue	2,433	125	1·44	0·17	69,858
Lord Chancellor's Department	138	28	0·32	0·31	10,128
Department for National Savings	196	22	0·24	0·37	7,694
Property Services Agency (inc. Crown Suppliers)	452	25	0·33	0·18	15,126
Scottish Office (including General Register Office (Scotland), Seottish Record Office and Scottish Prison Service)	267	21	0·26	0·20	9,576
Other Government Departments	789	82	0·97	0·24	33,193
Total	14,189	1,214	12·89	0·21	495,988

* For 1984 the figures in this column were shown to one decimal point only, and the total figure of 0·2 was 0·225 rounded down.

SCOTLAND

Cormorants

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the number of applications for licences to kill cormorants received in 1984 and 1985; and what was the number granted, the number of cormorants allowed to be killed, the number killed, and, in each case, the location and the reason for the killing.

Mr. John MacKay: The details are as follows:

	1984	1985
i. Applications received	25	37
ii. Licences granted	25	36
iii. No limits were attached to licences issued in 1984; one licence issued in 1985 to the Ythan district salmon fishery board set an upper limit of 100 birds.		
iv. Numbers killed, including provisional figures for 1985, and locations were as shown in the table below.		
v. Licences were issued for the prevention of serious damage to fisheries.		

Loch or River System	Number of Licences		Numbers killed under licence	
	1984	1985	1984	1985
Kyle of Sutherland	nil	1	nil	13
Naver	nil	1	nil	15
Loch Etive	nil	1	nil	nil
Loch Fitty	nil	1	nil	13
Loch Maree	1	1	5	7
Loch Leven	1	nil	107	nil
Lochailort	1	4	1	7
Doon	1	1	22	14
Laggan and Duich	1	1	18	21
Spean	1	1	3	5
Brora	1	1	14	29
South Esk	3	3	4	nil
Spey and Findhorn	1	2	1	1
Nairn	1	1	22	4
Annan	1	3	nil	nil
Awe	1	1	nil	2
Conon	1	2	6	nil
Tay	6	7	272	212
Tweed	2	2	85	19
Ythan	1	1	314	88
Shin	1	nil	12	nil
Helmsdale	nil	1	nil	nil
Total	25	36	886	450

Forth Road Bridge

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to exclude the Forth road bridge approach roads from the responsibility of the Forth road bridge joint board.

Mr. Ancram: No.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what additional income he estimates will be received as a result of his decision to increase tolls on the Forth road bridge.

Mr. Ancram: It is estimated that revenue from tolls will be increased by between £1·2 million and £1·5 million per annum.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland from what date he plans to levy increased tolls on users of the Forth road bridge.

Mr. Ancram: My right hon. and learned Friend will bring the necessary order into effect on a date to be determined after consultation with the Joint Board.

Pesticides

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, under part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, he intends to institute a system of licensing for agricultural contractors for the application of pesticides in respect of forestry.

Mr. John MacKay: I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the question he put to my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which he answered today. The proposals in his reply will take aboard the use of pesticides in forestry.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

North-West

Mr. Pendry asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will provide the names of all those companies in the north-west, or which moved to the north-west, having received Government or European Economic Community grants to maintain or create employment since 1979; and what was the amount of any such grants, the date of payment of such grants, the number of jobs maintained or created by the grant, the specific type of grant paid, the address of the specific plant to which the grant related and, where a move of location had been the purpose of the grant, the previous address of the plant.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I regret that the information the hon. Gentleman seeks is not available in the form requested. Much of it cannot be revealed for commecial reasons and what is available can only be provided at disproportionate costs. However I shall be writing shortly to the hon. Gentleman.

Westland plc

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, further to his statement of the evening of Monday 13 January, what was the time at which he became aware of the contents of the letter sent to the Government by Sir Austin Pearce.

Mr. Brittan: I became aware of the contents of the letter dated 13 January from Sir Austin Pearce to the Prime Minister on 14 January.

Mr. John Morris asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his reply to the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South on 13 January, *Official Report*, column 783, whether he or anyone in his Department saw the Solicitor-General's letter in draft before it was sent, or material upon which the letter was based; and whether he was consulted about the contents of the letter, or its sending, before it was sent.

Mr. Brittan: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to what I said in my speech to the House on 15 January at column 1167-8.

Warship Builders (Privatisation)

Mr. Trotter asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the latest progress in privatising the warship building interests of British Shipbuilders.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State gave his consent today to British Shipbuilders for the sale of Swan Hunter Shipbuilders Ltd. to a management buy-out consortium. British Shipbuilders will receive £5 million partly offset by provision for unavoidable future losses and capital expenditure planned before completion of the sale. In addition British Shipbuilders has accepted a limited contingency liability should redundancies arise.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Forestry Commission Land (Dorset)

Mr. John asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many sales of Forestry Commission land have taken place and Dorset *(a)* in 1984 and *(b)* in 1985; and what, in each year, has been the total area sold.

Mrs. Fenner: The information is as follows:

Calendar year	*Number of sales*	*Total area sold hectares*
1984	7	287
1985	4	144

Pesticides

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, under part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, he intends to institute a system of licensing for agricultural contractors for the application of pesticides.

Mrs. Fenner: I am concerned to ensure that all who apply pesticides on a commercial scale should be appropriately trained in their effective use and in the necessary safeguards for health and the environment.

My Department has therefore proposed, in the consultative document "Pesticides: Implementing Part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985", that there should be a general obligation on all who use pesticides in the course of their business to ensure that they and their employees have received adequate instruction and guidance; and a specific obligation

> "on those whose business is the application of pesticides as a commercial service, that they and their employees involved in the use of pesticides attend an approved training course and obtain certification that they have reached the appropriate standard".

My officials are consulting a range of public agencies and industry representatives on the implementation of this proposal.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food which agency will monitor and provide inspectors for the implementation and enforcement of part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 in England and Wales; and if he will indicate by region and by county how many extra inspectors will be provided.

Mrs. Fenner: I refer the hon. Member to chapter 9 of the consultative document "Pesticides: Implementing Part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985", where we have proposed that a number of different agencies should be responsible for enforcement. The deployment of their resources is a matter for the agencies involved, and I am therefore unable to give the detail requested.

EMPLOYMENT

Disabled People

Mr. Ralph Howell asked the Paymaster General why disabled persons are included in the unemployment count.

Mr. Alan Clark: Disabled people are included in the count of people claiming unemployment benefits because they declare that they are capable and available for work. Some severely disabled people, who could not obtain employment except under sheltered conditions, are included. The severely disabled used to be excluded from the former count at jobcentres and careers offices until October 1982 when they numbered about 23,000; but they are not separately identified at unemployment benefit offices which have been the source of the unemployment count since then.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Alexander asked the Paymaster General what was the number of low-paid male manual workers for each year since 1975 and the proportion of the total work force that they represented.

Mr. Alan Clark: The number and proportion of adult male manual employees with relatively low weekly earnings can be assessed from the tables on the distribution of weekly earnings regularly published in the annual reports on the "New Earnings Survey", table 14 for 1975 to 1981 and table 29 for 1982 to 1985, copies of which are available in the Library.

It is a matter of judgment what levels of relatively low pay are regarded as significant.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Paymaster General how many 16-year-olds entered employment, excluding special training measures, in each of the last 15 years; and what these numbers represent as a percentage of their respective age groups.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information in the precise form requested is not available. The latest available relevant estimates for 1984 and 1985 are shown in the following table:

Young people aged 16 years in Great Britain*

	January 1984		*January 1985*	
	Numbers	*Per cent.*	*Numbers*	*Per cent.*
Total population	895,000	100	870,000	100
of which:				
(a) in full-time education or YTS, or claimant unemployed	745,000	83	740,000	85
(b) other: mainly employed outside YTS†	155,000	17	130,000	15

* Ages as at preceding 31 August.

† Mainly those in employment but excluding those employed under the youth training scheme and including some who were seeking work but not claiming benefit and others who were neither employed nor seeking work—for example, because of domestic responsibilities. This group is obtained by subtracting from the total population of the age group those estimated to be in full-time education or in the youth training scheme and the claimant unemployed.

Similar estimates for 1974-83 are shown in table 5 of Statistical Bulletin 5/85, published by the Department of Education and Science, which is available in the Library. Corresponding estimates prior to 1974 are not readily available.

Wages Councils

Mr. Prescott asked the Paymaster General if he will publish in the *Official Report* an estimate of the number and proportion of workers who would be covered by wages councils if wages council orders ceased to apply to workers under 21 years of age; and if he will provide the same data for each wages council industry.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: About 2·25 million workers will continue to be covered by wages councils following the removal from regulation of workers under 21 years of age. This figure represents about four fifths of the total number covered at present. It is not possible to provide the information requested for individual wages council industries.

Youth Training

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Paymaster General if he will list in the *Official Report* those firms, of which his Department is aware, that pay an additional wage to youth training scheme trainees.

Mr. Trippier: Payments made to youth training scheme trainees in excess of the standard allowances to which they are entitled are a matter for the training providers concerned. Neither my Department nor the Manpower Services Commission maintain a record of the firms who make such payments.

Technical and Vocational Education

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Paymaster General, how many children in each local authority are taking part in the technical and vocational education initiative at the latest date for which data are available, and for the previous year.

Mr. Trippier: 14 local education authorities started projects in 1983, and have therefore had 3 student intakes; 47 further authorities started 48 projects in 1984, with Strathclyde education authority running separate projects in 2 of its divisions; 12 authorities started projects in 1985.

The following figures give the numbers of children taking part in the initiative as at September 1985, with revised totals for September 1984.

Authority	*Position at September 1984*	*Position at September 1985*
Barnsley*	708	1,144
Bedfordshire*	977	1,213
Berkshire	239	489
Birmingham	500	794
Bolton	179	419
Borders	236	534
Bradford*	510	760
Bromley†	—	228
Buckinghamshire	259	494
Bury	197	383
Cambridgeshire	225	460
Cheshire	200	390
Cleveland	214	422
Clwyd*	509	913
Cornwall	286	565
Coventry	259	518
Croydon	235	477
Cumbria	226	448
Derbyshire	236	492
Devon*	554	805
Doncaster	236	484
Dudley	250	498
Dumfries and Galloway	199	429
Durham	259	510
Dyfed†	—	250
Ealing†	—	195
East Sussex	249	502
Enfield*	412	674
Essex	235	498
Fife	232	470
Glasgow‡	238	451
Gloucestershire	271	536
Gwent	250	500
Gwynedd	230	482
Hampshire	323	586
Havering	247	494
Hereford and Worcester*	513	764
Hertfordshire*	606	876
Isle of Wight	265	528
Kent†	—	225
Kingston†	—	243
Leicestershire*	1,007	1,524
Lincolnshire	246	484
Lothian†	—	243
Mid Glamorgan	247	497
Newcastle	239	495
Norfolk	207	438
Northamptonshire	245	496
North Tyneside	253	507
Northumberland	277	550
North Yorkshire†	—	274
Powys	267	492
Renfrew‡	220	442
Richmond	256	504
Sandwell*	1,161	1,491
Shropshire	245	502
Solihull	255	502
Somerset	258	504
South Glamorgan†	—	250
South tyneside	251	520
Staffordshire*	632	946
Stockport	251	502
Suffolk	231	452
Sunderland	240	509
Surrey	262	515
Tameside	256	545
Walsall†	—	250
Warwickshire	216	433
West Glamorgan	247	503
West Sussex†	—	206
Wiltshire†	—	256
Wigan*	450	672
Wirral*	509	766
Wolverhampton†	—	243
Totals 74	20,692	39,656

* 1983 Project
† 1985 Project
‡ Divisions of Strathclyde EA.

Norwood

Mr. John Fraser asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently unemployed in each ward of the Norwood constituency.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following information is in the Library. Figures are given showing the numbers of unemployed claimants in the wards of the Norwood parliamentary constituency as at 12 December 1985.

	Number
Angell	1,976
Gipsy Hill	1,027
Herne Hill	1,369
Knight's Hill	1,024
St. Martin's	1,035
Thurlow Park	442
Tulse Hill	1,918

ENVIRONMENT

Thamesmead Community Trust

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many staff he expects to be transferred from the Greater London council to the new Thamesmead community trust indicating the differing grades involved.

Sir George Young: This information is not yet available. Mr. Thornton, chairman designate of the trust, is still involved in negotiations with the staff and trade union representatives about future staffing levels at

Thamesmead. When these are finalised and endorsed by the board, the trust will make the requisite offers of employment.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what initial office accommodation is to be made available for the new Thamesmead community trust.

Sir George Young: The trust will be able to purchase from the London Residuary Body existing GLC owned office accommodation at Thamesmead. If additional space is needed, it will be for the trust to make provision for it.

Audit Commission

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of the Audit Commission; and what subjects were discussed.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Secretary of State for the Environment last met the chairman of the Audit Commission on 17 October 1985 to discuss future membership of the commission.

Washington Development Corporation

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the names of those persons who have been appointed to the Washington Development Corporation; when he intends to add further names; and when he intends to complete the list.

Mr. Tracey: The terms of office of all members of the board of the Washington development corporation expired on 31 December 1985. So far the following have been re-appointed:

Professor G. McClelland *(Chairman)*
Mr. F. Osborn *(Deputy Chairman)*
Mr. D. Kelly
Mr. S. Wareing (until 31 March 1986).

Steps are in hand to appoint two councillors nominated by Sunderland borough council. My right hon. Friend is currently considering what further appointments to make to the board.

Publicly Owned Land

Mr. Lightbown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what further efforts he is planning to make to bring unused and underused publicly owned land back into full use.

Sir George Young: On 19 November, I announced that directions had been given, under section 98 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, to the owners of 21 sites on the registers of unused and underused public land, requiring them to dispose of their interest in the land. I said then that the Government were determined to maintain the momentum we had built up in bringing surplus land back into use and that further sites which might be suitable for similar directions were being considered.

My right hon. Friend has today given notice under section 99 of the 1980 Act to the owners of another 32 sites on the registers of his intention to direct them to dispose of their interest in the land, unless they are able to satisfy him that there are good reasons why he should not do so. The notices give the owners 42 days in which to make representations to the Secretary of State. A list of the sites, amounting to some 50 hectares (125 acres), has been placed in the Library of the House.

This is the third batch of section 99 notices. As in the past, we hope that issuing the notice will in itself bring about the release of much of the land. Where it does not, we shall not hesitate, if appropriate, to give a direction under section 98 of the Act.

Public bodies owning unused or underused land should take note. They have had ample opportunity to decide how they wish to use such land or to dispose of it on their own terms. If they have no use for the land, the Government are determined that it should no longer lie idle.

North-East Hampshire Structure Plan

Mr. Critchley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will aprove the first alteration to the north-east Hampshire structure plan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have approved this alteration today. I have made a number of technical modifications and a strategic modification to transport policy. I have decided to approve the housing provision proposed by the county council, ie 18,100 dwellings up to 1991. I have had regard both to the demand for housing and to the concern of local people that the quality of life in the area would be harmed by any additional housing provision, and I am satisfied that no increase is justified in this alteration.

Water Authorities

Mr. Robert C. Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list for each water authority the external financing limit set for 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88;

(2) if he will list for each water authority the target rate of return set for 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. John Patten: [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *572*]: Water authorities will be set external finance limits and target rates of return in respect of 1987-88 later this year as part of the normal public expenditure round. The equivalent figures requested for English water authorities for 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 are set out below.

For 1986-87, grants for land drainage and flood protection, totalling some £14 million have yet to be notified to individual authorities.

The Welsh water authority is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

	External finance limits £ million, cash			*Target rate of return per cent*		
	1984-85	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Anglian	60·0	46·0	40·5	1·36	1·62	1·68
Northumbrian	26·0	23·0	20·0	1·25	1·54	1·73
North West	87·0	*84·5	54·0	0·95	1·48	1·50

	External finance limits £ million, cash			Target rate of return per cent		
	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Severn-Trent	40·0	*55·2	2·5	1·25	1·47	1·60
Southern	23·0	11·0	0	0·91	1·43	1·55
South West	11·0	*4·9	4·0	1·25	1·43	1·73
Thames	−34·0	−60·0	−85·0	0·50	1·41	1·61
Wessex	16·0	21·0	25·0	0·61	1·40	1·50
Yorkshire	34·0	31·0	32·0	1·00	1·37	1·60

* Revised from the figures notified to Authorities in January 1985.

Merseyside Residuary Body

Mr. Robert N. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied with the progress being made by the Merseyside residuary body; and if he will make a statment.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 January 1986, c. *679*]: I am satisfied that the Merseyside residuary body has covered much of the groundwork for tasks that need to be completed by 1 April and will continue to make progress on that basis.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why he dismissed Mr. Leslie Pocock as chairman of the Merseyside residuary body.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 January 1986, c. *679*]: I have nothing to add to the announcement I made on 24 December in my Department's news release number 642, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

TRANSPORT

Roads Expenditure

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state (i) actual expenditure in 1984-85, (ii) estimated expenditure in 1985-86 and (iii) planned expenditure in 1986-87 on the reconstruction of *(a)* motorways and *(b)* all purpose trunk roads showing, in each case the number of miles involved.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The renewal of roads, including major renewal schemes, generally involves a combination of reconstruction, overlaying and resurfacing work.

Information about the cost of the reconstruction element alone is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate expense. The following information relates to expenditure on all types of carriageway renewal, including reconstruction:

	Motorway	All-purpose trunk road
1984-85		
Estimated expenditure	£75 million	£42 million
Mileage renewed	80 e.r.m.*	160 s.c.e.m.†
1985-86		
Estimated expenditure	£70 million	£54 million
Mileage to be renewed	70 e.r.m.*	160 s.c.e.m.*†‡
1986-87		
Planned expenditure	£83 million	£59 million
Mileage to be renewed	80 e.r.m.*	185 s.c.e.m.†

* Equivalent route miles; ie the equivalent mileage of dual 3-lane motorway renewed.
† Single carriageway equivalent miles: ie the equivalent mileage of single carriageway, 2 lane trunk road renewed.
‡ The mileage actually achieved will depend greatly upon weather conditions during the remainder of the winter. The final result is likely to be between 135 and 160 scen.

Road Reconstruction Costs

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost per mile at 1985-86 prices of reconstructing (i) dual three-lane motorway, (ii) dual two-lane all purpose trunk road and (iii) single carriageway all purpose trunk road.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The average costs per mile in 1985-86 at 1985-86 prices of reconstruction—that is, the total or partial replacement of a road pavement—are as follows:

	£ million
Dual 3-lane motorway	2·1
Dual 2-lane all-purpose trunk road	1·4
Single carriageway all-purpose trunk road	0·7

The renewal of roads generally involves a combination of reconstruction, overlaying and resurfacing work. Average renewal costs per mile in 1985-86 are as follows:

	£ million
Dual 3-lane motorway	1·0
Dual 2-lane all-purpose trunk road	0·6
Single carriageway all-purpose trunk road	0·3

Great Northern Electric Rail Services

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to introduce private capital into the Great Northern electric rail services.

Mr. David Mitchell: We have told BR that we shall welcome proposals from them for more private sector finance and participation in the development of stations and railway services.

British Airways (Privatisation)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in connection with the privatisation of British Airways, he will introduce legislation defining unacceptable predatory behaviour for application subsequent to the airline entering the private sector.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No. The Civil Aviation Authority has adequate powers to maintain and promote competition including taking action against airlines which act in an anti-competitive or predatory fashion. In addition, the Director General of Fair Trading can investigate and seek to remedy anti-competitive behaviour in domestic and whole plane charter services and refer monopoly questions concerning these services to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry can also refer to the Commission monopoly questions concerning any aspect of civil aviation, including international scheduled services.

Airports (Ground Handling Charges)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to legislate for the deregulation of airport ground handling charges; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The arrangements for ground handling differ widely between airports. Charges for the services provided are a matter for the airport operator, or for the authorised agent and airlines concerned. However, the Airports Bill, published on 16 January, contains proposals whereby the Civil Aviation Authority will have power in this area to remedy charges or trading practices by airport operators that are discriminatory or that represent an abuse of an operator's monopoly.

Aircraft Engine Hush Kits

Mr. Snape asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received from the National Joint Council for Civil Air Transport about the implications for the future competitiveness of British-owned air cargo companies, in the light of the cessation of trading on 3 January of Tradewinds Airways, of the requirement for United Kingdom air cargo operators to fit engine hush kits and of the related exemptions granted to non-United Kingdom carriers; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what assessment he has made of the implications for the international competitiveness of the United Kingdom air cargo industry of his Department's requirement that certain aircraft operated by British-owned carriers must be fitted with engine hush kits from 1 January and of the decision to grant one and two-year exemptions from this requirement to European and non-European airlines, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The decision to exclude from the United Kingdom register from 1 January 1986 subsonic jet aeroplanes not complying with minimum noise standards was taken following an announcement by the previous Administration in the White Paper on airports policy of 1978 (Cmnd. 7084). Over the last seven years most of our airlines have brought their fleets into full compliance with those standards while maintaining or enhancing their competitiveness. As Tradewinds Airways' recent announcement made clear, its decision to cease trading was by no means due solely to the need to fit hush kits to its aeroplanes. The question of granting exemptions to foreign carriers does not arise; international agreements prevent the banning of such aeroplanes before 1 January 1988.

My right hon. Friend is considering representations on these matters from the trade union side of the National Joint Council for Civil Air Transport.

PRIME MINISTER

Legislation (Ministerial Conduct)

Mr. Spearing asked the Prime Minister what instructions she has given and what action she has taken concerning the application and interpretation of the rules governing ministerial conduct, insofar as they relate to Ministers sponsoring Bills covering matters in which they retain a pecuniary interest; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Ministers who are Members of this House are bound, just as any other hon. Member is bound, by the rules of the House governing registration and declaration of any personal interest they may have in business which comes before the House; and these rules of course apply also to Ministers in charge of a Bill.

New Zealand (Nuclear Shipping)

Mr. Wigley asked the Prime Minister whether she has had any discussions with President Reagan or other members of the United States Administration, concerning the implications for the joint United States/United Kingdom naval exercises to be held in the south Pacific later this year, of New Zealand's decision to ban nuclear shipping from New Zealand territorial waters.

The Prime Minister: I have had no such discussions relating to specific exercises but I have talked with President Reagan about the general point.

Written Communications

Dr. Marek asked the Prime Minister what are the circumstances in which Ministers reveal the existence of written communications which the sender has asked not to be revealed.

The Prime Minister: It is not my practice to reveal such communications without permission.

Westland plc

Mr. Spearing asked the Prime Minister what was the time on 13 January when she became aware of the contents of the letter received from Sir Austin Pearce.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 14 January at column 924.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the effect of the Anglo-Irish agreement upon the role and machinery of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As article 2 of the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985 makes clear, the Intergovernmental Conference established under the agreement is within the framework of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council. The other machinery of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council retains its existing functions.

Iraq

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, during the recent visit to the United Kingdom of the Iraqi Foreign Minister, he had any discussions about the possibility of lifting the embargo on the sale of military equipment to Iraq; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: Changes to the current guidelines on the sale of defence equipment to Iraq were not discussed during the recent visit to this country of the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The guidelines remain as outlined in the answer given by my right hon. and learned Friend to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) on 29 October 1985 at column 454.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations were made by Her Majesty's Government to the Iraqi Foreign Minister on recent development in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Mr. Renton: There was no specific discussion of recent developments in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when he next intends to meet the Iraqi Foreign Secretary to discuss political prisoners there;

(2) when he next intends to have talks with the Iraqi Foreign Minister.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend has at present no plans for further meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Iraq.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on current relations between the United Kingdom and Iraq.

Mr. Renton: The United Kingdom has normal diplomatic relations with Iraq. High level ministerial visits are exchanged, and these enable us to improve existing relations whilst providing an opportunity to speak frankly on matters where our views do not coincide. Iraq is also an important and growing market for British exporters.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what matters were discussed when he last met the Iraqi Foreign Minister; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on his recent meeting with the Iraqi Foreign Minister.

Mr. Renton: When my right hon. and learned Friend met the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Iraq on 4 December they discussed a wide range of bilateral and regional issues, including Iran-Iraq, Arab-Israel and the situation in the Lebanon.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps were taken at the recent meetings with the Iraqi Foreign Secretary to seek to ensure an end to human rights violations in Iraq.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. and learned Friend to the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) on 18 December 1985 at column 294.

European Court of Human Rights (Right of Petition)

Mr. Ashby asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government intend to renew the existing rights of individual petition from the Channel Islands or other British dependencies which are parties to the European Court of Human Rights.

Mr. Renton: We are presently seeking the views on this matter of the Channel Islands and the dependent territories on whose behalf we previously accepted the right of individual petition to the European Commission of Human Rights.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Departmental Staff

Mr. Skinner asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the average rate of staff turnover in his Department's inner city offices during each of the past five years.

Mr. Major: Turnover is defined as those staff who leave the Department, change offices within the Department or change grade within an office. The number of staff who leave the Department (wastage) is much lower. Both sets of figures for the last two years are set out in the following table:

	Turnover per cent.	*Wastage per cent.*
December 1983—November 1984	24·4	10·6
December 1984—November 1985	21·3	10·4

This information relates to the grades of clerical assistant, local officer II and local officer I employed in inner city offices.

Obtaining information for earlier periods would be disproportionately expensive.

NHS (Pay)

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many National Health Service employees' take-home pay is less than the level regarded by the Government as the minimum required for subsistence.

Mr. Hayhoe: Information on take-home pay is not generally available. Deductions from gross earnings, such as income tax and national insurance contributions depend wholly on individual circumstances.

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total annual expenditure on wages and

salaries of *(a)* nursing and midwifery staff, *(b)* ancillary staff, *(c)* medical staff and *(d)* ambulance staff; and what are the total numbers employed in each group.

Mr. Hayhoe: The information requested is as follows:

	Staff numbers	*Expenditure (£ million)*
(a) Nursing and midwifery staff	393,700	3,034
(b) Ancillary staff	152,200	937
(c) Medical staff (medical)	36,800	873
(dental)	2,400	47
Total	39,200	920
(d) Ambulance staff	18,100	174

Expenditure is for 1984/85 and includes employers' national insurance and superannuation contributions. Staff numbers are whole time equivalents of permanent paid staff employed in the hospital and community health service at 30 September 1984. Details for both expenditure and staff numbers exclude agency staff and locums.

Family Practitioner Committees (Computer Facilities)

Mr. Kilroy-Silk asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those family practitioner committees which do not possess a computer capable of operating a cervical screening call and recall scheme.

Mr. Barney Hayhoe: The 45 family practitioner committees listed do not possess computer systems capable of operating a cervical screening call and recall scheme.

Berkshire
Bolton
Bradford
Bromley
Bury
Cambridgeshire
Camden and Islington
Cheshire
City and East London
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
Cumbria
Doncaster
Dudley
East Sussex
Essex
Gateshead
Greenwich and Bexley
Hertfordshire
Humberside
Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster
Kingston and Richmond
Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham
Lancashire
Leeds
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth
Newcastle
Norfolk
North Yorkshire
Oldham
Oxfordshire
Redbridge and Waltham Forest
Sheffield
Shropshire
Somerset
South Tyneside
Suffolk
Sunderland
Surrey
Tameside
Trafford
Wakefield
West Sussex
Wolverhampton

Departmental Local Offices

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will state for the inner and outer areas of Greater London, respectively, the approximate turnover of staff in grades of clerical assistant and clerical officer, respectively, in social security offices open to the public, together with maximum and minimum rates of turnover naming the offices concerned;

(2) if he will tabulate for each of his offices in Greater London for the years 1980 and 1985 (a) the numbers of staff, (b) persons in receipt of supplementary benefit and (c) the approximate percentage of (b) arising from retirement pensioners and others, respectively.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state in respect of social security offices in the London boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, and Newham; the number of outstanding single claims, the number of staff vacancies and the number of resignations from clerical grades in the year 1985 set out on a borough office basis.

Mr. Major: The number of *(a)* resignations from clerical grades in the year 1985 and *(b)* outstanding single payment claims at 31 December 1985 is as follows:

London Borough of Hackney	*(a)*	*(b)*
Finsbury Park ILO	23	215
Hackney ILO	7	700
Hoxton ILO	13	400
Shoreditch AO	11	428
Stoke Newington ILO	15	225
London Borough of Tower Hamlets		
Poplar ILO	15	251
Stepney AO	9	70
Hackney ILO	See above	
Shoreditch ILO	See above	
London Borough of Newham		
Canning Town ILO	9	350
Plaistow ILO	16	579
Woodgrange Park ILO	10	90

At 1 January 1986 there were no vacancies at any of the offices listed above.

Disablement Benefit

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether applications for disablement benefit are subject to disproportionate delay when processing the backlog of applications for other types of social security benefit.

Mr. Newton: No. Claims for disablement benefit are given the same priority as claims for any other benefit. However, if the hon. Member has a particular problem in mind I should be very willing to investigate it.

Limited List Prescribing

Mr. Robert Sheldon asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has now received in respect of the change to a limited list for prescribing specific drugs.

Mr. Hayhoe: Since the end of June 1985 we have replied to approximately 2,500 representations about specific drugs; information relating to correspondence received before that date is not readily available.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social services how many single payments to supplementary benefit claimants last year were for a sum, respectively, of less than £10, £10 to £20, £20 to £40, £40 to £60, £60 to £80, £80 to £100, £100 to £150, £150 to £300, £300 to £500, £500 to £800, £800 to £1,000 or greater than £1,000.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Opticians and Ophthalmologists

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many opticians and ophthalmologists have been trained in each of the last five years.

Mr. Hayhoe: I regret that information is not available in the form requested. The table shows the numbers of new opticians who registered with the General Optical Council and the numbers of doctors in training in ophthalmology in National Health Service hospitals.

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Ophthalmic Opticians	244	265	271	277	*
Dispensing Opticians	276	224	192	218	*
Doctors in Training	536	545	535	536	*

* Not available

Notes:

The figures for opticians are United Kingdom figures for years ended 31 December.

The figures for doctors are England and Wales figures at 30 September.

Benefit Claims (Slough)

Ms Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people claimed supplementary benefit in Slough in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1985; and what percentage change that represents;

(2) what was the percentage change in claims made to the Department of Health and Social Security offices in Slough between 1979 and 1985; and what was the percentage change in staff for the same period.

Mr. Major: The table shows the number of claims to benefit received by the Department's office at Slough in 1980—the earliest available figures—and 1985; the percentage changes and the staffing changes. There has been a large number of procedural changes in both contributory and supplementary benefits over this period and therefore the figures for claims and staffing levels are not directly comparable.

	1980	*1985*	*Percentage change*
Sickness benefit	35,787	3,549	−90
Maternity benefit	3,183	2,241	−30
Injury benefit	1,314	—	—
Widows benefit	332	482	+45
Death grant	2,331	2,132	−9
Disablement benefit	134	*	—
Retirement pension	3,939	3,823	−3
Supplementary benefit	12,533	16,994	+36
Staff. Contributory benefit	108	77	−29
Supplementary benefit	113	−29 +35	
Total staff	192	190	−1

* Disablement benefit claims are now handled at a separate specialist benefit office.

"Reform of Social Security"

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) why, in table 16B of the technical annexe to the "Reform of Social Security", the number of lone parent losers broken down by decrease does not equal the figures given for the aggregate total decreased; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will publish a revised version of table 16A and 16B of the technical annex to the "Reform of Social Security" giving precise figures, rather than figures rounded to the nearest thousand; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The estimates in the technical annex are based on data in sample surveys and are, by their nature, approximations. Unrounded figures would give an air of spurious precision without adding to the usefulness of the information. As the technical annex makes clear in paragraph 2·14, numbers of claimants were rounded to 10,000 and, due to rounding, totals do not sum exactly in every case.

McColl Report

Mr. Terry Fields asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to the reply of 19 December 1985, *Official Report*, column *310*, he is yet in a position to state when the McColl report on artificial limb and appliance centres will be published.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 15 January at columns *599-600*.

Board and Lodging Allowance

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for a board and lodging allowance have been made by persons aged under 26 years since 25 November 1985 in the Tyne and Wear area.

Mr. Newton: The Department's local offices do not keep separate statistics on the number of claims for a board and lodging allowance made by persons aged under 26 years. The information is not therefore readily available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Income Support

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much an unemployed single person, aged 24 years and who receives *(a)* heating additions and *(b)* the average amount of single payment per annum will lose in benefit following the introduction of income support, using the assumptions in paragraph 2·4 of the technical annex of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), and calculated on (i) a weekly and (ii) a yearly basis.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *317-8*]: As paragraph 1.45 of the White Paper makes clear, no one then on supplementary benefit would lose cash income at the point of introducing the new scheme because transitional protection will ensure that income support will make up weekly cash income to at least the same level as supplementary benefit did before the change.

I assume however that the hon. Member is seeking information about the underlying entitlement in the cases he postulates. Since two thirds of single unemployed people aged 24 are non-householders, and therefore most unlikely to be receiving a heating addition but likely to be receiving a non-householder addition, any meaningful comparison must look at householders and non-householders separately.

Assuming a basic rate heating addition and average water rates, the current supplementary benefit entitlement of a single 24-year-old unemployed householder would be £33·10; while that of a single 24-year-old non-householder receiving the non-householder addition would be £27·50. In either case, on the illustrative figures contained in the technical annex, the income support rate would be £24. Thus the change in underlying entitlement would be £9·10 a week (£470 a year) for the householder with the heating addition and £3·50 a week (£180 a year) for the non-householder with the housing addition.

These calculations take no account of single payments, since the income support scheme is concerned with weekly payments of benefit.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how much a 60 to 79-year-old single pensioner who currently receives *(a)* diet, *(b)* clothing, *(c)* heating additions and *(d)* the average single payment help will lose under his new income support scheme, using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd 9691);

(2) how much a pensioner couple who both currently receive *(a)* diet, *(b)* clothing, *(c)* heating additions and *(d)* the average single payment help and are aged between 60 and 79 years will lose under his new income support scheme, using the assumptions in paragraph 2.4 of the technical annex of the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd 9691).

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 19, December 1985, c. *317-318*]: As paragraph 1.45 of the White Paper makes clear, no one then on supplementary benefit would lose cash income at the point of introducing the new scheme because transitional protection will ensure that income support will make up weekly cash income to at least the same level as supplementary benefit did before the change.

I assume however that the hon. member is seeking information about the underlying entitlement in the cases he postulates. Assuming the basic rate additions for heating and diet, the estimated average clothing addition, and average water rates, the current supplementary benefit entitlement for those between 60 and 79 is £43·35 for a single pensioner householder, £65·85 for a pensioner householder couple, £38·35 for a single pensioner non-householder and £68·35 for a pensioner non-householder couple. On the illustrative figures of the technical annex, income support rates in such cases would be £40·60 for a single pensioner and £63·25 for a pensioner couple receiving the lower pensioner premium, and £42·85 for a single pensioner and £65·45 for a pensioner couple receiving the higher pensioner premium — factors associated with ill-health or disability are among qualifying conditions for the clothing addition referred to by the hon. Member. Thus the difference between the two schemes would range from an increased underlying entitlement of £4·50 a week for a single pensioner non-householder receiving the higher income support premium to a decreased underlying entitlement of £2·75 a week for a single pensioner householder receiving the lower income support premium. No account is taken in these calculations of single payments, since income support is concerned only with regular weekly payments.

It is estimated that fewer than 1 per cent. of pensioners currently receive the combination of additions mentioned in the question.

Supplementary Benefit (Statistics)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what was the number and rate per 1,000 of the population of people on supplementary pension *(a)* nationally *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region for each year 1979 to the latest available date;

(2) what was the number and rate per 1,000 of the population of people on supplementary benefit *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in each social security region and *(c)* in each standard economic planning region for each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 December 1985, c. *321*]: The information for Great Britain as a whole is as follows:

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary pension (000s)	2,046	1,981	2,039	2,098	1,925
Rate per 1,000 of the pensioner population	214	204	207	212	195
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary benefit* (000s)	4,370	4,863	6,121	7,070	7,238
Rate per 1,000 of the total population	80	89	112	129	132

As information on population is not available for all social security regions and information on supplementary benefit recipients is not available for all standard regions, comparative rates are available only for England, Wales and Scotland as follows:

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
England					
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary pension (000s)	1,756	1,709	1,752	1,814	1,654
Rate per 1,000 of the pensioner population	209	203	208	215	196
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary benefit* (000s)	3,652	4,092	5,144	5,939	6,088
Rate per 1,000 of the total population	78	87	110	127	130
Wales					
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary pension (000s)	117	108	113	111	109
Rate per 1,000 of the pensioner population	220	203	212	209	205
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary benefit* (000s)	267	290	370	426	437
Rate per 1,000 of the total population	95	103	131	152	156
Scotland					
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary pension (000s)	173	164	174	173	163
Rate per 1,000 of the pensioner population	196	186	196	196	185
Numbers of claimants and dependants on supplementary benefit* (000s)	451	482	608	705	713
Rate per 1,000 of the total population	87	93	117	136	138

* Includes supplementary pensiners.

Source:

Benefit/pension figures: Annual Statistical Enquiries

Population figures: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Pensions

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish versions of tables P1 to P6 of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), showing projections based on current state earnings-related pension scheme provisions;

(2) if he will provide the figures, for all the cases analysed in tables P1 to P6 of the technical annex to the "Reform of Social Security", published 16 December 1985, for an unmodified state earnings-related pension scheme on the same basis as those quoted for a modified state earnings related pension scheme.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his replies*, 19 December 1985, c. *320*, and 16 January 1986, c. *596*]: The following table gives the information requested. Amounts illustrated are total weekly state basic and earnings-related pensions assuming no change in the present scheme. All other assumptions are the same as those used and explained on pages 1 and 2 of the technical annex to the White Paper.

Age in 1988 and earnings levels	*Table number in the technical annex to the White Paper*					
	P1	*P2*	*P3*	*P4*	*P5*	*P6*
16 low earner	83	83	60	60	*	*
middle earner	126	126	80	80	*	*
high earner	161	161	110	110	*	*
20 low earner	81	81	59	59	99	99
middle earner	121	121	78	78	146	146
high earner	154	154	106	106	146	146
30 low earner	75	75	56	54	90	88
middle earner	110	110	72	69	131	131
high earner	138	138	96	91	131	131
40 low earner	70	68	52	49	77	73
middle earner	100	100	67	60	118	118
high earner	124	124	87	77	118	118

* Amounts were not shown for these cases in tables P5 and P6 of the technical annex.

District Health Authorities

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether any district health authority chairman has expressed concern to him in discussions about the scope for efficiency savings in the current year and 1987; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether any district health authorities have made any representations to him about the scope for savings in cost improvement programmes in 1986-87 compared with 1985-86.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1986, c. *600-1*]: Any discussion about the scope for future cost improvement normally takes place at regional level, since regional health authorities are required to put forward an overall programme. Three district health authorities have however discussed the scope for increased programmes in 1986-87 with Ministers, in the context of wider issues.

Radiation (Studies)

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the studies being undertaken by the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment particularly relating to the incidence of leukaemia and lymphatic cancer in young

people living close to the royal ordnance factory, Burghfield and atomic weapons research establishment, Aldermaston will be made public; and when he expects the committee to report.

Mr. Hayhoe [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 January 1986, c. *700*]: Yes, the committee's findings on the incidence of leukaemia and lymphatic cancer in young people living close to the royal ordnance factory, Burghfield and atomic weapons research establishment, Aldermaston will be published but it is too early to predict when the committee will complete its deliberations.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 89**

SESSION 1985-86

16th December 1985—17th January 1986

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc., between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There will, however, be headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one will find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc., under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speakers rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc.* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R=first reading, 2R=second reading, Money res=money resolution, Com=Committee stage, Rep=Report stage, 3R=third reading, amendt/amendts=amendment/amendments, *=matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

Abortion deaths 81-4w
Scotland 63-4w

Access to buildings
Mobility of disabled 655-6w

Accidents
Channel tunnel 758

Accounting
Johnson Matthey 649w

Acid rain 548-9w
Freshwater fish 544-5w
Merrick 548-9w
Scotland 549w
Water 549w

Action on Smoking & Health 429w
Dept of Health & Social Security 429w
Government grants 428w, 429w

Acute beds 558w
Hospital waiting lists 558w

Adjournment debates
Speakers rulings & statements (16.12.85) 132-3, (20.12.85) 748, (15.01.86) 1186

Adjudication officers 79w, 499w

Adley, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1272, 1273, 1292-5
Members interests (17.12.85) 226, 229, 245-6, 251
Oral question time point of order (17.12.85) 157-8
Oral questions, Members attendance (18.12.85) 345
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 786
Questions
Buses, Speed governors 757-8
Coal mining, Industrial disputes 29w
Drug abuse, Heroin 132w
Drug crimes, Malaysia 569w
Employment, Manufacturing industries 398w
Hong Kong, Nationality 584w
London docklands railway, Private sector 764
NATO 564w
Railway electrification, Dorset 44w
South Africa, Ministers visits abroad 284-5
Westland helicopters, Avionics 243-4w
Westland helicopters, Company finance 347w
Westland helicopters, Foreign investment in UK 451w

Administrative costs
Departmental forms 154w
Entry clearances 640w

Administrative delays
Cervical cancer 325w, 500w, 501w, 699w
Departmental forms 154w
Enterprise allowance scheme 56-7w
Export credit guarantees 1060-1
Handicap benefits 738w
House of Commons Select Committees 691w
Pensions 75w
Severe disablement allowance 499w
Social security appeals tribunals 79w
Social security payments 75w
Unemployment benefits 397w

Adoption
Disclosure of information 700w
Ministers correspondence 700w

Adult education
Unemployed 644-5w

Advanced gas-cooled reactors
Nuclear power stations 30-1w

Advertising
Dept of Trade & Industry 23w
Home Office 275w

Advertising agencies
Dept of Health & Social Security 411-4w
Dept of Trade & Industry 21-3w

Advertising codes of practice
Tobacco industry 434w

Advisory Conciliation & Arbitration Service
Teachers 147

Advisory services
AIDS 70w, 71w
Exports 203-4w

Aerospace industry 632w
Airbuses 451-2w
EC countries 452w
Exports 632w
Helicopters 137w, 526w
International cooperation 517-8w
Manpower 636-7w
USA 517-8w

Affray (13.01.86) 792-869

Afghanistan (20.12.85) 681-90
Foreign policy 204w

Africa
Debts 308-9w
Democracy 208w
Food aid from EC 329w
Overseas aid 770

African National Congress 293
Foreign relations 294
South Africa 285
Violence 285

Agricultural advisory services 16-7, 59-60w
Scotland 16-7, 18, 59-60w

Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 279-80w, 280-1w
Civil service manpower 279-80w
Income 280-1w

Agricultural land
Cereals 554-5
High technology parks 559
Land use 558-9

Agricultural policy 278w

Agricultural production
Cereals 276w, 561
Pulses & seeds 277w

Agricultural research 210-1w
Crops 2w
Public appointments 336w
Research finance 771
Scotland 59-60w

Agricultural subsidies
Cereals 551-2w

Agricultural support systems
Highlands & Islands Development Board 294-5w

Agricultural surpluses
Cereals 276w, 553-4
Common agricultural policy 551w
Intervention stocks 551w

Agricultural & Food Research Council 336w

Agriculture
Government grants 266-7w
Northern Ireland 266-7w
Overseas aid 769
Sudan 772

Agusta
Company finance 533w
International cooperation 529w, 610w

Agusta helicopters 530-1w, 531-2w, 535w
Defence procurement 530w

Aid financed trade
Development aid 770
Soft loans 585w
Water treatment 770

AIDS 63w, 70w, 71w, 72w, 170w, 326w, 427w, 494w, 556-7w
Advisory services 70w, 71w
Armed forces 212w
Blood 326w
Death 70w
Departmental coordination 556w
Departmental publications 70w
Discrimination 71w
Disease control 72w
Government grants 427w
Haemophilia 70w
Health education 71w
Health service staff 556-7w
Medical research 71w
Patients 494w
Preventive medicine 63w
Prison medical services 170w
Research finance 71w
Scottish health boards 63w

Aids for handicapped
Bettman Centre 493w
Blind 411w
Local government social services 493w

Air force 101w
Armed forces discharges 381-2w
Armed forces retirement 382-3w, 383-4w
Armed forces training 564w
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 213w
Jet aircraft 384w
Military aircraft 247w
Military police 213w
West Germany 381-2w

Air force bases
Armed forces deployment 538w
Public buildings 522w

Air freight transport
Aircraft noise 733-4w
Trade competitiveness 733-4w

Air pollution
Consultation papers 259w
Sulphur dioxide 3, 545w

Air transport 477w
Bilateral treaties 47w

Air buses
Aerospace industry 451-2w
Government assistance 634w

Aircraft
Fire prevention 582w
Fire resistant materials 582w
Safety measures 581-2w

Aircraft noise
Air freight transport 733-4w

Aircrew
Armed forces discharges 99-101w
Armed forces retirement 99-101w
Armed forces training 99w, 101w

Airedale
Road construction 763-4

Airlines
International Monetary Fund 593w
Shares 478w

Airport security 630w
Manchester Airport 569w, 578w
Military exercises 521-2w

Airports
Fees & charges 733w
Privatisation 478w
Public buildings 167w

Airports Bill 1985/86
1R (16.01.86) 1239

Airspace
Nicaragua 283

Aish & Company 214w, 215w

Aitken, Mr Jonathan
Questions
Business statement 1219

Alcoholic drinks duties
Tax yields 361w

Alcoholism & crime 457w

Alexander, Mr Richard
Questions
Manual workers, Low pay 726w
Petroleum exploration 26w
Soft loans, Aid financed trade 585w
Teachers, Pay 146

Alley, Eric 177-8w
Civil defence 177-8w

Almeida Theatre (20.12.85) 731-7

Alternative energy
EC Energy Council 10
Energy conservation 5
Energy research 4, 634w
Research finance 10

Alton, Mr David
Debates etc
Housing cooperatives (20.12.85) 745-8, 751
Members interests, Business statement (17.12.85) 176
Questions
Business statement 577
Cervical cancer, Screening 572
Financial institutions, City of London 360w
Food labelling 355-6
House of Commons Select Committees 291-2w
Nuclear weapons tests, National Radiological Protection Board 906
Plessey, Mergers 179w
Student grants 147-8
Trident missiles 246w
UNESCO 179w

Amber valley 289w, 322-3w, 509w
Health service staff 322-3w, 509w
Hospital waiting lists 322w
Hospitals 323w
Pupil-teacher ratios 289w

Ambulance services
Pay 161w
Scotland 161w

Amenity beds
Income 314-6w
NHS & private practice 311w
Regional health authorities 314-6w

Amess, Mr David
Debates etc
Hospital radio (18.12.85) 378-80
Sunday trading, Public petitions (19.12.85) 663
Questions
Horses, Animal welfare 281-2w
Local government expenditure, Basildon District Council 922
Rate limitation, Appeals 465w

Amnesty International
Torture 363-4w

Ancient monuments
Governments grants 678w
Mary Rose 678w

Ancram, Mr Michael, Parliamentary Under Secretary Scottish Office
Debates etc
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 85-7
Planning inquiries, Dounreay (14.01.86) 1053-6
Questions
Acid rain 548-9w
Acid rain, Scotland 549w
A92, Expenditure 162w
A92, Road works 61w
Building industry, Scotland 61w
Bypasses, Scotland 61-2w
Council house waiting lists, Waiting lists 482w
Forth road bridge, Joint boards 723w
Forth road bridge, Road tolls 566w, 723w
Gardens, Scotland 357w
Motorways, Lighting 292w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Dounreay 109-10w
Rate support grants, Lothian Regional Council 615w
Road works, Scotland 352-3w

Anderson, Mr Donald
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 337-8
Questions
Customs, Prosecutions 361w
Cycleways, Public footpaths 19w
Export controls, Machine tools 361w
Lesotho, South Africa 924
Middle East, Peace negotiations 288
Severn bridge, Road tolls 757
South Africa, Mandela, Nelson 286
Zimbabwe, Foreign relations 200w

Anderson, Martina 342w

Anglian Water Authority 463w, 656-62w

Anglo-Irish Agreement 4w, 132w, 265w, 735w
International conferences 4w
Ministers 4w

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 735w

Angola
Peace negotiations 133w

Animal experiments 173-4w
Animal cruelty (15.01.86) 1078-81

Animal feed
Cattle 541-2w
Intervention stocks 553-4

Animal husbandry
Antibiotics 485-6w
Drugs 613w

Animal welfare 347-8w
Codes of practice 560
Horses 281-2w
Anniversaries Okehampton Bypass 371w, 407w

Annual reports 17w, 649w, 1068-9
Hong Kong 133w
Johnson Matthey 649w
Nature Conservancy Council 17w

Annual reports, Specific cases 133w

"Annual Review of Agriculture, 1986" 543w

Antibiotics
Animal husbandry 485-6w
Veterinary medicine 485-6w

Antidumping
Costs 589-90w
Evidence 589-90w

Antrim, East
By-election writs (17.12.85) 139

Antrim, North
By-election writs (17.12.85) 140

Antrim, South
By-election writs (17.12.85) 140

Apartheid
Economic sanctions 1074

Appeals
Limited list prescribing 421-2w
Rate limitation 465w

Apples
House of Commons catering 716w

Apralan
Cattle diseases 283w

Arab boycott
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 291
Israel 33w

Arab states
British residents abroad 192w, 203w
Christmas 203w
Prisoners 192w
Women 208w

Archaeology
International conferences 148-9

Archbishop of Canterbury 521w

"Archbishop of Canterburys Commission on Urban Priority Areas Report" 521w

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985 (16.01.86) 1332-3

Architectural conservation
Diorama 655w

Area manpower boards 400-4w

Areas of deprivation 467w

Argentina
Diplomatic relations 198w, 199w
Fishery agreements 364w
Foreign policy 199w
Overseas trade 199w
Peace negotiations 198-9w

Armed forces deployment
Air force bases 538w

Armed forces
AIDS 212w
Hospital catering 373w, 374w
Schools 917
Vocational guidance 918
West Germany 211w

Armed Forces Bill 1985/86
Motion relating to Select Committee (16.12.85) 127
House of Commons Select Committee (20.12.85) 744

Armed forces catering services
Armed forces civilians 373w
Hospital catering 373w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 373w

Armed forces civilians
Armed forces catering services 373w
Navy 374-8w
Pay 523w

Armed forces deployment
Army reserves 916
Bolton 96w
Bury 96w
Heathrow 521-2w
Navy 215w
9 Signal Regiment 379w, 525w
South Africa 212w
US bases 538w
USA 205w

Armed forces discharges
Air force 381-2w
Aircrew 99-101w
14 Signal Regiment 99w, 215w
9 Signal Regiment 99w, 215w, 524w, 525w
13 Signal Regiment 523w, 524w

Armed forces officers
Criminal investigation 525w

Armed forces pensions
Costs 96w
Widows 246w

Armed forces retirement
Air force 382-3w, 383-4w
Aircrew 99-101w

Armed forces storage depots 374w
Navy 374w

Armed forces strength
Bolton 522-3w
Bury 522-3w
Vocational guidance 917
14 Signal Regiment 101-2w
9 Signal Regiment 101-2w

Armed forces training
Air force 564w
Aircrew 99, 101w
Army reserves 916
EL Salvador 202w, 525w
Honduras 525w
Morocco 212w
RAF Cranwell 99w, 101w
RAF Finningley 101w
RAF Shawbury 99w
RAF Valley 99w
South Africa 523w
Ulster Defence Regiment 102w

Arms control 203w
USA 199w

Arms embargoes
Chile 199w
Iraq 735w
Israel 206w
South Africa 134w

Arms trade
International cooperation 535w
Morocco 134w
South America 589w

Armstrong, Robert 520w

Army
Fox hunting 379-80w, 536-7w, 538w
Horses 536w, 537w

Army in Northern Ireland 265-6w

Army reserves
Armed forces deployment 916
Armed forces training 916

Arnold, Mr Tom
Questions
Civil service manpower, Dept of Health & Social Security 414-6w

Arrests
Monteith, Billy 343w

Artificial insemination
Clinics 325w

Artificial Limb & Appliance Centres Review 310w, 600w, 740w
Disclosure of information 600w

Arts Council
Arts finance 512w
Parks 512w
Recreation spaces 512w
South Bank 512w

Arts Council grants
Concert Halls 304-5w

Arts finance
Arts Council 512w
Greater Manchester 189w
Local government reform 189w, (20.12.85) 731-7
South Bank 512w

Asbestos
Brakes 407w
Heating 371w

Asbestos stripping 371w
Housing investment programmes 371w

Ashby, Mr David
Debates etc
Juries (18.12.85) 416, 420, 421-3, 425
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 798
Questions
European Court of Human Rights, British dependent territories 736w
Fires, Coal mining 1205

Ashdown, Mr Paddy
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 945, 961-4, 1015
Members interests (17.12.85) 242-5
Private notice questions (16.12.85) 46
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 38, (13.01.86) 780 (15.01.86) 1099, 1110, 1116, 1119, 1131-5
Questions
Health service staff, Low pay 736w
Helicopters, International cooperation 535w
Indirect taxation, Family income 306-7w
Lloyds of London, Members interests 1057-8
Local authorities, Non-domestic rates 570w
Nuclear accidents, Hinckley Point B 30-1w
Nuclear accidents, Information 249w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Nuclear accidents 549w
Nuclear safety, Scotland 64w
Planning appeals, Hypermarkets 13w
Strategic defence initiative, Computer applications 910-1
Strategic defence initiative, Technical assistance 560w
Westland helicopters, Defence contracts 535w

Ashford Detention Centre 623-4w

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1367, 1370-2
Questions
Business statement 576, 1215
Child patients, Mental hospitals 702w
Criminal injuries compensation 131w
Debendox, Drug side effects 498-9w
Food additives, EC law 276w
Food labelling, Food additives 556
NHS complaints 232w
NHS complaints, Clinical judgements 231w, 232w, 233w
Special schools, School governors 119w
Vaccine damaged children, Compensation 157w

Ashton, Mr Joseph
Questions
Health education, Nutrition & health 121w

Asian Development Bank (Extension of Limit on Guarantees) Order 1985 (13.01.86) 791

Asset stripping
National Bus Company 760

Assisted areas
North West region 139-40w

Assisted places scheme
Cost per pupil 708w
Income distribution 643-4w

Associated British Foods 243w, 252w
Company accounts 243w
IRA 252w

Association of British Chambers of Commerce 587w
Trade promotion 587w

Association of Chief Police Officers 126-7w
Codes of practice 126-7w
Ministerial responsibility 127w

Association of Metropolitan Authorities 6-7w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit 6-7w

Association of University Teachers 148-9
World Archaeological Congress 148-9

Atkins, Rt Hon Sir Humphrey
Questions
Lloyds of London, Fraud 346-7w

Atkins, Mr Robert
Questions
British Aerospace, Profitability 156
Defence attaches 608-9w
European fighter aircraft, International cooperation 909
Export promotion, Government grants 1060
London docklands railway, Stolport 755
Middle East, Foreign policy 193w
Public transport, Local government expenditure 404-6w

Atkinson, Mr David
Debates etc
Afghanistan (20.12.85) 681-4
Questions
Inflation 650w
Nuclear weapons, Nuclear fuel cycle 561w

Atkinson, Mr Norman
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 325
Questions
Civil disorder, Metropolitan Police 172-3w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority 230-1w

Atomic Weapons Research Establishment
Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment 744-6w
Radiation hazards 372w

Attendance allowance
Handicapped children 598-9w

Attorney-General
Government departments 567-8
Security 446w

Audit
Family practitioner committees 154w, 607w

Australia
Nuclear weapons tests 159w, 160w, 216w, 561w, 629w

Automatic credit transfer 228w
Post Office 228w

Autumn Statement
Northern Ireland 267-8w

Average earnings
Confederation of British Industry 585w
Inflation 650w
Marginal tax rates 1194
Men 300-1w
Nurses 1199
Pensions 319-20w
Women 3001-w

Avionics
Westland helicopters 243-4w

Avon bridge 630-1w

A1 478w
Road construction 478w

A13 561w

A19
Road works 297w

A40 44w
Construction costs 44w
Road construction 44w

A41
Bypasses 477w
Orders & regulations 477w

A45 295w
Road traffic 295w

A92 162w
Expenditure 162w
Road works 61w, 162w

A127 295-6w
Road accidents 295-6w
Road safety barriers 295-6w

A320 Airbus 632w
Government assistance 632w

Badgers & Bovine Tuberculosis (No 2) Review 579w

Baker Review see Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 Independent Review

Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth, *Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Ministerial statements (18.12.85) 310-30
Questions
Housing revenue accounts, Surpluses 664-70w
Housing subsidies, Expenditure 663-4w
Local government expenditure, Greater London Council 219w
Local government reform, Local government finance 222-3w
Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 663w
North East Hampshire structure plan 730w
Ordnance Survey, Management 104-5w
Property Services Agency, Berkshire 669-72w
Public participation in planning, Disclosure of information 369w
Rate equalisation, Greater London Council 108w
Rate limitation, Local government expenditure 219w

Baker, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 950, 963
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1117
Questions
Diplomatic service, Trade promotion 297-8
Hill Kestrel Communications, Fraud 540w

St Edward, Bones 540w

Baking industry
Staffordshire 636w
Working hours 635-6w

Baking Industry (Hours of Work) Act 1954 635-6w

Balance of trade
Japan 590w
Manufactured goods 452-3w, 587w
USA 452-3w, 520-1w

Baldry, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 173-4
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 308-9
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 188
Questions
Argentina, Peace negotiations 198-9w
Book piracy 1067-8
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 27w
Common agricultural policy, EC reform 278w
Emergency planning, Royal Observer Corps 714w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 291-2
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w
Unemployment 190w

Bangladesh
Immigrants 625w
Immigration controls 623-4w
Visas 624w

Bank loans
Bank of England 1193

Bank of England 652w
Bank loans 1193
Banking supervision 1191-2
Commercial bills 362w
Financial institutions 359w
Own resources 359w

Banking Act 1979 309w
Banks 309w

Banking supervision (17.12.85) 159-67, 649w, 1068-9, 1191-2
Bank of England 1191-2
Johnson Matthey 649w
Ministerial statements (17.12.85) 159-67
Public appointments 1193

"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 159-67

Banks
Banking Act 1979 309w
Financial institutions 309w
Trustee savings banks 363w

Banks Colliery
Standing Order No 10 applications (17.12.85) 175

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Homelessness, Greater London (20.12.85) 700-4, 708-9
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 320
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Trade & Industry 23w
Advertising, Home Office 275w
Arts Council, Arts finance 512w
Arts Council, Recreation spaces 512w
Blackwall tunnel, Repairs & maintenance 480w
Central America, EC external relations 191w
Civil defence, Government grants 272-3w
Civil defence, Government grants to local authorities 272-3w
Civil defence, Local authorities in Scotland 293w
Civil defence, Scotland 292-3w, 483w
Civil defence, Training 272w
Concessionary fares, London boroughs 478w
Crimes of violence, Women 275w
Crown lands & estates, Diorama 655w
Drug crimes, Greater London 459w
Duty solicitors, Greater London 446-7w
Early warning systems, Chemical weapons 462w
Fayed, Mohammed 628w
Greater London Council, Redundancy 564-5
Heathrow, Armed forces deployment 521-2w
House of Fraser, Mergers 634w
Local government expenditure, Greater London Council 366-9w, 470w
Local government reform, County Hall 369w
Local government reform, Departmental leaflets 469w
Local government reform, Greater London Council 468-9w
Local government reform, Greater London Council Research Library 469w
Local government reform, London boroughs 677w
London Docklands Development Corporation, External financing limits 472w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Property transfer 471-2w
London docklands railway, Employment 471-2w
London docklands railway, Manpower 679w
London Residuary Body, Finance 677-8w
Metropolitan Police, Councillors 459w
Metropolitan Police, Police training 460w
Metropolitan Police, Ports 459w
Police custody, Prevention of Terrorism Acts 459-60w
"Public Order Law White Paper" 460-1w
Road traffic control, Talgarth road 490w
Social security benefits, Newham 496w
South Bank, Arts finance 512w
South Bank, Local government reforms 512w
South Bank, Managers 512w
South Bank, Pulford, Richard 512w
South Bank Board, Pay 512w
United Kingdom Warning & Monitoring Organisation 274w

BAOR
Costs 211w

Barnett, Mr Guy
Debates etc
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 207-10
Questions
Teachers, Industrial disputes 143
Woolwich ferry, Local government reform 406-7w

Barnsley
Coal mining 53w
Glass industry 53w

Barron, Mr Kevin
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 828

Basildon District Council 465w, 922
Local government expenditure 922
Rate limitation 922

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Questions
Business statement 579

Baton rounds
Metropolitan Police 171-2w

BBC 626w
Income 626w
Television advertising 626w, 636w

BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review 627w

BBC external services
Electromagnetic interference 206w
Satellite broadcasting 206w
Television 206w

Beaches
Sea pollution 223-8w

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 166
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 434, 437-9, 444
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1007
Members (18.12.85) 364
Members interests, Liberal Party (18.12.85) 343, 344
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 322
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 44, (13.01.86) 784
Questions
Japan, Foreign relations 205w
Nimrod aircraft, Defence contracts 913

Beckenham Hospital (20.12.85) 738-44

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 168-9
Questions
Dept of Health & Social Security, Public appointments 504w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Health & Social Security 595-6w
Family credit, Social security claims 495w
Housing benefits, Social security benefits rules 503-4w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 410-2w
Invalid care allowances 701-2w
Invalid care allowances, Costs 701w
Invalid care allowances, European Court of Justice 701w
Invalid care allowances, Married women 701w
Severe disablement allowance, Administrative delays 499w
Severe disablement allowance, Social security benefits disqualification 437w
Severe disablement allowance, Social security recipients 499w
Social security reviews, Marginal tax rates 495-6w
Supplementary benefits, Young people 506-8w
Young people, Social security benefits rules 422-6w

Bed & breakfast accommodation
Business expansion scheme 651w
Local government expenditure 465-6w, 577w
Slums 553w
Tyne & Wear 553w

Beef & veal
Intervention stocks 540-1w

Beggs, Roy
Members resignations (17.12.85) 139

Beith, Mr A J
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 303
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 183-6
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 871-2
Questions
European Assembly, Elections 204w
Languages education, Nordic countries 118-9w
Lesotho, South Africa 923
Nicaragua, USA 283-4
Overseas aid, Agriculture 769
Overseas trade, USSR 590w
Public sector borrowing requirement 305w
Regional aid, Northern region 1066
Social security benefits rules, Seasonal workers 239-40w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 294-5
Strategic Defence Initiative, Reagan, President 907-8

Belfast
Building industry 454w

Belfast, East
By election writs (17.12.85) 140

Belfast, North
By election writs (17.12.85) 140

Belfast, South
By election writs (17.12.85) 140

Bell, Mr Stuart
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1209
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985 (16.01.86) 1334-5
Questions
Regional aid, Northern region 1196-7

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Questions
Smoking related diseases, Death 415-6w
Smoking related diseases, Norfolk 73-5w

Bendall, Mr Vivian
Debates etc
Taxis, Heathrow (17.12.85) 277-9, 280
Questions
Middle East, Foreign policy 193w

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Debates etc
Education (Amendment) Bill, Rem stages (16.12.85) 107-9, 112, 113, 119-20, 121
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 32
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Income distribution 643-4w
Education, Departmental publications 113-4w
Education support grants, Expenditure 713w
Food additives, Food industry 276w
Higher education admission 709-10w
Nursery schools, Cost per pupil 707-9w
Open University, University finance 711-2w
Ordnance survey, Financial targets 104w
Overseas aid, Overseas students 713w
Overseas students, Student numbers 709-11w
Pre-school education, School population 712w
Public footpaths, Defence Act 1842 373w
Public footpaths, Menwith 372-3w
Pupil-teacher ratios 711w
School meals 709-10w
School meals, Nutrition 644w
School meals, Per capita costs 643w
Schools, Class sizes 711w
Schools, Cost per pupil 708w
Social security benefits, Costs 414w
Student grants 148
Teachers, Merit awards 441w, 442w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Pupils 727-8w
Unemployment benefit offices, Stockport 639w
Universities, Higher education admission 643w
University finance, University Grants Committee 442-4w
University teachers, Careers development 712w
Youth employment, School leaving 726w
Youth training scheme, Pay 727-8w

Bennett, Sir Frederic
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 302-3

Berkhampsted bypass 765-6
Dual carriageways 765-6
Road construction 765-6

Berkshire
Property Services Agency 669-72w

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 944, 991-3
Juries (18.12.85) 420, 425, 427
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 877, 893
Questions
BBC 626w
BBC, Income 626w
BBC, Television advertising 626w, 636w
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review 627w
Mental patients, Respiratory diseases 73-4w
Planning permission, Opencast mining 464-6w

Best, Mr Keith
Debates etc
Drinking & driving (18.12.85) 508-14, 515, 517, 518, 519
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 950-1
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 338
Questions
Blood alcohol levels 435w
Cash limits, Wales 619w
Drinking & driving 406w
Earthquakes, Defence research 211w
Housing benefits, Pensioners 410w
Iran, Foreign relations 363w
Iran, Human rights 363w
Legal aid, Inquiries 446w
NHS finance, Rural areas 75w
Nuclear test ban, Civil service manpower 366w
Nuclear test ban, International co-operation 290-1w
Nuclear test ban, Strategic defence initiative 197w
Nuclear weapons tests 216w
Oil imports, Iran 249-50w
Overseas trade, Iran 331-2w
Radioactive waste disposal, Research 106w
Sunday trading, Law enforcement 251-2w
Trident missiles, Testing 212w
Wales Tourist Board, Government grants 286w

Betting & gaming duties
Bingo 143-4w

Bettman Centre
Aids for handicapped 493w

Bideford bypass 580w

Bidwell, Mr Sydney
Questions
El Salvador, Armed forces training 202w
Pilotage, Orders & regulations 167w
Trades Union Congress, Government grants 639w

Biffen, Rt Hon John, *Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons*
Debates etc
Business statement (13.01.86) 774-6
Business statement, Members interests (17.12.85) 176-7
Members interests (17.12.85) 219-23, 249-51
Recess motions, Christmas (18.12.85) 389-92
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 836
Westland Helicopters, Solicitor-General (15.01.86) 1077
Questions
Business statement 573-82, 1214-24
House of Commons catering, Apples 716w
House of Commons Select Committees 291-2w
House of Commons staff 66w
House of Commons, Sanitation 160w
House of Commons Select Committees, Administrative delays 691w
House of Commons Select Committees, House of Commons debates 683-6w, 693w
House of Commons Select Committees, House of Commons Divisions 679-82w
House of Commons Select Committees, House of Commons staff 691-4w
House of Commons Select Committees, Members 681-4w
House of Commons Select Committees, Select Committee evidence 685-6w, 689-92w
House of Commons Select Committees, Specialist advisers 685-6w, 687-90w
House of Commons Select Committees, Temporary staff 691w
House of Commons Select Committees, Witnesses 691-2w
Members allowances, Members staff 15
Members allowances, Private members bills 441w
Members facilities, Computers 16
Members interests 15-6
Members & trade unions 16
Northern Ireland Office, Oral questions 65-6w
Reprography, Members facilities 716w
Upper Waiting Hall, Exhibitions 607-8w

Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 132w, 735w
Anglo-Irish Agreement, International conferences 4w
Anglo-Irish Agreement, Ministers 4w
Body searches, Northern Ireland 185-6w
Body searches, Scotland 60-1w
Devolution, Northern Ireland 565
Greater London Council, Science & technology 105w
Lesotho, South Africa 923-4
Motorways, Road construction 477w
Oil exports, North Sea oil 28w
Terrorism, International cooperation 207w

Bilateral aid
Overseas aid 447w

Bilateral treaties
Air transport 47w

Bingo
Betting & gaming duties 143-4w
Licensed premises 143-4w

Birds
Scotland 721-3w

Birmingham
House purchase 458-9w
Land Registry Office 109w

Birtenshaw Farm 18w
Planning appeals 18w

Black economy
Building industry 593w
Growth promoting hormones 613w

Blackwall tunnel 475-6w, 479w, 480w
Repairs & maintenance 480w
Road traffic 479w

Blaenau Ffestining (18.12.85) 374-6

Blair, Mr Tony
Questions
Africa, Debts 308-9w
Crown lands & estates, Rates & rating 49w
International economic relations, Interest rates 1202-3
Public sector borrowing requirement 347w

Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Questions
European Regional Development Fund, Council of Ministers 137-8w
South Africa, Foreign relations 295

Blechen, Norman 584w

Blaenau Ffestiniog
Stone quarrying (18.12.85) 374-6

Blind
Aids for handicapped 411w
Health services 697w
Social services 697w

Block grant
Per capita costs 672-3w
Rates & rating 104w

Blood
AIDS 326w
Factor VIII 416w
Imports 326w
Laboratories 416w
Scotland 292w
Self-sufficiency 292w

Blood alcohol levels 406w, 435w, 481w

Blood products laboratory 416w

Blyth Valley
Special development areas 1066-7
Unemployment 1066-7

Board & lodging charges 69w, (17.12.85) 168-74, 240w, 417-8w, 489-90w, 553-4w, 740w
Costs 417-8w
Judgments 240w
Ministerial statements (17.12.85) 168-74
Social security recipients 240w, 418w
Supplementary benefits 69w, 553-4w, 740w
Tyne & Wear 740w
Young people 418w
Youth training scheme 489-90w

Body, Sir Richard
Questions
Animal husbandry, Antibiotics 485-6w

Cereals, Intervention stock 283w
Horses, Export of live animals 485w
Nature conservation, Wash 463w
Pesticides, Fenvalerate 484w

Body searches 60-1w, 185-6w, 342-3w, 458w
Brixton Prison 342w, 458w
Majid, Jamila 342-3w
Northern Ireland 185-6w
Scotland 60-1w
Thomarin, Sylvia 342-3w

Boiler conversion scheme 27w
Coal firing scheme 27w

Bolton
Armed forces deployment 96w
Armed forces strength 522-3w

Bolton Health Authority 496w
Hospital waiting lists 496w

Bone marrow disorders
Transplant surgery 167w

Bones
St Edward 540w

Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1378-82

Book piracy 1067-8

***Bottomley, Mr Peter** Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Debates etc
Industrial tribunals (18.12.85) 535-8
Questions
Baking industry, Staffordshire 636w
Baking industry, Working hours 635-6w
British Dental Association, Trade unions 125w
Building industry, Death 52-4w
Building industry, Labour only subcontracting 52w
Business on own account scheme 550w
Factory Inspectorate, North West region 188w
Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 639w
Health & Safety Executive, Building industry 52w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Nuclear accidents 549w
Shareholders 650w
Small businesses, Industrial health & safety 302-3w
Trade unions, Political levy 304w, 399-400w
Trades Union Congress, Government grants 639w
Wages councils, Personal 726w
Wages Inspectorate, Yorkshire & Humberside 489-92w
Youth training scheme, European Social Fund 299w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Debates etc
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 33
Questions
Ordnance Survey, Management 104-5w
Social security benefits rules, Students 229-30w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 196w
Teachers, Industrial dispute 114-5w

Bourne End bypass 477w

Bowden, Mr Andrew
Questions
Retirement pensions, South Africa 427-8w
Social Security, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 310w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Questions
Educational standards, Schools 117w
Gartcosh Steelworks, Factory closures 591w
Inner London Education Authority, Local government expenditure 185w
Local government reform, Local government finance 222-3w
Small businesses, Employment 303w

Boyes, Mr Roland
Questions
Bed & breakfast accommodation, Tyne & Wear 553w
Board & lodging charges, Tyne & Wear 740w
Business statement 579, 1218
Members facilities, Computers 16
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd, Research finance 11
Strategic defence initiative, Technical Assistance 560w
Turkey, Political prisoners 191w
Washington Development Corporation, Public appointments 729w

Boyson, Dr Rhodes, Minister of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Agriculture, Northern Ireland 266-7w
Building industry, Belfast 454w
Building industry, Northern Ireland 42w, 186w
Fishing gear 579w
Northern Ireland Office, Civil service manpower 41w
Youth training scheme, Northern Ireland 41w

Bradford
Ministers domestic visits 651w
Slum clearance 565
Textile industry 1063

Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Questions
Food additives, Food standards 486w
Road accidents, A127 295-6w

Brakes
Asbestos 407w

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 276
Questions
Emergency planning, Local government staff 456w

Bray, Dr Jeremy
Debates etc
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1273, 1300-1
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 695-6
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 64-7
Questions
Business statement 1217
CERN, UK contributions 145
Exchange rates, Interest rates 1198
Iron & steel, Exports 1060

Breach of contract
Hospital consultants 699w

Bread
Prices 551-2w

Breast cancer
Public petitions (17.01.86) 1345
Screening 78w, 432w, 571-2

Breast Cancer Screening Working Party 78w

Breathalysers 583w
Christmas 567-8w
Road accidents 481w

Brewing industry
Public houses 136w

Bridge of Don 61w, 162w

Bright, Mr Graham
Questions
EC internal trade 1072

British Aerospace (13.01.86) 870-8
Defence contracts 98-9w
Dockyards 718w
Ministers correspondence 918-9, 922
Profitability 156
Westland helicopters 592w, 724w, 918-9, 920-1, 922, 1204-5

British Airports Authority
Privatisation (16.01.86) 1239

British Airways
Privatisation 580w, 733w
Stolport 408w
Unfair competition 733w

British citizenship 714w, 715w
Immigration appeals 8-9w

British Council 192w
Cultural relations 297
Finance 297

British Dental Association 125w
Trade unions 125w

British dependent territories
European Court of Human Rights 736w

British embassies
Costs 366w
South Africa 196w
USSR 366w

British Film Institute
Film industry 35-8w
Government grants 35-8w

British Gas Corporation
Consumer protection 6-7
Licensing 6, 10-1
Pension funds 9
Privatisation 5-6, 6-7, 9, 10-1, 27-8w, 30w, 634w
Shares 5-6, 27w
Tax yields 123w
Trades Union Congress 30w

British Geological Survey
Keyworth 17

British Library
Construction, Specific cases 35w

British Medical Association
Skoal Bandits 432w

British national (overseas) (16.01.86) 1268-304

British nationality (16.01.86) 1268-304

British Rail
Railway travel 477w

British residents abroad
Arab States 192w, 203w
India 639-40w
Prisoners 473w

British Shipbuilders 587w
Privatisation 72w
Warships 724w

British Steel Corporation 587w
Pay 449w
Privatisation 1059
Public appointments 449w

British Telecom
Price increases 589w

British Veterinary Association 613w

Brittan, Rt Hon Leon, Secretary of State for Trade & Industry
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 1R (18.12.85) 346
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 938-48, 949, 952-3
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1111, 1155, 1159-65
Westland helicopters, Ministerial statements (16.12.85) 35-46, (13.01.86) 777-89, 870-4
Questions
Employment schemes, Government grants 179-83w
Financial services 1057
Financial services, Securities & Investment Board 1057
Financial Services Bill 1985/86, Members interests 1058
Industrial development 585w
Lloyds of London, Inquiries 1069
Lloyds of London, Members interests 1057-8, 1069-70

Patent Office, Non-departmental public bodies 453-4w
Securities & Investment Board, Self-regulatory system 245w
Strategic defence initiative, Intellectual property 184w
Westland helicopters, British Aerospace 592w, 724w
Westland helicopters, Company finance 452w
Westland helicopters, Foreign investment in UK 451w
Westland helicopters, Merchant banks 451w
Westland helicopters, Ministers correspondence 724w

Brixton Prison 342w, 458w
Body searches 342w, 458w
Prisoners rights 342w
Security 342w
Women 342w

Broadcasting licences
Community radio 713-4w

Broadcasting programmes 130w

Bromley Health Authority (20.12.85) 738-44
Hospital hygiene services 601w

Brooke, Mr Peter, *Minister of State at the Treasury*
Questions
Betting & gaming duties, Bingo 143-4w
Car tax 1199
Car tax, Car industry 1198-9
Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency 650w
Civil servants, Trade unions 720-2w
Civil service manpower, Fife 361w
Customs, Drug crimes 144-5w
Customs, Prosecutions 361w
Customs, Ships 144w
Customs officers, North East region 190w
Customs officers, Northern region 191w
Customs officers, Tyne & Wear 144w
Drug crimes, Northern Region 190w
EC budget, UK contributions 511w, 655w
EC Budget Council 48-9w
Export controls, Machine tools 361w
Free ports 649w
Indirect taxation, Family income 306-7w
Inflation 648w
Select committees, Publishing 652-4w
Shareholders, Investment in financial assets 1193
Shareholders, Privatisation 1194
Small investors, Industrial loan stocks 1194
Tax yields, Alcoholic drinks duties 361w
Tax yields, VAT zero rated goods 142w
Taxation, Lead free petrol 654-5w
UK repayments from EC budget 539-40w
VAT, EC countries 305-6w
VAT, Tax avoidance 654w
VAT, Tax evasion 648w
VAT threshold, Building industry 593w

Brown, Mr Gordon
Debates etc
Industrial tribunals (18.12.85) 538
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 32
Tin, Cornwall (18.12.85) 543
Questions
Child benefit 436w
Child benefit, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 318w
Civil service manpower, Fife 361w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Defence 381w
Dockyards, Management 718w
Dockyards, Privatisation 718w
Family credit, Social security claims 435w
Family income supplement, Social security reform 596-7w
Family income supplements, Social security recipients 434w
Forth road bridge, Joint boards 723w
Forth road bridge, Road tolls 566w, 723w
Funerals, Death grants 316-7w
Funerals, Exceptional needs payments 436w
Handicap benefits, Social security reform 597-8w
Handicapped children, Mobility allowance 598-9w
Housing benefits, Costs 317w
Housing benefits, Expenditure 596w
Housing benefits, Rates & rating 317w, 319w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 596w, 597w, 696w
Income support scheme, Heating allowances 318w
Income support scheme, Housing benefits 318w
Income support scheme, Industrial disputes 599w
Income support scheme, Pensioners 317-8w, 741-2w
Income support scheme, Severe weather payments 318w
Income support scheme, Single people 741w
Income support scheme, Social security recipients 317-8w
Income support scheme, Unemployed 317-8w
Income support scheme, Unemployed 597w
Johnson Matthey, Banking supervision 649w
Johnson Matthey, Company finance 594w
Manufacturing industries, Regional development grants 332-4w
Means tested benefits, Social security reform 435-6w, 704-6w
Ministry of Defence, Early retirement 215-6w
Ministry of Defence, Fife 643w
National insurance benefits, Expenditure 439
"Reform of Social Security Consultation Paper" 598w
Rent rebates, Social security reform 596w
Severe weather payments 599-600w
Severe weather payments, Exceptional needs payments 71-2w
Social Fund, Finance 319w
Social Fund, Maternity benefits 599w
Social security benefits, Costs 596w
Social security benefits rules, Industrial disputes 318w
Social security reform 598w
Supplementary benefits, Carers 599w
Supplementary benefits, Costs 319w
Unemployment, Economic regions 638-9w
Water charges, Social security reform 597w
Westland helicopters 578w

Brown, Mr Michael
Questions
Action on smoking & health, Government grants 428w, 429w
Africa, Democracy 208w
Angola, Peace negotiations 133w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Action on Smoking & Health 429w
Namibia, Political parties 133w
Namibia, Racial discrimination 205w
NHS, Recruitment 503w
Office of Fair Trading, Cash limits 244w
Smoking, Hospitals 503w
Smoking, Public buildings 502w

Brown, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Legal Advice & Assistance Regulations 1985 (19.12.85) 657-9
Questions
Fraud investigation group, Manpower 768
Regional aid, Northern region 1065

Brown, Mr Robert C
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 788, 873
Questions
Middle east, Peace negotiations 193w
Nimrod aircraft, Defence contracts 913
Sewers, Water authorities 571-2w
Water authorities, External financing limits 730-2w
Water authorities, Finance 572w

Brown, Mr Ron
Questions
Afghanistan, Foreign policy 204w
Teachers, Scotland 64-5w

Browne, Mr John
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 985, 1001-3
Questions
International economic relations, Exchange rates 1202

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc
Fuel poverty (16.12.85) 133
Low incomes, Heating allowances (16.12.85) 133
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 95-9
Questions
A92, Expenditure 162w
A92, Road works 61w
Bank of England, Banking supervision 1191-2
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 6-7
Farm incomes 281w
Industrial energy prices, Electricity area boards 13
Strategic defence initiative, Defence expenditure 560w

Brucellosis
Cattle diseases 284w
Slaughterhouses 283w

Bruinvels, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1237
Motorways, Lighting (18.12.85) 383-5
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 797
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 330
Questions
Bus lanes, Millbank 559w
Business statement 579, 1221
Civil & Public Services Association 31w
Drinking & driving, Christmas 567-8w
Drinking & driving, Convictions 132w
Drinking & driving, Publicity 583w
Fire prevention, Electric lighting 175w
Housing design, Crime prevention 175w
Ministers visits abroad, Gulf states 587-8w
Motorways, Leicestershire 477w
M25, Construction costs 44w
Nicaragua, Coffee 284
Northern Ireland Office, Oral questions 65-6w
Nursing homes, Licensing 79-80w
Police, Leicestershire 455w
Police, Manpower 456w
Prime Minister official engagements 103w, 265w, 553w, 627w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Northern Ireland 554w
Railway transport, Electric power 297w
Road accidents, Drinking & driving 112w
Road accidents, Motorways 112w
Road construction, Road works 756
Shops Bill (HL) 1985/86 547-8w
Smith houses, Defective housing 254-5w
Teachers appraisal 152
10 Downing Street, Security 271w
Terrorism, Sentencing 553w
Unemployment, Parliamentary constituencies 125w

Brunei 628w
Heads of state 629w

Bryan, Sir Paul
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1087

Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick, *Minister of State for Energy*
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 10-1, 27-8w, 634w
British Gas Corporation, Tax yields 123w
Continental shelf, Orders & regulations 30w
Energy consumption, fuels 124w
Gas tariffs, Privatisation 30w
Lead free petrol, Capital investment 634-5w
Lead free petrol, Costs 635w
Lead free petrol, Energy consumption 635w
North Sea oil, Technical assistance 250w

Offshore drilling, Energy research 26-7w
Oil exports, North Sea oil 28w
Oil imports, Iran 249-50w
Oil reserves, Oil recovery 13-4
Oil rigs, Manpower 248-9w
Petroleum exploration 26w
Standing charges, Gas fuels 124-5w

Buck, Sir Antony
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 39
Questions
Strategic defence initiative, Defence research 907

Budapest Cultural Forum 208w

Budgen Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 306
Members interests (17.12.85) 220
Questions
Butter, Food surpluses 279w
Cereals, Production quotas 558
Fraud, Criminal investigation 253-4w
UNESCO, Overseas aid 241w

Budget
USA 648w

Building industry
Belfast 454w
Black economy 593w
Complaints 570-1w
Death 52-4w
Glasgow 482w
Health & Safety Executive 52w
Industrial injuries 79w
Injuries 52-4w
Labour only sub-contracting 42w, 52w
Latent damage 766
Liability 766
Liverpool 491-2w
Merseyside 491-2w
Northern Ireland 42w, 186w
Scotland 61w
Self-employed 186w, 399w
Strathclyde 482w
Tax exemption certificates 50w
Unemployment 454w
VAT threshold 593w

Building land
Defence land 916-7
Playing fields 285w, 286w

Building regulations
Energy efficiency 8
Energy efficiency year 13w
Greater London 13-4w
Insulation 8

Building repairs
Leeds General Infirmary 154w

Building societies
Company registration 143w
Takeovers 142-3w

Building Societies Bill 1985/86
2R (19.12.85) 592-653
Money res* (19.12.85) 653
Ways & means res* (19.12.85) 653

"Burdens on Business" 55w, 56w
Costs 55w

Bureaucracy
Inland Revenue 308w
Inland tax assessment 308w
Small businesses 55-6w

Burnham Committee 119w
Pay settlements 119w

Bury
Armed forces deployment 96w
Armed forces strength 522-3w

Bus crews
Codes of practice 757-8
Driving instruction 758

Bus fares
Price increases 759-60
South Yorkshire 759-60

Bus lanes
Millbank 559w

Buses
Motor vehicle safety 476w
Speed governors 476w, 757-8

Business education
Curriculum 123w
Universities 335w

Business expansion scheme 141w, 652w
Bed & breakfast accommodation 651w
Industrial investment 141w
Scotland 652w

Business on own account scheme 550w

Business question time intervention (19.12.85) 581

Business questions
Speakers rulings & statements (16.01.86) 1223, 1224

Business statement 573-82, (13.01.86) 774-6, 1214-24
Members interests (17.12.85) 176-7
Speakers rulings & statements (13.01.86) 774, 775

***Butcher, Mr John** Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry*
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Trade & Industry 23w
Advertising agencies, Dept of Trade & Industry 21-3w
Industrial production 632w
Iron & steel industry, Industrial production 24-5w
Tobacco, Retail trade 138-9w
Westland helicopters, Company finance 137w

Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1118, 1127-30

Butter
Food surpluses 279w
Import quotas 210w
Imports 280w
Intervention stocks 351w, 483-4w, 487w
New Zealand 210w, 280w

Butterfill, Mr John
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 941, 981, 984, 1003-4
Questions
Tax yields, Industrial building allowances 360w
Teachers, Pay 1203

By election writs
Antrim, East (17.12.85) 139
Antrim, North (17.12.85) 140
Antrim, South (17.12.85) 140
Belfast, East (17.12.85) 140
Belfast, North (17.12.85) 140
Belfast, South (17.12.85) 140
Fermanagh & South Tyrone (17.12.85) 139
Lagan Valley (17.12.85) 139
Londonderry, East (17.12.85) 139
Mid-Ulster (17.12.85) 139
Newry & Armagh (17.12.85) 140
North Down (17.12.85) 140
South Down (17.12.85) 140
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 139
Strangford (17.12.85) 140
Upper Bann (17.12.85) 140

Bypasses
A41 477w
Scotland 61-2w

Cabinet
Channel crossing 759

Cabinet committees
Westland helicopters 1206

Caborn, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (18.12.85) 300
Questions
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil service recruitment 153w
Economic growth, Regional planning & development 586w
School leaving, Educational qualifications 122w
Social security claims, Home visits 415w
Social security recipients, Sheffield 229w
South Africa, EC external relations 195w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 293
Tactical nuclear weapons, NATO 562-3w

Callaghan, Rt Hon James
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 787, (15.01.86) 1107-14

Callaghan, Mr Jim
Questions
Food standards, Irradiation 310w
Industrial development 585w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w

Calling of members
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 142, 249, (18.12.85) 345, (19.12.85) 568, (20.12.85) 696, (15.01.86) 1130, (16.01.86) 1221

Cammell Laird 642w
Defence procurement 912
Submarines 911

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Air force 213w

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 164
Business question time intervention (19.12.85) 581
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 396
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1209
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 940, 982-7, 1011, 1012
Members interests (17.12.85) 237-40
Members interests, Liberal party (18.12.85) 345
Oral question time intervention (13.01.86) 767
Oral question time point of order (18.12.85) 288
Recess motions, Christmas (18.12.85) 392
Unemployment (18.12.85) 373
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 42, (13.01.86) 786, (15.01.86) 1164
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Civil service manpower 279-80w
Associated British Foods, Company accounts 243w
Associated British Foods, IRA 252w
Business statement 578
Falkland Islands, EC external relations 192w
Fayed, Mohammed 628w
Industrial energy prices, Temperature 13
Members interests 16
Prime Minister, Gifts 628w
Public expenditure, Northern Ireland 1197
Regional aid, Northern region 1066
Type 23 Frigates 914

Canada
Double taxation 103w, 307-8w

Canary Wharf
London docklands railway 755

Canavan, Mr Dennis
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1348, 1350
Questions
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 587w
Fraud, Johnson Matthey 510w
Intervention stocks, Food surpluses 1w
South Africa, Foreign policy 195w

Cancer
EC action 584w

Health services 501w
Medical treatments (13.01.86) 898-904, (15.01.86) 1183-90
North East Thames Regional Health Authority 501w

Cancer hazards
Radiation hazards 698w

Capenhurst
Nuclear safeguards 29w

Captial gains tax 48w
Tax yields 360w

Capital investment
Coal mining 2
District health authorities 507w
Government grants to local authorities 21w
Health services finance 326w
Lead free petrol 634-5w
Mersey Regional health authority 149-52w
Oil industry 248w
Power industry 248w
Scottish health boards 164-6w
Wales 332w
Welsh Development Agency 615-6w

Capital punishment
Terrorism 553w

Car industry
Car tax 1198-9
Employment 1199
Foreign companies in UK 1062
Motor vehicle parts 1061

Cardiac surgery 238w

Cardiff
Company liquidations 451w

Cardiff West 565w
Shops 565w

Careers development 712w
University teachers 712w

Carers
Supplementary benefits 599w

Carlile, Mr Alex
Debates etc
Legal Advice & Assistance Regulations 1985 (19.12.85) 656, 659-60
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 796-7, 821, 827, 828, 833, 849-52
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Income 280-1w

Carlisle, Mr John
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1233
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 799-800, 805-6
Questions
Business statement 1218
South Africa, African National Congress 285
South Africa, Funerals 196w
Traffic lights, Costs 111-2w

Carlisle, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1029
Questions
Companies 588w
Companies, Privatisation 647-8w
Privatisation, Share ownership 1059

Carlisle, Rt Hon Mark
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1237-8
Juries (18.12.85) 418-9
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 812-5

Cars
Road accidents 481w

Carter-Jones, Mr Lewis
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 174
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 31
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 63-4
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 40, (13.01.86) 781
Questions
Diet & disease, Medical research 78w
Educational psychology, Local government staff 338w
Educational psychology, Professional qualifications 337-8w
Hospital patients, Trauma 158w
Kidneys, Transplant surgery 698w
Medical research, Trauma 38w
South Africa, Violence 285-6
Spectacles, Costs 433w
Spectacles, Prescriptions 433w
Vaccination, Publicity 78-9w

Cartwright, Mr John
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 318
Questions
Armed forces catering services, Armed forces civilians 373w
Armed forces catering services, Hospital catering 373w
Community radio, Broadcasting licences 713-4w
Dartford tunnel, Private sector 762
House purchase, Housing Defects Act 1984 103-4w
Libyan Arab Republic, USA 1205-6
Local government revenue, Greenwich 661w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 291
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Armed forces catering services 373w
Queen Elizabeth Military hospital, Contract catering 373w, 374w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Elections 259w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Local government reform 259w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Local government staff 728-9w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Offices 729w

Cash, Mr William
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 637-8
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 307
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 445-464
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 966-7, 1008
Juries (18.12.85) 421
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 795
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1129, 1132-3
Questions
Business education, Curriculum 123w
Competition, European communities 591-2w
Exports, Iron & steel 1068
Police authorities, Local government expenditure 173w

Cash limit
Legal costs 635w
Office of Fair Trading 244w
Wales 619w

Castleford
Coal mining 126w
Manufacturing industries 126w

Cattle
Animal feed 541-2w
Drug research 283w

Cattle diseases
Apralan 283w
Brucellosis 284w

Central America
Debts 200w
EC external relations 191w
EC aid 448-50w
USA 205w

Central Blood Laboratories Authority 416w

Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency 650w

Central Council for Agricultural & Horticultural Cooperation 483-4w

Cereals
Agricultural land 554-5
Agricultural production 276w, 561
Agricultural subsidies 551-2w
Agricultural surpluses 276w, 553-4
Co-responsibility levy 558
EC action 276w
Export credit guarantees 242-3w
Intervention stocks 1w, 283w, 551w, 554, 557
Prices 555, 557, 558, 561
Production quotas 554-5, 557, 558, 561
Weather 558

CERN
UK contributions 145

Cervical cancer
Administrative delays 325w, 500w, 501w, 699w
Computer applications 569-70, 699w
Departmental circulars 238-9w
District health authorities 570-1
Mid Glamorgan 616-7w
Per capita costs 572
Screening 239w, 324-5w, 439w, 500w, 501w, 569-70, 570-1, 572, 616w, 617w, 618w, 699w, 737-8w
Teaching hospitals 571
Wales 616w, 617w, 618w

Chairman of Committee of the Whole House
Debates etc
Amendments & new clauses (16.12.85) 107, 114
Scope of debate (16.12.85) 107, 111, 122, 123

Chalker, Mrs Lynda, *Minister of State for Transport (Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from 10 Jan 1986)*
Debates etc
Drinking & driving (18.12.85) 514-21
Questions
Asbestos, Brakes 407w
A19, Road works 297w
A40, Construction costs 44w
A45, Road traffic 295w
Cancer, EC action 584w
Dartford tunnel, Road construction 111w
Drinking and driving 406w
Leighton Linslade bypass, Government grants 112w
Lesotho, South Africa 923-4
Local government reform, Department of Transport 47-8w
Motor vehicle safety, EC law 111w
Motor vehicle safety, Space saver spare wheels 298w
Motor vehicles, Lighting 42w
Motorways, Noise insulation grants 407w
Motorways, Road traffic 45-6w, 297w
Motorways, Safety barriers 167w
M1, Road construction 406w
M25, Construction costs 44w
M25, Fog 43w
M25, Road construction 406w
M25, Road traffic 405-6w
Pedestrian areas, Local government reform 111w
Rear seat belts 345w
Road accidents, Drinking and driving 112w
Road accidents, Motorway 112w
Road construction, Public inquiries 43w
Road freight transport, Hazardous wastes 45w
Road freight transport, Road accidents 45w
Road humps, Road traffic control 405w
Road safety, Lorries 46w
Road signs, Motorways 42-3w
Road signs, Tourist attractions 345w
Space saver spare wheels, Motor vehicle safety 111w, 405w
Traffic lights, Costs 111-2w
Woolwich ferry, Local government reform 406-7w

Channel crossing 475w, 630w, 920
Cabinet 759

Channel ferries 535-6w, 765
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 395-414
Environmental impact assessment 15w
Hazards 630w
Income 345w
Investor protection 764-5
Lighting 759
Lorries 113w
Motor vehicles 478-80w
Nature Conservancy Council 15w
North of England Regional Consortium 759
Passengers 478-80w
Private investment 764-5
Railway freight transport 476w
Road accidents 765
Road traffic 345w, 475-6w
Shipping 475w
Transport costs 475w
Travel 475w

Channel ferries
Channel crossing 535-6w, 765
Defence 535-6w
NATO 765

Channel tunnel
Accidents 758
Driving (18.12.85) 395-414
Environment protection 758
Road traffic 475-6w
Safety 758-9
Ventilation 758-9
Wars 520w

Channon, Rt Hon Paul, *Minister of State for Trade*
Debates etc
Tin, Cornwall (18.12.85) 541-3
Questions
Antidumping, Evidence 589-90w
Arms trade, South America 589w
Balance of trade, Japan 590w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 452-3w, 587w
Cereals, Export credit guarantees 242-3w
Company liquidations, Ultraleisure 449-50w
Competition, European communities 591-2w
Export credit guarantees, Ecuador 1060-1
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Financial targets 1061
Export promotion, Data banks 587w
Export promotion, Government grants 1060
Export promotion, Turkey 1060
Exports, Wealth 1061
Iron & steel, USSR 1065
Manufactured goods, EC trade 453w
Ministers visits abroad, Gulf states 587-8w
Multifibre arrangement 24w, 588w, 1062-3, 1064
Multifibre arrangement, EC action 184w
Multifibre arrangement, Hong Kong 1063
Multifibre arrangement, Textile industry 1063-4
Overseas trade, Iran 331-2w
Overseas trade, Japan 590w
Overseas trade, Romania 585w
Overseas trade, Service industries 1073-4
Overseas trade, South Africa 1074
Overseas trade, USSR 590w, 1064-5
Soft loans, Aid financed trade 585w
Technology transfer, USSR 1065
Trade promotion, China 1073
Wood, Imports 332w

Chapman, Mr Sydney
Debates etc
Urban areas (20.12.85) 709-12
Questions
Agricultural land, Land use 558-9
Balance of trade, Japan 590w
Civil servants, Greater London 48w
Coal mining, Productivity 717w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 190w
Liability, Building industry 766
Non-departmental public bodies 109w
Nuclear test ban 197w
Oil reserves, Oil recovery 13-4
Private rented housing, Judgments 464w
Road construction "Fairer & Faster Route to Major Road Construction" 756
Teachers, Industrial disputes 146

Charities (18.12.85) 365-71
Private education 50w

Cheese
Milk 553

Chemical industries
Sugar 279w

Chemical weapons 196w
Defence research 462w
Early warning systems 462w

Chemists shops
Prescriptions 428w

Chequers
Official hospitality 264w

Chester
Regional aid 1067

Chief Adjudication Officer 497w

Chief constables
Greater Manchester 565

Chief Nursing Officer 95w

Child benefit 436w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 318w
Scotland 72-3w

Child care
Education welfare officers 185w
Government grants to local authorities 119w
Ministerial responsibility 552w
School meals 38w, 119w, 141-2
Teachers 144
Training 185w

Child health 237-8w
Medical research 602w
Social class 602w

Child patients
Hospital wards 284w
Mental hospitals 702w
Wales 284w

Children
Children in care 82w
Ex-servicemen 906
Kidnapping (20.12.85) 725-30
Nigeria (20.12.85) 725-30
Outpatients 108w

Children in care (17.01.86) 1405-9
Children 82w

Chile
Arms embargoes 199w
Diplomatic service 298
Human rights 200w, 473-4w
Military vehicles 298
Political prisoners 474w
United Nations 473-4w

China
Soft loans 585w, 1073
Trade promotion 1073

Chocolate
Food labelling 557

Chope, Mr Christopher
Questions
Marginal tax rates, Average earnings 1194
Philippines, Ministers visits abroad 198w

Christmas
Arab states 203w
Breathalysers 567-8w
Drinking & driving 567-8w

Christmas Island 609w
Nuclear weapons tests 609w

Church of England
Inner city areas 521w

Churchill, Mr Winston
Questions
Greater London Council, Local government reform 564

Cinemas (Safety) Regulations 1985 8w

City of London
Financial institutions 360w
Fraud 135-6w, 153, 155-6, 360w, 568-9w, 1191, 1192-3
Invisible trade balance 1192

City & Guilds of London Institute 118w
Vocational education 118w

Civil Aviation Authority (16.01.86) 1239

Civil defence
Alley, Eric 177-8w
Communication 7-8w
Emergency planning 523w
Government grants 272-3w, 292-3w
Government grants to local authorities 9w, 272w, 273w, 293w, 483w
Local authorities 177-8w
Local authorities in Scotland 293w
Local government expenditure 9w
Local government services 9w
Police authorities 272w
Scotland 292-3w, 483w
Training 272w

Civil disorder (13.01.86) 792-869
Compensation 131w
Haringey 343w
Metropolitan Police 172-3w, 343w
Police training 172-3w
Public order policing 919
Street lighting 173w
Tottenham 919

Civil servants
Department of Employment 18
Department of Health & Social Security 18, 19-20
Department of Health & Social Security local offices 497w
Disclosure of information 520w
Greater London 48w
House of Commons Select Committees 628w
Leave 7-2w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 19-20
10 Downing Street 18-9
Trade unions 720-2w
Westland helicopters 1206
Work study 17-8

Civil servants secondment
"Faith in the City" 521w
Strategic defence initiative 160w

Civil service
Scotland 18
Trade unions 31w

Civil service dispersal
Research 585-6w

Civil service manpower
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 279-80w
Defence Select Committee 641w
Dept of Health & Social Security 414-6w, 595w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 322w, 496w
DHSS local offices 509w
Fife 361w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 640w
Local government reform 11-2w, 15w, 24w, 47-8w, 49-50w, 258w
Ministry of Defence 381w
Northern Ireland Office 41w
Nuclear test ban 366w
Scottish Office 161w
Welsh Office 284w

Civil service recruitment
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 153w, 496w
Diplomatic service 297-8
Equal opportunities officers 31w

Civil service redundancies
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 496w

Civil & Public Services Association 31w

Civilian Pay Records Office 523w

Clark, Mr Alan, *Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Aerospace industry, Manpower 636-7w
Average earnings, Men 300-1w
Building industry, Labour only subcontracting 52w
Building industry, Liverpool 491-2w
Coal mining, Barnsley 53w
Community programme 51w
Community programme, Ex-servicemen 637-8w
Community programme, Finance 637w
Community programme, Training allowances 398w
Community programme, Vacancies 303w
Community programme, Voluntary organisations 398w
Community programme, Working hours 303w
Employment, Inner city areas 397w
Employment, Manufacturing industries 398w
Employment, Welwyn Hatfield 399w
Employment schemes, Newham 51w
Employment schemes, Vocational training 186w
Employment schemes, Wolverhampton 186w
Industrial training schemes, Tameside 125w
Job creation schemes, South East region 299-300w
Kirkby Victims Support Scheme, Government grants to voluntary organisations 187w
Manual workers, Low pay 726w
Manufacturing industries, Castleford 126w
Part-time employment 51w
Prices, Retail prices index 362w
Self-employed, Building industry 399w
Self-employed, Ethnic groups 399w
Self-employed, Statistics 299w
Unemployment 549w, 639w
unemployment, Copeland 188w
Unemployment, Economic regions 301-2w, 638-9w
Unemployment, Graduates 397w
Unemployment, Handicapped workers 725w
Unemployment, Littleborough 566-8w
Unemployment, Liverpool 492-3w
Unemployment, Norwood 728w
Unemployment, Parliamentary constituencies 125w
Unemployment, Wandsworth 398-9w
Unemployment benefit offices, Stockport 639w
Unemployment benefits, Administrative delays 397w
Unemployment benefits, Social security abuse 300w
Unemployment benefits, Welwyn Hatfield 397w
Youth employment, School leaving 726w

Clark, Dr David
Debates etc
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1034-7, 1047-8
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 259-62, 265
Questions
Brucellosis, Cattle diseases 284w
Brucellosis, Slaughterhouses 283w
Customs, Ships 144w
Customs officers, Tyne & Wear 144w
Housing insulation, Government grants to local authorities 263w
Nature Conservancy Council, Annual reports 17w
Okehampton bypass, Dept of the Environment 371w
Okehampton bypass, Dept of Transport 407w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Orders & regulations 14-5w

Clark, Dr Michael
Debates etc
Southend Hospital (15.01.86) 1183-6, 1187
Questions
Civil servants, Work study 17-8
Electricity generation, Nuclear power 4
Health education, Drug abuse 155-6w
Nuclear power stations, Construction 28w

Clark, Sir William
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 162
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 972-4
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 28
Questions
Taxation, UK companies abroad 510w

Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth, *Paymaster General*
Questions
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 188-9w

Clarke, Mr Tom
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1346-53, 1369, 1403-4
Members Fund (16.12.85) 129
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 197-9
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Public appointments 449w
Business statement 581-2
Health services finance, Scottish health boards 59w
Iron & steel, USSR 1065
Joint financing, Scotland 58w
Joint liaison committees, Scotland 59w
Lesotho, South Africa 924
South Africa, EC external relations 194-5w

Class sizes
Pupil-teacher ratios 116w
Schools 711w

Clawbacks 559
Sheep 559-60
Sheep meat 560

Cleaning services
NHS 427w

Clegg, Sir Walter
Debates etc
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1250-2

Clelland, David
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 829-31
Questions
Newcastle Airport, Immigration controls 273w

Cleveland
Regional aid 1066
Unemployment 1196-7

Clinical judgments 231w, 232w, 233w
NHS complaints 231w, 232w, 233w

Clinics
Artificial insemination 325w
Test tube babies 325w

Closed circuit television
Crime prevention 340w

Clothing
Nurses 234w

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Questions
British Telecom, Price increases 589w
Cervical cancer, Screening 572
Electricity generation, Nuclear power 4-5
European Assembly, EC reform 200-1w
Iraq, Arms embargoes 735w
Iraq, Foreign relations 735-6w
Iraq, Human rights 736w
Iraq, Kurdistan 735w
Iraq, Political prisoners 735w
Margam mine, National Coal Board 14-5
Members allowances, Members staff 15
Nuclear weapons policy, Nuclear weapons deployment 915
Prime Minister official engagements 627w

Clwyd, Ann
Nuclear weapons policy 915

Coal
Exports 8-9

Coal firing scheme 27w
Boiler conversion scheme 27w

Coal mine closures (17.12.85) 175
Kinsley 7
National Coal Board 330w

Coal mining 28w
Barnsley 53w
Capital investment 2
Castleford 126w
Colliery review procedure 12-3
Conditions of employment 7
Death 250-1w
Fires 1205
Imports 8-9
Industrial disputes 14, 29w
Industrial health & safety 7
Industrial injuries 250-1w
Industrial relations 11-2, 12-3
Investment 9, 26w
Manpower 28w
Ministers domestic visits 1-2
Monktonhall Colliery 2-3
Musselburgh 2
National insurance contributions 14
Private investment 29w
Privatisation 6, 445w
Productivity 11-2, 26w, 717w
Redundancy 330w
Redundancy pay 247-8w
Redundant mineworkers payments scheme 12
Research 11
Scotland 1-2, 2-3
Trade competitiveness 9
Unemployment 26w
Working hours 7

Coal stocks
Road & rail transport comparisons 29w

Coastal shipping 762
EC action 762-3
EC countries 762, 763
Greece 763
Norway 762-3

Cockeram, Mr Eric
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 616-8
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 327
Questions
Outgoers scheme, Common agricultural policy 562

Codes of practice
Animal welfare 560
Association of Chief Police Officers 126-7w
Bus crews 757-8
Health Services Board 505w
Mergers 335w
Regional health authorities 319w
Residential care 604w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 42w, 269w
Takeovers 335w

Coffee
Haringey 284
Nicaragua 284

Cohabitation
Illegitimate children 153w
Invalid care allowances 701w
Single people 153w

Cohen, Mr Harry
Debates etc
Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill 1R (15.01.86) 1078-81
Housing, Waltham Forest (20.12.85) 717-20, 721-2
Nuclear weapons policy (18.12.85) 380-3
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 793
Questions
Animal experiments 173-4w
Bank of England, Financial institutions 359w
Bank of England, Own resources 359w
Breast cancer, Screening 78w

Broadcasting programmes 130w
Complaints against the police, Jarrett, Floyd 131w
Complaints against the police, Parsons, Mark 131w
Data protection tribunal, Public appointments 130w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Personal records 497w
Electoral register, Disclosure of information 128w
Electoral register, Metropolitan Police 128w
Electoral register, Police 128w
Food standards, Nutrition & health 277-8w
Groce, Cherry, Police firearms 130w
L9A1 gas spray guns 211w
Makenjuola, Adebola, Sexual offences 252w
Metropolitan Police, Rewards 7w
M25, Fog 43w
Police, Computers 130w
Police, Scotland 352w
Police equipment, Riot control weapons 129-30w
Prison accommodation 7w
Residential care of children, Northern Ireland 134-5w
Social security recipients, Leytonstone 69w

Coinage
Commonwealth Games 592w

Coleman, Mr Donald
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.1.85) 336-7

Collective warship 708w

College closures
Jordanhill College of Education 294w

Colliery review procedure 9, 12, (17.12.85) 175
Coal mining 12-3

Collyear Committee 633w

Colombia
Disaster relief 283-4

Colvin, Mr Michael
Questions
Brewing industry, Public houses 136w
British Library, Construction, specific cases 35w
Channel crossing, Channel ferries 765
Channel crossing, Shipping 475w
Common agricultural policy, EC reform 561
Defence procurement, Warships 914
Social security payments, Post Office 228w

Commercial bills 362w
Bank of England 362w

Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis 546w, 559w

Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy 121w

Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment 744-6w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 744-6w
Royal ordnance factories 744-6w

Common agricultural policy
Agricultural surpluses 551w
Crops 2w
EC Agricultural Council 351-2w
EC reform 278w, 561
Environment protection 282w
Outgoers scheme 562

Common fisheries policy (16.01.86) 1240-67
EC Fisheries Council 282w

Common sheep meat regime 560

Common sugar regime
Raw materials 279w

Commonwealth
Economic sanctions 294-5
UNESCO 179w

Commonwealth Games
Coinage 592w

Communication
Civil defence 7-8w

Community care
Hospital discharges 236-7w

Community policing
Elderly 155

Community programme 51w
Exservicemen 637-8w
Finance 637w
Training allowances 398w
Training grants 52w
Vacancies 303w
Voluntary organisations 398w
Working hours 303w

Community radio (18.12.85) 378-80, 625w
Broadcasting licences 713-4w
Ethnic minorities 625w

Commuters
Hertfordshire 409w
Railway transport 409w

Companies 588w
Dockyards 718w
Government grants 723-4w
Loan guarantee scheme 301-2w
Manchester Airport 169w
North West region 723-4w
Privatisation 647-8w
Spectacles 326-7w
Training allowances 727-8w
Tristan da Cunha 33w, 364w

Companies Act 1985 25w

Company accounts
Associated British Foods 243w
Johnson Matthey 1068-9
Small businesses 243w

Company finance
Agusta 533w
Government shareholding 647-8w
Johnson Matthey 594w
Rolls-Royce 590w
Westland helicopters 137w, 347w, 452w, 515w, 518-9w, 534w

Company law
Law reform 136-7w

Company liquidations
Cardiff 451w
Enterprise allowance scheme 57w
Inquiries 25w
Investor protection 1073
Ultraleisure 449-50w
WG Allen 1073

Company registration
Building Societies 143w
Fees & charges 136w

Company taxation
USA 510w

Compensation
Civil disorder 131w
Land reclamation 463w
Lothian Estates 717w
National Coal Board 717w
Sexual offences 270-1w
Vaccine damaged children 157w

Competition
European communities 591-2w

Complaints
Building industry 570-1w

Complaints against police
Jarrett, Floyd 131w
Metropolitan Police 344w
Parsons, Mark 131w
Public petitions (20.12.85) 671-2

Computer applications
Cervical cancer 569-70, 699w
Family practitioner committees 737-8w
Strategic defence initiative 910-1
Transplant surgery 698w

Computer privacy
Electoral register 128w

Computers
Doctors 77-8w
Members facilities 16
Police 130w, 352w

Computers in government departments 650w

Concert halls
Arts Council grants 304-5w
Merseyside 304-5w

Concessionary fares
Handicapped 478w
London boroughs 478w

Conditions of employment
Coal mining 7
EC law 552w
Hospital consultants 312w
Industrial arbitration 1206-7
Management 381w
Scientific civil service 16-7
Teachers 1203

Confederation of British Industry
Average earnings 585w
Financial services 1057

Conflict of interests 161w, 163w
Scottish health boards 161w
Scottish health board 161w, 163w

Conlan, Mr Bernard
Questions
Freedom of expression, Prosecutions 152
Motor vehicle safety, Space saver spare wheels 298w

Consolidated Fund Bill 1985/86 (17.12.85) 258
1R (17.12.85) 258
2R and rem stages* (18.12.85) 393-4
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591

Consolidated Fund debates
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 395-414
Copyright (18.12.85) 522-30
Drinking & driving (18.12.85) 508-21
Fraud (18.12.85) 433-72
Immigration controls (18.12.85) 494-507
Industrial tribunals (18.12.85) 531-8
Juries (18.12.85) 415-32
Low pay (18.12.85) 473-93
Tin (18.12.85) 539-43

Construction
Hospitals 266w, 554-6w
London docklands railway 755
Naval bases 97w
Nuclear power stations 28w

Construction costs
A40 44w
European Economic Community 463-4w
Hospitals 234-6w
M1 44w
M25 44w

Construction, Specific cases
British Library 35w

Consultants
Personal social services 323-4w
Social security 323-4w

Consultation papers 228-9w
Air pollution 259w
Hospital closures 228-9w
Pollution control 259w

Consumer organisations
Energy Efficiency Year 331w

Consumer protection (13.01.86) 790
British Gas Corporation 6-7
Public utilities 590-1w

Contadora Group 191w, 205w
EC external relations 191w
USA 205w

Continental shelf
Orders & regulations 30w

Contract catering 373w, 374w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 373w, 374w

Contracts
Insurance (20.12.85) 673-80
Ministry of Defence 247w
Trident 562w

Contracts for services
Disclosure of information 702w
District health authorities 155w, 508w
Health services 236w
NHS 385-96w, 436-8w, 702w
Scottish health boards 293-4w, 482w
Termination of employment 155w

Contracts of employment
Hospital consultants 312w

Conventional war
Falkland Islands 522w

Convictions
Drinking & driving 132w

Conway, Mr Derek
Questions
Higher education, Student numbers 117w
Territorial Army & Volunteer Revenue 916

Coombs, Mr Simon
Questions
Energy consumption, Fuels 124w
Food labelling, Nutrition & health 556
Housing Corporation, Finance 262w
Power industry, Capital investment 248w
Road construction, Public inquiries 43w

Cooperatives
Employment opportunities 719w
Food From Britain 483-4w
Wales 719w

Copeland
Unemployment 188w

Copyright
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 522-30
Publishing 1067-8
Recording equipment 592w
Television programmes 24w

Corbett, Mr Robin
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 41
Questions
Civil defence, Government grants to local authorities 9w
Civil defence, Local government expenditure 9w
Civil defence, Local government services 9w
Counterfeit manufacturing 592w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc
Arts finance, Local government reform (20.12.85) 733
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 308
Immigration control (18.12.85) 494-9, 502, 504, 507
Low pay (18.12.85) 491
Pensioners Right to Heat, Light & Communications Bill, 1R (18.12.85) 347-9
Questions
Armed forces training, El Salvador 525w
Armed forces training, Morocco 212w
British Gas Corporation, Tax yields 123w
Central America, EC aid 448-50w
Chile, Human rights 473-4w
District health authorities, Contracts for services 155w
Entry clearances, Dacca 624w
Honduras, Defence 473w
Honduras, Development aid 448w
Honduras, Refugees 207-8w
Hospital closures, NHS finance 503w
Hospital waiting lists, Greater London 558w
Hospital waiting lists, Surgery 155w
Immigrant detainees, Indian subcontinent 623-4w
Immigrants, Bangladesh 625w
Immigration controls 625w
Immigration controls, Bangladesh 623-4w
Imports, Morocco 138w
Industrial development 584-5w
Lembach, Pedro Fernandez, Political prisoners 474w
Middlesex Hospital, Hospital closures 155w
Morocco, Arms trade 134w
Morocco, Resources exploration 134w
Phosphates, Imports 184-5w
Primary health care 155w
Standing charges, Gas fuels 124-5w
Visas, Bangladesh 624w
Visas, Foreign tourists 132w
Visas, Sri Lanka 132w, 624w
Western Sahara, Recognition of states 133-4w

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Business statement (13.01.86) 776
Criminal Records Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1405-7
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1347
Members interests (17.12.85) 227, 228
Oral question time intervention (13.01.86) 767
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 322
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 785, 873
Questions
Business statement 1214-5
Teachers, Industrial disputes 144

Corneal Tissue Bill 1985/86
2R* (17.01.86) 1410

Cornish unit houses 331-2w
Defective housing 331-2w
Wales 331-2w

Cornwall
Tin (18.12.85) 539-43

Coronary bypass operations 238w
Hospital waiting lists 325w

Coroners 547w

Corporation tax
Small businesses 141w
Tax yields 359w

Corrie, Mr John
Questions
Hill livestock allowances, Scotland 294-5w
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd, Upper Waiting Hall 250w
Sea transport, Scottish Islands 163w

Cost benefit analysis
Defence research 907

Cost effectiveness 263w, 298w, 325-6w, 372w, 374w, 517w, 564w, 583w, 642w, 743-4w
Defence 564w
Defence procurement 372w
District health authorities 600-1w, 743-4w
Industrial development 586w
Regional health authorities 325-6w
Westland helicopters 517w

Cost per pupil
Assisted places scheme 708w
Northern Ireland 554w
Nursery schools 707-9w
Primary education 707-9w
Schools 708w

Couchman, Mr James
Debates etc
Business statement (13.01.86) 776
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1234-5

Council house sales 259-60w
Welwyn Hatfield 463w

Council house waiting lists 465w
Waiting lists 482w

Council housing
Costs 217w
Defective housing 103-4w
Empty housing 218-9w, 662w
Heating 719w
Rent arrears 257-60w
Waltham Forest (20.12.85) 717-24

Council housing finance 255-6w, 465-6w
Defective housing 465-6w

Council of Ministers
European Regional Development Fund 137-8w
Middle East 133w
Offices 463-4w
Order of Business 365w

Council of Scottish Agricultural Colleges 59-60w

Councillors
Metropolitan Police 459w

Counterfeit manufacturing 592w

County Hall 369w
Hypermarkets 369w
Local government reform 369w

County Palatine 329w
Magistrates 329w

Court of Appeal
Lee, Bruce 454w

Cox, Mr Tom
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1352, 1368, 1376-8
Questions
Dial-a-ride, Greater London 478w
Food surpluses, European Economic Community 277w
Housing finance, Greater London Council 216-8w
Overseas trade, USSR 1064-5
Prisoners, Petitions 4w
Sudan, Overseas aid 771-2

Co-responsibility levy 557, 560-1
Cereals 558
Milk 560-1

Craigen, Mr Jim
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 596, 627-9
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.12.85) 1347
Hospital closures, Ruchill Hospital (18.12.85) 377-8
Iron & steel industry, Glasgow (20.12.85) 697
Questions
Mental health services, Glasgow 615w
Shopping centres, Glasgow District Council 614-5w
Torture, Amnesty International 363-4w

Cranborne, Viscount
Debates etc
Afghanistan (20.12.85) 685
Questions
Business statement 1220
Occupational deafness, Marine engines 76w
Trade promotion, Marketing 298

Crayford School, Bexley 149
School closures 149

Cricklewood
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 694w
Social security claims 694w

Crime
Falkland Islands 32w
Law enforcement 457w
Statistics 457w

Crime prevention
Closed circuit television 340w
Housing design 175w
Street lighting 173w, 175w

Crimes of violence
European Assembly members 32-3w
Sentencing 341-2w
Women 127w, 275w

Criminal injuries compensation 131w
Rape 270-1w

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
Government grants 271w
Manpower 271w

Criminal investigation
Armed forces officers 525w
Drug crimes (19.12.85) 591
Falkland Islands 32w
Fraud 252-3w, 253-4w, 568-9w, 766-7, 768

Criminal proceedings
Costs 713w
Crown courts 454-5w
Fraud 153, 155-6, (14.01.86) 925-34
Government departments 567-8

Criminal Proceedings Arising From Fraud Review Committee 540w, (14.01.86) 925-34
Ministerial statements (14.01.86) 925-34

Criminal records
Disclosure of information (17.01.86) 1405-9

Criminal Records Bill 1985/86
2R (17.01.86) 1405-9

Criminal statistics 547w

Critchley, Mr Julian
Questions
North East Hampshire structure plan 730w

Crops
Agricultural research 2w
Common agricultural policy 2w
Marginal land 2w
Pulses & seeds 277w

Crouch, Mr David
Questions
Channel tunnel, Safety 758

Crown Agents (Amendment) Bill 1985/86
2R* (16.01.86) 1336
Money res (16.01.86) 1336

Crown courts
Criminal proceedings 454-5w
Fraud 454-5w
Juries 445-6w

Crown lands & estates
Diorama 655w
Rates & rating 49w

Crown Prosecution Service 159w
Manpower 159w

Crown Suppliers 335w
Fees & charges 335w

Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill 1985/86
1R (15.01.86) 1078-81

Cruelty to children 603w
Local government social services 437w

Cultural heritage
Gardens 357w

Cultural relations 208w
British Council 297

Cunningham, Dr John
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 311-3, 322
Questions
Cattle, Drug research 283w
Housing revenue accounts, Surpluses 664-70w
Housing subsidies, Expenditure 663-4w
Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 663w
Property Services Agency, Berkshire 669-72w
Rate equalisation, Greater London Council 108w
Unemployment, Copeland 188w

Curriculum
Business education 123w

Currie, Mrs Edwina
Debates etc
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 34
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1096
Questions
Board & lodging charges, Social security recipients 240w
Coal mining, Productivity 11-2

Custody officers 169-70w
Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 169-70w

Customs
Drug crimes 144-5w
Equipment 144-5w
Manpower 144w
Prosecutions 361w
Ships 144w

Customs officers 144-5w, 190w, 191w
Manpower 191w
North East region 190w
Northern region 190w, 191w
Tyne & Wear 144w

Cycle Tracks Act 1984 19w

Cycleways
Public footpaths 19w

Cyprus
Elections 32w
United Nations 32w

Dacca
Entry clearances 624w

Daily Telegraph 455w
Official secrets 455w

Dairy farming
Costs 560-1

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 173
Business questions point of order (16.01.86) 1224
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 395-402, 404, 410, 411, 412, 414
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 307-8
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1235
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1031, 1032
Oral question time point of order (18.12.85) 300
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 69
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 40-1, (13.01.86) 784-5, 874 (15.01.86) 1087, 1116, 1126, 1130, 1151-2
Westland helicopters, Solicitor-General (15.01.86) 1077
Questions
Agricultural & Food Research Council 336w
Business statement 1222
Cancer, EC action 584w
CERN, UK contributions 145
Channel crossing 475w
Channel crossing, Road accidents 765
Company accounts, Johnson Matthey 1068-9
Fisheries, South Atlantic 583-4w
Fishery protection, South Atlantic 584w
Foreign Affairs Select Committee, General Belgrano 287-8
Fraud, City of London 568-9w
Gardens, Scotland 357w
Growth promoting hormones, Black economy 613w
Honours, Political Honours Scrutiny Committee 3w
Immigration controls, Statistics 9-10w
Inquiries, Official secrets 768-9
Insider trading, Prosecutions 184w
Johnson Matthey 305w
Navy, Shipping 641w
Nuclear safeguards 609w
Postgraduate students, Science & technology research 579-80w
Science Research Council, Research finance 645w
Scientific civil service, Conditions of employment 16-7
Smith, James, Defence procurement 214w, 215w
Smoke & chimney gases, Polkemmet Bing 551-2w
Strategic defence initiative, Civil servants secondment 160w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 214w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence research 213w, 214w
Strategic defence initiative, Edinburgh University 910
Strategic defence initiative, Imports 213w
Strategic defence initiative, Intellectual property 184w, 213-4w
Strategic defence initiative, Lasers 214w
Strategic defence initiative, Scientists 265w
Strategic defence initiative, Tactical nuclear weapons 213w
Strategic defence initiative, Technical assistance 4w
Treaties, Space technology 208w
Tunnels, Psychology 407w
Waste disposal, Polkemmet 3
Welsh Plant Breeding Station, Overseas students 336w
Youth custody, Prisons 8w
Youth custody, Scotland 63w

Dartford tunnel 111w, 761
East London River Crossing 761
Private sector 762
Road construction 111w
Road tolls 761
Road traffic 762

Dash 7 aircraft 408w
Finance 408w

Data banks
Export promotion 587w

Data protection registrar 128w

Data protection tribunal 130w
Public appointments 130w

Davaar Island 583w
Lighthouses 479w

Davidson Pearce 581w

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil
Questions
Strategic defence initiative, Nuclear weapons deployment 907

Davies, Mr Ron
Debates etc
Johnson Matthey (18.12.85) 344-5
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 340
Questions
Cervical cancer, Mid Glamorgan 616-7w
Cervical cancer, Wales 616w, 617w, 618w
Environment protection, EC action 282w
Households, Wales 285w
Manufacturing industries, Wales 285w
Nuclear weapons tests, Personal injury compensation 905
Pesticides, Licensing 723w, 725w
Population, Wales 285w
Public sector assets, Privatisation 652w
Severn bridge, Road tolls 757
Staff-student ratios, Universities 121w
Unemployment, Wales 285w
Woolaway houses, Defective housing 167w
Young people, Police cautions 546-7w

Davis, Mr Terry
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 317
Questions
Marginal tax rates, Taxpayers 1195

Day nurseries
Taxation 141-2w

De Havilland 408w

Deakins, Mr Eric
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 307
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 201-4
Questions
Association of Chief Police Officers, Ministerial responsibility 127w
Cereals, Prices 557
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil service manpower 496w
EC integration 197w
Equal opportunities, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 33-4w

Housing investment programmes, Private rented housing 217w
Job creation schemes, South East region 299-300w
Metropolitan Police, Police powers 126-7w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 291
Overseas aid, Bilateral aid 447w
Production quotas, Cereals 555

Death
AIDS 70w
Building industry 52-4w
Coal mining 250-1w
Drinking & driving 112w
Ethiopia 40-1w
Hypothermia 321w, 322w
Mental patients 73-4w
Motorways 112w
Nuclear power stations 250w
Smoking related diseases 73-5w, 415-6w
South Africa 285-6
Surgery 601-2w

Death grants
Funerals 316-7w
Social Fund 316-7w

Debendox
Drug side effects 498-9w

Debendox Action Group 498-9w

Debts
Africa 308-9w
Central America 200w
Developing countries 204w
Farmers 282w
Overseas aid 308-9w
Severn bridge 756
South America 200w

Debts written off
Lothian Health Board 292w

Declarations of interest 161w, 482w, 505-6w, 734w
District health authorities 505-6w
Health Services Board 505w
Ministers 734w
Regional health authorities 505-6w

Deeds of Covenant 120w
Student grants 120w
Students 229-30w

Deep discounted stock 511w

Defective housing 16-7w, 103-4w, 167w, 254-5w, 331-2w, 466-7w, 576w
Cornish unit houses 331-2w
Council housing 103-4w
Council housing finance 465-6w
Easiform housing 16-7w
Government grants 254-5w
Local government expenditure 576w
Repairs & maintenance 466-7w
Smith houses 254-5w
Woolaway houses 167w

Defence
Channel ferries 535-6w
Cost effectiveness 564w
EC internal relations 474w
Guatemala 473w
Honduras 473w
Labour Party 567
Nimrod aircraft 98w

Defence Act 1842 373w
Public footpaths 373w

Defence attaches 608-9w

Defence contracts 911-2
British Aerospace 98-9w
Defence industries 915
EC countries 916
European fighter aircraft 910
GEC avionics 98w
Nimrod aircraft 97-8w, 912, 913
Overcharging 214w, 215w
Scotland 912
Scott Lithgow 642w, 914
Strategic defence initiative 214w
Submarines 641-2w, 911
Tenders 517w
Trident submarines 911
Type 23 frigates 913-4
VC10 aircraft 97w, 247w
Westland helicopters 515w, 534w, 535w

Defence equipment
Nuclear weapons 561w

Defence expenditure
Defence procurement 379w
European fighter aircraft 534-5w, 612w
Helicopters 535w
NATO 535w
Public expenditure 561w
Strategic defence initiative 560-1w
Tornado aircraft 534w, 611-2w
Trident 562w

Defence industries
Defence contracts 915
Personnel 379w
Tyne & Wear 913-4

Defence land
Building land 916-7
Land acquisition 916-7
Rainham marshes 561w
Road construction 561w

Defence procurement 155, 247w, (18.12.85) 385-6
Agusta helicopters 530w
Cammell Laird 912
Cost effectiveness 372w
Defence expenditure 379w
European fighter aircraft 909
Helicopters 520w, 529w, 532-3w, 534w, 609-10w, 610-1w
International cooperation 910
Mergers 719w
Navy 914
Smith, James 214w, 215w
USA 521w, 526-8w
VC10 aircraft 97w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering 912
Warships 914
West Germany 525w
Westland helicopters 155, 525-6w, 564, 566

Defence research
Chemical weapons 462w
Cost benefit analysis 907
Earthquakes 211w
Nuclear disarmament 906
Strategic defence initiative 213w, 214w, 906, 907
Technical assistance 908

Defence Select Committee
Civil service manpower 641w

Deficit financing
USA 648w

Democracy
Africa 208w

Demonstrations
Gartcosh 921
Northern Ireland 266w, 340w
Surveillance 266w, 340w

Dental charges exemptions 420w

Dental services
Fees & charges 147w

Departmental circulars
Cervical cancer 238-9w
Dept of Health & Social Security 494w
Marriage Act 1983 420w
NHS administration 420w

Departmental coordination
AIDS 556w

Departmental correspondence 497w, 580-1w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 497w
Dept of Transport 580-1w

Departmental forms
Administrative costs 154w
Administrative delays 154w

Departmental leaflets
Dept of Transport 581w
Local government reform 469w

Departmental publications
AIDS 70w
Education 113-4w
Students 38w

Departmental reports
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority 717w

Dependents
Families 506w

Deposited papers
House of Commons Library (16.01.86) 1209-12

Dept of Education & Science
In-service training 120w

Dept of Employment
Civil servants 18

Dept of Health & Social Security
Action on Smoking & Health 429w
Advertising agencies 411-4w
Civil servants 18, 19-20
Civil service manpower 414-6w, 595w
Departmental circulars 494w
Disclosure of information 497w
Equal opportunities 595-6w
Health Education Council 429w
Nairobi Conference 595w
Personal records 497w
Public appointments 504w
Statistics 604w
Women 504w

Dept of Health & Social Security local offices
Civil servants 497w
Civil service manpower 322w, 496w
Civil service recruitment 153w, 496w
Civil service redundancies 496w
Cricklewood 694w
Departmental correspondence 497w
East Midlands 496w
Greater London 738w
Harlesden 693-4w
Heating 503-4w
Inner city areas 736w
Labour turnover 736w
Neasden 693-4w
Opening hours 503-4w
Secretarial staff 496w
Slough 739-40w
Social security recipients 322w

Dept of the Environment
Efficiency scrutinies 263w
Local government reform 258w
Okehampton bypass 371w

Dept of Trade & Industry
Advertising 23w
Advertising agencies 21-3w
Local government reform 24w

Dept of Transport
Departmental correspondence 580-1w
Departmental leaflets 581w
Efficiency scrutinies 298w
Local government reform 47-8w
Okehampton bypass 407w

Derbyshire
Health service staff 322-3w, 509w
Hospital waiting lists 322w
Hospitals 323w
Pupil-teacher ratios 289w
School leaving 645w
School leaving certificates 645-6w

Derelict land grants 371-2w
Glory Hole 464w

Derelict land grants, Specific cases 464w

Deserts
Water supply 770-1

Design
Prison 177w

Deterrence theory 563w
Nuclear weapons deployment 915

Nuclear weapons policy 915
Strategic defence initiative 907-8

Developing countries
Debts 204w
Foreign aid 550-1w
International Monetary Fund 593w
Overseas aid 550-1w

Development agencies
Northern region 1195-6

Development aid
Aid financed trade 770
El Salvador 448w
Food 770
Honduras 448w
Manpower 769
North Yemen 447-8w
Rural areas 770
Sudan 772

Devolution
Northern Ireland 565

Devonport Dockyard 374w, 381w
Management 381w
Shipbuilding 374w

Dewar, Mr Donald
Debates etc
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 396
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 692-3, 695
Questions
Business expansion scheme, Scotland 652w
Drinking & driving, Scottish courts 359w
Drug abuse, Scottish courts 358-9w
Parliamentary private secretaries 348-52w
Police interrogation, Scotland 357w
Prison population, Scotland 357-8w
Remand in custody, Scottish courts 357w
Summary trial, Scottish courts 357w, 358w

DHSS Circular House of Commons (85) 22 503w

DHSS Circular SI2/85 553w

DHSS local offices
Civil service manpower 509w
Greater London 738w
Labour turnover 738w
Supplementary benefits 497w
Wick 499w

Dial-a-ride 478w
Greater London 478w

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc
Business statement (13.01.86) 775
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 786
Questions
Child care, Ministerial responsibility 552w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence research 907

Dicks, Mr Terry
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 324

Diet & disease
Handicapped 78w
Medical research 78w

Dietary allowances 741-2w

Diets
East Sutton Park Open Prison 625w

Diorama
Architectural conservation 655w
Crown lands & estates 655w

Diplomatic relations
Argentina 198w, 199w
Polisario Front 133-4w

Diplomatic service
Chile 298
Civil service recruitment 297-8
Jamaica 298
Overseas trade 203-4w
Trade promotion 297-8

Director of Public Prosecutions
Government grants 253-4w

DIR8O/778/EEC 12w

Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill 1985/86
2R (17.01.86) 1346-1404

Disadvantaged
Supplementary benefits 154-5

Disallowed questions
Speakers rulings & statements (13.01.86) 758, (15.01.86) 1058

Disaster relief
Colombia 283-4
Ethiopia 447w
Food surpluses 329w
Sudan 447w

Disciplinary proceedings 235-6w, 312w
Hospital consultants 312w
Hospital staff 235-6w

Disclosure of information
Adoption 700w
Artificial Limb & Appliance Centres Review 600w
Civil servants 520w
Contracts for services 702w
Criminal records (17.01.86) 1405-9
Dept of Health & Social Security 497w
Electoral register 128w
General Belgrano 287-8
Government departments 446w
Inquiries 629w
Law officers 769
Ministers correspondence 734w
Official secrets 769
Pollution control 369w
Prosthetics 600w
Public participation in planning 369w
Westland helicopters 515w, 520w, 919, 920-1

Disclosure of information
Immigrant detainees 457-8w

Discounts
Vaccination 151w

Discrimination
AIDS 71w
Viral diseases 71w
Westland helicopters 518w, 519w

Disease control 63w, 72w, 427w, 613w
AIDS 72w

Diseases
Prescription charges exemptions 501-2w

Dismissal
Pocock, Leslie 731w
Secretaries of state 516w
Teachers 150

Disposable income
Social security reform 694w

Distribution & Media Sales (UK) 243w
Inquiries 243w

District health authorities
Capital investment 507w
Cervical cancer 570-1
Contracts for services 155w, 508w
Cost effectiveness 600-1w, 743-4w
Declarations of interest 505-6w
Expenditure 238w, 702-3w
Hospitals 84-96w
Merseyside 149-52w
Primary health care 602w, 702-3w
Screening 324-5w

Dixon, Mr Don
Debates etc
Industrial tribunals (18.12.85) 533, 537
Questions
British Shipbuilders 587w
Business statement 1216
Coal mining, Redundant mineworkers payments scheme 12
Sewers, Water authorities 572-3w
Water authorities, Privatisation 679-82w
Water supply, Water authorities 573-4w
Water supply industry, Privatisation 573w

Djibouti
UK companies abroad 365w

Dobson, Mr Frank
Debates etc
Board & Lodging charges (17.12.85) 172
Homelessness, Greater London (20.12.85) 706
Oldchurch Hospital (13.01.86) 901, 902
Questions
Aids for handicapped, Blind 411w
Aircraft, Fire prevention 582w
Aircraft, Fire resistant materials 582w
Amenity beds, NHS & private practice 311w
Amenity beds, Regional health authorities 314-6w
Artificial insemination, Clinics 325w
Blind, Social services 697w
Blood, Imports 326w
Cancer, North East Thames Regional Health Authority 501w
Cervical cancer, Administrative delays 699w
Cervical cancer, Departmental circulars 238-9w
Cervical cancer, Screening 239w, 324-5w, 439w, 500w, 501w, 569-70, 699w
Child health 237-8w
Child health, Medical research 602w
Child health, Social class 602w
Cruelty to children 603w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Statistics 604w
District health authorities, Capital investment 507w
District health authorities, Contracts for services 508w
District health authorities, Cost effectiveness 600-1w, 743-4w
District health authorities, Expenditure 238w, 702-3w
Doctors surgeries, government grants 603w
Drug abuse, Family doctors 505w
Educational health services 600w
Family doctors, Patients 325w
Fraud, Members correspondence 252-3w
Health service ancillary staff, Patients 235w
Health service staff, Housing 603w
Health service staff, Management 235w
Health service staff, Pay 312-3w
Health services, Contracts for services 236w
Health services, Greater London 234w
Health Services Board, Declaration of interest 505w
Health services finance, Greater London 311w
Health services finance, Sponsorship 311w
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 499-500w, 604w
Hospital closures, Sick leave 324w
Hospital consultants, Breach of contract 699w
Hospital consultants, Conditions of employment 312w
Hospital consultants, Contracts of employment 312w
Hospital consultants, NHS & private practice 601w
Hospital discharges, Community care 236-7w
Hospital Hygiene Services, Bromley Health Authority 601w
Hospital length of stay 235w, 604w
Hospital staff, Disciplinary proceedings 235-6w
Hospital waiting lists, Coronary bypass operations 325w
Hospitals 605w
Hospitals, Construction costs 234-6w
Hospitals, Fires 234w, 438w, 697w
Hospitals, Food poisoning 605w
Hospitals, Peterborough Health Authority 326w
Hospitals, Sponsorship 605w
Hypothermia, Death 321w
Kidney failure, Kidney patients 699-700w
Kidneys, Transplant surgery 310-1w
Local government expenditure, Voluntary organisations 237w
London Marathon, Government grants 263w
Lothian health board, Debts written off 292w

NHS, Contracts for services 385-96w, 436-8w, 702w
NHS, Hospitals 84-96w
NHS, Management 326w
NHS, Pay 312w, 557-9w
NHS, Privatisation 311w, 601w
NHS finance, Greater London 145-8w, 311w
NHS finance, Northern Ireland 268-70w
NHS finance, Teaching hospitals 312w
NHS Management Inquiry 326w
Nurses, Clothing 234w
Nursing homes, Handbooks 605w
Patients, Family doctors 699w
Personal social services, Consultants 323-4w
Prescription charges exemptions, Diseases 501-2w
Primary health care, District health authorities 602w
Primary health care, Expenditure 602w
Primary health care, Homelessness 606w
Primary health care, Inner city areas 602-3w, 606w
Primary health care, NHS finance 703-4w
Pupils 698w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper". Social security recipients 566
Regional health authorities, Codes of practice 319w
Regional health authorities, Cost effectiveness 325-6w
Regional health authorities, Declarations of interest 505-6w
Regional health authorities, Pay 235w
Residential care, Codes of practice 604w
Richmond Terrace, House of Commons accommodation 261w
Road accidents, Traffic lights 582w
Road traffic offences 569w
School nurses, Educational health services 697-8w
Scottish health boards, Capital investment 164-6w
Spectacles, NHS 326-7w
Spectacles, Prices 238w, 604w
Stanley Royd Hospital, Food poisoning 325w, 605w
Surgery, Death 601-2w
Surgery, Hospital waiting lists 238w
Surgery, Infectious diseases 325w, 440w, 605w
Teaching hospitals, NHS finance 508-10w
Voluntary organisations, Local government reform 603w

Dock workers
Radioactive waste disposal 221-2w

Dockyards
British Aerospace 718w
Companies 718w
Management 718w
Manpower 102w, 374w
Privatisation 718w
Redundancy 215-6w
Southampton 294
Transport 374w

Doctors
Computers 77-8w

Doctors surgeries 603w, 699w
Government grants 603w

Dog fighting (19.12.85) 664, (15.01.86) 1078-81
Public petitions (19.12.85) 664

Dogs
Imports 5w
Licensing 217-8w
USA 5w

Dollar
Exchange rates 1202

Domestic energy conservation
Energy efficiency 331w
Energy Efficiency Year 330-1w
Government grants 629w

Dormand, Mr Jack
Questions
Coal mining, Investment 26w
Government grants, British Film Institute 35-8w
Regional aid, Northern region 1195-6
Research, Civil service dispersal 585-6w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w

Dorrell, Mr Stephen
Questions
Youth training scheme, Skilled workers 150-1

Dorset
Forestry Commission 724-5w
Railway electrification 44w

Double taxation
Canada 103w, 307-8w
Income tax 103w

Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Canada) Order 1985 103w, 307-8w

Douglas, Mr Dick
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1149
Questions
Business statement 1218-9
Energy efficiency, Energy prices 8
Ministers domestic visits, Coal mining 1-2
Strategic Defence Initative 194w
Submarines, Shipbuilding 911

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Questions
European fighter aircraft, Defence contracts 910

Dounreay
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 109-10w, 160w, (14.01.86) 1049-56
Planning inquiries (14.01.86) 1049-56

Dover, Mr Den
Questions
Channel crossing 920
Double taxation, Canada 307-8w

Drake, Jacqueline 701w

Draught-proofing materials 315w
Exceptional needs payments 315w

Drift nets 563, 614w
Fishing gear 614w

Drinking & driving (18.12.85) 383-5, 406w
Christmas 567-8w
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 508-21
Convictions 132w
Death 112w
Publicity 583w
Road accidents 112w, 481w
Scottish courts 359w

Driving
Channel tunnel (18.12.85) 395-414
Tunnels 407w

Driving instruction
Bus crews 758

Driving offences (18.12.85) 508-21

Driving tests
Dyslexia 478w

Drug abuse
Family doctors 505w
Health education 155-6w
Heroin 132w
Publicity 505w, 557-8w
Scottish courts 358-9w

Drug crimes
Criminal investigation (19.12.85) 591
Customs 144-5w
Greater London 459w
Local government expenditure 6-7w
Malaysia 569w
Northern Region 190w
Personal property (19.12.85) 591
Police 6w
Regional crime squads 6w
Ships 144w

Drug research
Cattle 283w

Drug side effects
Debendox 498-9w

Drug Trafficking Offences Bill 1985/86 (19.12.85) 591

Drug
Animal husbandry 613w

Dual Carriageways 765-6
Berkhamsted bypass 765-6

Dubs, Mr Alfred
Debates etc
Immigration control (18.12.85) 499-503, 506
Social security, Public petitions (20.12.85) 672
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1156-7
Questions
Africa, Food aid from EC 329w
British citizenship 715w
Defence expenditure, Public expenditure 561w
Entry clearances, Administrative costs 640w
Entry clearances, Immigration appeals 715w
Hong Kong, Overseas aid 772
India, British residents abroad 639-40w
India, Special voucher scheme 640w
Naturalisation 714w
Oil prices, Economic planning 648w
Political refugees, Immigration applications 714w
Rape, Criminal injuries compensation 270-1w
Refugees 714w
Road humps, road traffic control 405w
Special voucher scheme, India 715w
Taxicards, Greater London 476w
Unemployment, Wandsworth 398-9w

Dumping
Licensing 614w

Dunn, Mr Bob, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Income distribution 643-4w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 441w
National Youth Advisory Council, Public appointments 287-8w
Pre-school education, School population 712w
Private education, Pupils 442w
Pupil-teacher ratios 711w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Derbyshire 289w
Sacred Heart of Mary School, Upminster 646w
School leaving certificates, Derbyshire 645-6w
School meals 709-10w
School meals, Nutrition 644w
School meals, Per capita costs 643w
Schools, Class sizes 711w
Schools, Cost per pupil 708w
Schools & parents, Parents rights 39w
Special educational needs, Judgments 288-9w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 544w

Dunnet Committee see Badgers & Bovine Tuberculosis (No 2) Review

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 305
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 698
Questions
AIDS, Disease control 72w
Iraq, Terrorism 200w
Multiple sclerosis, Medical treatment 76-7w

Durham Prison 170w

Duty solicitors 169-70w, 446-7w
Greater London 446-7w

Dwyer, Jean (20.12.85) 725-30

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 984, 985

Prime Ministers question time point of order (19.12.85) 568
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1107, 1161, 1162, 1163
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 5-6
Economic growth, Manufacturing industries 1199-1200
Fraud, Criminal investigation 766-7
London Commodity Exchange, Upper Waiting Hall 633w
South Africa, Foreign policy 195w

Dyslexia
Driving tests 478w
Special educational needs 288-9w

Eadie, Mr Alexander
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1357
Questions
Coal mining, Imports 8-9
Coal mining, Industrial health & safety 7
Coal mining, Industrial relations 12-3
Coal mining, Scotland 2-3
Electricity generation, Nuclear power 5
National Coal Board, Compensation 717w
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Departmental reports 717w

Early retirement
Ministers of religion 445w
Ministry of Defence 215-6w
NHS 429-32w

Early warning systems
Chemical weapons 462w
Military aircraft 562w

Earthquakes
Defence research 211w

Eastform housing 16-7w
Defective housing 16-7w
Housing Defects Act 1984 17w

East Anglia
Water pollution 257w

East London river crossing 111w, 761
Dartford tunnel 761
Tenders 111w

East Midlands
Dept of Health & Social security local offices 496w

East Sutton Park Open Prison 625w
Diets 625w

East West relations
Nuclear test ban 290-1w

Eastham, Mr Ken
Debates etc
Manchester Airport (18.12.85) 351-2
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 43, (13.01.86) 789, (15.01.86) 1117-20
Questions
British Aerospace, Defence contracts 98-9w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 10
Falkland Islands, Hospitals 125w
Falkland Islands Company, Hospitals 125w
Food additives, Nutrition & health 276w
Gulf war, United Nations 206-7w
Nimrod aircraft, Repairs & maintenance 97-8w
VC10 aircraft, Military aircraft 97w

EC accession
Horticulture 278-9w

EC action
Cancer 584w
Cereals 276w
Coastal shipping 762-3
Environment protection 282w
Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1027-48
Fisheries (16.01.86) 1240-67
Food surpluses 279w
Legal costs 42w
Lighting 42w
Multifibre arrangement 184w

EC Agricultural Council
Common agricultural policy 351-2w

EC aid
Central America 448-50w
Overseas aid 447w

EC budget
EC Foreign Affairs Council 202w
UK contributions 511w, 655w

EC budget contributions
Portugal 207w

EC Budget Council 48-9w

EC countries
Aerospace industry 452w
Coastal shipping 762, 763
Defence contracts 916
Helicopters 515-6w
Higher education 117w
Housing stock 16w
Unemployed benefits 72w
VAT 305-6w
Water supply 468w

EC Draft 7283/85 (14.01.86) 1027-48

EC Draft 8662/85 (16.01.86) 1240-67

EC Draft 9284/85 (16.01.86) 1240-67

EC Draft 10047/85/1 (16.01.86) 1240-67

EC Draft 10047/85/2 (16.01.86) 1240-67

EC Draft 10047/85/3 (16.01.86) 1240-67

EC Energy Council
Alternative energy 10

EC external relations
Central America 191w
Contadora Group 191w
Falkland Islands 192w
Nicaragua 201w
South Africa 194-5w, 195-6w

EC Fisheries Council 487-8w
Common fisheries policy 282w
Ministerial statements (19.12.85) 584-9

EC Foreign Affairs Council
EC budget 202w
Ministerial statements (18.12.85) 301-9

EC grants & loans
Scottish Islands 482w

EC integration 197w, 198w, 365-6w

EC internal relations 201w, 202w
Defence 474w

EC internal trade 1072
Financial services 1072
Horticulture 278-9w

EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 188-9w

EC law
Conditions of employment 552w
Food additives 276w
Motor vehicle safety 111w
Sea pollution 223-8w
Voting methods 552w

EC reform 197w, 198w, 201w, 365-6w, 521w
Common agricultural policy 278w, 561
European Assembly 200-1w
Parliament 201-2w
Voting methods 201w

EC Research Council 244w

EC Steel Council 25-6w

EC trade
Manufactured goods 453w
Market share 453w

Economic growth 651w
Interest rates 1200
Manufacturing industries 1199-1200, 1200-1
Regional planning & development 586w

Economic planning
Oil prices 648w

Economic regions
Hypothermia 322w
Unemployment 301-2w, 638-9w

Economic sanctions
Apartheid 1074
Commonwealth 294-5
Employment 294
Lesotho 923-4
South Africa 195-6w, 293, 294-5, 295-6

Economic situation 651w
Wales 758

Ecuador
Export credit guarantees 1060-1

Edinburgh University 910
Strategic defence initiative 910

Education
Departmental publications 113-4w

Education Act 1944 708w

Education Act 1980 122w
School choice 122w

Education support grants (16.12.85) 107-25, 126, 289-90w, 713w
Expenditure 289-90w, 713w

Education Support Grants (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 1985 (16.12.85) 126

Education welfare officers 185w
Child care 185w

Education (Amendment) Bill 1985/86
Rem stages (16.12.85) 107-25

Educational finance
Government grants 289-90w
Higher education 338-40w
Powys 1207-8
University finance 116-7w
Voluntary schools 340w

Educational health services 600w
School nurses 697-8w

Educational psychology
Local government staff 338w
Manpower 338w
Professional qualifications 337-8w
Training 337-8w

Educational qualifications
Educational standards 442w
School leaving 122w

Educational standards
Educational qualifications 442w
Higher education admission 115w
Schools 117w
Selective schools 117w
Teachers 442w
Youth training scheme 150

Edwards, Rt Hon Nicholas, *Secretary of State for Wales*
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Ministerial statements (18.12.85) 331-40
Questions
Capital investment, Wales 332w
Cash limits, Wales 619w
Cervical cancer, Mid Glamorgan 616-7w
Cervical cancer, Wales 616w, 617w, 618w
Cooperatives, Wales 719w
Government grants to local authorities, Capital investment 21w
Government grants to local authorities, Wales 617-8w
Housing insulation, Wales 719w
Job centres, Wales 719-20w
Manufacturing industries, Wales 285w
Rate support grants, Wales 618-9w
Shops, Cardiff West 565w
Small firms service, Wales 286w
Unemployment, Wales 285w
Wales Tourist Board, Government grants 286w
Welsh Development Agency, Capital investment 615-6w
Welsh Office, Civil service manpower 284w

Efficiency scrutinies 263w, 298w
Dept of the Environment 263w
Dept of Transport 298w

***Eggar, Mr Tim**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs*
Debates etc
Afghanistan (20.12.85) 686-90
Oral question time point of order (18.12.85) 300
Owoseja, Oluronke, Kidnapping (20.12.85) 728-30
Questions
Afghanistan, Foreign policy 204w
Anglo-Irish Agreement 132w
BBC external services, Electromagnetic interference 206w
BBC external services, Satellite broadcasting 206w
British Council 192w
British Council, Cultural relations 297
British Council, Finance 297
British embassies, USSR 366w
Budapest Cultural Forum 208w
Central America, EC external relations 191w
Chile, Arms embargoes 199w
Chile, Human rights 200w
Cyprus, United Nations 32w
El Salvador, Armed forces training 202w
Entry clearances, Fees and charges 291w
Equal opportunities, Foreign and Commonwealth Office 33-4w
Falkland Islands, Crime 32w
Falkland Islands, Criminal investigation 32w
Falkland Islands, EC external relations 192w
Falkland Islands, Fisheries 364w
Falkland Islands, General Belgrano 288
Foreign Affairs Select Committee, General Belgano 287-8
Honduras, Refugees 207-8w
Israel, Arab boycott 33w
Nicaragua, Airspace 283
Nicaragua, Coffee 284
Nicaragua, EC external relations 201w
Nicaragua, Ministers visits abroad 283
Nicaragua, USA 283-4
Overseas trade, Security 291w
Philippines, Foreign policy 31-2w
Sri Lanka, Foreign relations 202w
Terrorism, International co-operation 207w
Torture, Amnesty International 363-4w
Tristan da Cunha, Companies 364w
Tristan da Cunha, Overseas trade 33w
Turkey, Political prisoners 191w
USA, Central America 205w

El Salvador
Armed forces training 202w, 525w
Development aid 448w

Elderly
Community policing 155

Elections
Cyprus 32w
European Assembly 204w
School governors 152
Thamesmead Community Trust 259w

Electoral register
Computer privacy 128w
Disclosure of information 128w
Metropolitan Police 128w
Police 128w

Electric lighting
Fire prevention 175w

Electric power
Railway transport 297w

Electricity
Standing charges 124-5w

Electricity area boards
Industrial energy prices 13

Electricity generation 3-4
Nuclear power 4-5
Nuclear power stations 3-4
Wind power 27w

Electricity supply industry
Tax yields 123w

Electricity tariffs
Landlord & tenant 23-4w

Electromagnetic interference
BBC external services 206w

Emergency planning 456w, 523w, 714w
Civil defence 523w
Local government staff 456w
Royal Observer Corps 714w

Emergency powers
Northern Ireland (16.01.86) 1307-30, 1331-5

Emery, Sir Peter
Debates etc
By election writs, Northern Ireland (17.12.85) 139
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 56-9
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 44
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 6

Employees contributions
Occupational pensions 320-1w
Pensions 320w

Employers contributions
National insurance contributions 510-1w
Pensions 320w

Employers statutory sick pay scheme (15.01.86) 1175-82

Employment
Car industry 1199
Economic sanctions 294
Graduates 336-8w
Inner city areas 397w
London docklands railway 471-2w
Manufacturing industries 398w
Service industries 398w
Small businesses 303w
South Africa 196w, 1074
Welwyn Hatfield 399w
Westland helicopters 1204

Employment discrimination
Exservicemen 906

Employment opportunities 179-83w
Cooperatives 719w
Greater London 299-300w
Hypermarkets 13w
London docklands 220w, 467w
Taxation 650w

Employment Protection (Variation of Limits) Order 1985 (19.12.85) 662

Employment schemes
Glasgow 57-8w
Government grants 179-83w
Newham 51w
Vocational training 186w
Wolverhampton 186w

Empty housing
Council housing 218-9w, 662w
Home Office 458-9w
Private sector housing 263-4w
Public sector housing 263-4w

Energy conservation
Alternative energy 5
Low pay 315w

Energy consumption
Fuels 124w
Lead free petrol 635w

Energy efficiency 7-8, 307w, 330-1w
Building regulations 8
Domestic energy conservation 331w
Energy prices 8
Government assistance to industry 307w
Government grants 331w
Industrial energy conservation 7-8
Private investment 7-8
Tax incentives 307w

Energy efficiency year 7-8, 13w, 330-1w
Building regulations 13w
Consumer organisations 331w
Domestic energy conservation 330-1w
Thermal insulation 13w
Voluntary organisations 331w

Energy prices
Energy efficiency 8
Government assistance to industry 13

Energy research
Alternative energy 4, 634w
Natural gas production 26-7w
Offshore drilling 26-7w

Enterprise allowance scheme
Administrative delays 56-7w
Company liquidations 57w
Government grants 56-7w
Small businesses 57w
Women 57w

Enterprise & deregulation unit 56w
Costs 56w

Entry clearances (18.12.85) 494-507
Administrative costs 640w
Dacca 624w
Fees & charges 291w
Immigration appeals 715w
Islamabad 624w

Environment protection
Channel tunnel 758
Common agricultural policy 282w
EC action 282w
Opencast mining 5

Environmental impact assessment 15w
Channel crossing 15w

Equal opportunities
Dept of Health & Social Security 595-6w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 33-4w
Home Office 5w, 127w
Law reform 5w
Women 5w

Equal opportunities officers 31w
Civil service recruitment 31w
Management & Personnel Office 31w

Equipment
Customs 144-5w
Fire services 274w

Estimates days
House of Commons select committees 693w
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 180-218, 257

Ethiopia
Death 40-1w
Disaster relief 447w
Food aid 40w
Malnutrition 40-1w

Ethnic groups
Prison population 170w
Self-employed 399w

Ethnic minorities
Community radio 625w

Ethnic monitoring 130-1w, 399w
Probation 130-1w

Europe
Nuclear weapons 204w
Security 292-3

European Assembly 202w
EC reform 200-1w
Elections 204w

European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund
Intervention stock 283w

European Assembly members
Crimes of violence 32-3w

European Commission
Westland helicopters 515w

European Communities 206w
Competition 591-2w
National anthems 521w
Oral questions (18.12.85) 300
Tax harmonisation 521w
Voting methods 193-4w

European Communities (Spanish & Portuguese Accession) Bill (HL) 1985/86
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591

European Court of Human Rights
British dependent territories 736w
Government Communications Headquarters 207w

European Court of Justice
Invalid care allowance 701w
Westland helicopters 518w

European Economic Community
Construction costs 463-4w
Food surpluses 277w, 279w
Helicopters 533w
Treaties 364w
USA 1059

European fighter aircraft 612w, 909, 915
Defence contracts 910
Defence expenditure 534-5w, 612w
Defence procurement 909
International cooperation 563w, 909, 916

European monetary system 307w
Interest rates 1191-2

European Regional Development Fund
Council of Ministers 137-8w

European Security Conference
Stockholm 292

European Social Fund
Youth training scheme 299w

Evans, Gareth 629w

Evennett, Mr David
Questions
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 188-9w
Local enterprise agencies, Local authorities 303-4w
Local government expenditure, Greater London Council 219w
School closures, Crayford School, Bexley 149

Evidence
Antidumping 589-90w
Sexual offences 290w

Ewing, Mr Harry
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1232-3
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 81-5, 94, 95, 97
Questions
Business statement 1216-7
Iron & steel industry, Factory closures 1070-1

Ex gratia payments 231w
NHS complaints 231w

Examinations
Industrial disputes 442w

Exceptional circumstances additions
Social security benefits rules 69w

Exceptional needs payments 739w
Draught-proofing materials 315w
Expenditure 439w
Families 701w
Funerals 436w
Maternity benefits 436w
Severe weather payments 71-2w
Supplementary benefits 321-2w

Exchange rates
Dollar 1202
Industry 509-10w
Interest rates 1198
International economic relations 1202
Mark 650w
Sterling 651w
Trade competitiveness 566

Exclusion clauses (20.12.85) 673-80

Executive officers 361w

Exhaust emissions
EC action (14.01.86) 1027-48

Exhibitions
Gas safety 245w
Social services 556w
Upper Waiting Hall 607-8w
Yorkshire Water Colour Society 34-5w

Export controls
Machine tools 361w

Export credit guarantees
Administrative delays 1060-1
Cereals 242-3w
Ecuador 1060-1

Export Credits Guarantee Department
Financial targets 1061
Ultraleisure 449-50w

Export of live animals
Horses 485w

Export promotion
Data banks 587w
Government grants 1060
Soft loans 1060
Turkey 1060

Exports
Advisory services 203-4w
Aerospace industry 632w
Coal 8-9
Iron & steel 1060, 1068
Sheep meat 559
Wealth 1061
Wood 332w

Exservicemen
Children 906
Community programme 637-8w
Employment discrimination 906
Nuclear weapons tests 906
Radiation hazards 563w, 609w, 905-6

External financing limits
London Docklands Development Corporation 472w
North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board 164w
Water authorities 572w, 730-2w

Eyre, Sir Reginald
Questions
Channel crossing, Road traffic 345w
Smith houses, Defective housing 254-5w

Factor VIII 416w
Blood 416w

Factories
Helicopters 530w

Factory closures
Garcosh 1070-1, 1071-2
Garcosh Steelworks 591w
Iron & steel industry 591w, 1070-1
National Coal Board 329-30w

Factory Inspectorate
North West region 188w

"Fairer & Faster Route to Major Road Construction" 756
Road construction 756

"Faith in the City"
Civil servants secondment 521w

Falkland Islands
Conventional war 522w
Crime 32w
Criminal investigation 32w
EC external relations 192w
Ferries 522w
Fisheries 364w, 562-3
Fishing limits 562
General Belgrano 288
Helicopters 601w
Hospitals 125w
Ministers visits abroad 212w
Peace negotiations 191-2w
United Nations 191-2w

Falkland Islands Company 125w
Hospitals 125w

Fallon, Mr Michael
Questions
Airports, Privatisation 478w
Fraud, City of London 153
National income, Taxation 648w
Public expenditure, Per capita costs 360w
Regional aid, Northern region 589w, 1066
Transport supplementary grants 168-9w

Families
Dependents 506w
Exceptional needs payments 701w
Handicapped children 315-6w
Homelessness 465-6w, 651w
Households 506w
Income support scheme 318w
Low incomes 74-6w
Standard of living 418-9w
Supplementary benefits 700-1w
Taxation 646w

Family courts 446w
Family courts review 446w

Family credit (16.12.85) 21-34, 435-6w, 495w, 596w, 694-5w, 696w
Social security benefits disqualification 434w
Social security claims 435w, 495w
Social security reform 596-7w, 694-5w
Strike benefits 495w
Tax rates & bands 696w

Family credits
Social security reform 598w

Family doctors
Drug abuse 505w
Patients 325w, 699w

Family income
Indirect taxation 306-7w

Family income supplement
Social security reform 596-7w

Family income supplements
Social security recipients 434w, 498w

Family Planning Association 80w
Government grants 80w
Health Education Council 80w

Family practitioner committees
Audit 154w, 607w
Computer applications 737-8w

Farm incomes 281w

Farmers
Debts 282w
Severe weather payments 209w

Farr, Sir John
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.88) 900
Questions
Antidumping, Evidence 589-90w
Married women, Retirement pensions 409w
Middle East, Foreign policy 193w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w
Trident, Contracts 562w

Farrakhan, Louis 627w

Fashion
Naval bases 97w

Fast reactors
France 29w
International cooperation 29w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 109-10w

Fatchett, Mr Derek
Questions
Bank of England 652w
Leeds General Infirmary, Building repairs 154w
Lloyds of London, Inquiries 1069
Local government reform, Civil service manpower 15w, 24w, 258w
Local government reform, Dept of Transport 47-8w
Local government reform, Home Office 11-2w
Local government reform, Treasury 49-50w
Water supply, Leeds 220w

Fats
Food labelling 277w, 556-7

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 174
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1270, 1284-6

Official Report (16.01.86) 1213
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 31
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 783
Questions
Business statement 1219-20
Middle East, Peace negotiations 289-90
Palestine 202w

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1235
Questions
Diplomatic service, Overseas trade 203-4w

Fayed, Mohammed 628w

Fees & charges
Airports 733w
Company registration 136w
Crown Suppliers 335w
Dental services 147w
Entry clearances 291w
Firearms certificates 274w

Fenner, Mrs Peggy, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Civil service manpower 279-80w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Income 280-1w
Agricultural land, Land use 558-9
Agricultural research, Crops 2w
Animal husbandry, Antibiotics 485-6w
Badgers & Bovine Tuberculosis (No 2) Review 579w
Brucellosis, Cattle diseases 284w
Brucellosis, Slaughterhouses 283w
Cattle, Drug research 283w
Common agricultural policy, Crops 2w
Farmers, Debts 282w
Food additives 275w
Food additives, EC law 276w
Food additives, Food industry 276w
Food additives, Food standards 486w
Food additives, Nutrition & health 276w
Food labelling 555-6
Food labelling, Chocolate 557
Food labelling, Fats 277w, 556-7
Food labelling, Food additives 556
Food labelling, Nutrition & health 556
Food standards, Nutrition & health 277-8w
Forestry Commission, Land acquisition 724-5w
Growth promoting hormones, Black economy 613w
Horses, Animal welfare 281-2w
Horses, Export of live animals 485w
Horses, Markets 560
Horticulture, EC internal trade 278-9w
Pesticides, Fenvalerate 484w
Pesticides, Licensing 725w

Fenvalerate
Pesticides 484w

Fermanagh & South Tyrone
By election writs (17.12.85) 139

Ferries
Falkland Islands 522w

Field, Mr Frank
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 170-1
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 698
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 30
Questions
Board & lodging charges, Young people 418w
Civil disorder, Haringey 343w
Exceptional needs payments, Draught-proofing materials 315w
Families, Exceptional needs payments 701w
Families, Supplementary benefits 700-1w
Handicapped children, Families 315-6w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 701w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 696w
Income, Social security reform 696w
Income support scheme, Young people 701w
Low pay, Marginal tax rates 594-6w
Maternity benefits, Public expenditure 697w
Maternity benefits, Social security reform 697w
Ministers of religion, Early retirement 445w

Fields, Mr. Terry
Questions
Artificial Limb & Appliance Centres Review 740w
Fire services, Equipment 274w
Mary Rose, Ancient monuments 678w

Fife
Civil service manpower 361w
Ministry of Defence 381w, 643w

Film industry
British Film Institute 35-8w

Financial institutions
Fraud (18.12.85) 433-72

Financial institutions (18.12.85) 346
Bank of England 359w
Banks 309w
City of London 360w
Investment in financial assets (14.01.86) 938-1024

Financial services 135-6w, 589w, (14.01.86) 938-1024, 1057, 1069, 1191
Confederation of British Industry 1057
EC internal trade 1072
Greater London 1072
Securities & Investment Board 1057

Financial Services Bill 1985/86
1R (18.12.85) 346
2R (14.01.86) 135-6w, 589w, 938-1024, 1057, 1069
Money res (14.01.86) 1025-6
Ways & means res (14.01.86) 1026
Fraud 135-6w
Lloyds of London 589w, 1057-8, 1069
Members interests 1058

Financial Services Bill 1985/86
Lloyds of London 1069-70

Financial targets
Exports Credits Guarantee Department 1061
Ordnance survey 104w
Post Office 450-1w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Flats, Service charges 677w
Westland helicopters 567
Westland helicopters, Civil servants 1206

Fire certificates 175w

Fire Precautions Act 1971 (16.01.86) 1225-38

Fire Precautions (Amendment) Bill 1985/86
1R (17.12.85) 178-9

Fire prevention
Aircraft 582w
Electric lighting 175w
Multiple occupation 626w
Public buildings (17.12.85) 178-9

Fire regulations
Prosecutions 174-5w

Fire resistant materials 234w, 582w
Aircraft 582w
Nurses 234w

Fire services
Equipment 274w
Local government expenditure 172w, 173w
Testing 274w

Firearms certificates
Fees & charges 274w

Firearms Licensing Committee 274w

Fires
Coal mining 1205
Hospitals 234w, 438w, 697w
Nursing homes 697w
Oakthorpe 1205
RAF Brampton 917

Fish
Government grants 613w
Import controls 613w
USA 613w

Fish conservation
Salmon 563
Scotland 565w

Fish diseases 486w

Fisher, Mr Mark
Debates etc
Education (Amendment) Bill, Rem stages (16.12.85) 113-6, 118-9
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1011
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1162
Questions
EC reform 201w
Universities, Research 117w

Fisheries
EC action (16.01.86) 1240-67
Falkland Islands 364w, 562-3
Great Grimsby 399w
Social security benefits rules 239-40w
South Atlantic 583-4w

Fishery agreements
Argentina 364w

Fishery protection
Sea fishing 62w
South Atlantic 584w

Fishing crews
Industrial training 399w

Fishing gear 579w
Drift nets 614w

Fishing limits
Falkland Islands 562

Fishing vessels
Shipping safety 479w, 582w
135-6w, 589w, 1057, 1069

Flannery, Mr Martin
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 318, 324
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 785
Questions
British Aerospace, Westland helicopters 920-1
Overseas trade, South Africa 1074
Philippines, Foreign policy 198w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 115w, 143

Flats
Service charges 677w

Flats Management Committee of Inquiry 677w

Fletcher, Mr Alex
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 165
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 965-8
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 694
Questions
North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, External financing limits 164w
Ravenscraig Steelworks, Trade unions 294w

Fog
M25 43w

Fontainebleau Summit 539-40w

Food
Development aid 770

Food additives 275w, 561
EC law 276w
Food industry 276w
Food labelling 277w, 556
Food standards 486w
Nutrition & health 276w
Research 486w

Food aid
Ethiopia 40w
Fuels 772
Sudan 447w, 772

Food aid from EC
Africa 329w

Food from Britain 483-4w
Cooperatives 483-4w
Government grants 483-4w

Food industry
Food additives 276w

Food labelling 555-6
Chocolate 557
Fats 277w, 556-7
Food additives 277w, 556
Nutrition & health 556

Food poisoning 605w
Hospitals 605w
Stanley Royd Hospital 325w, 605w

Food standards
Food additives 486w
Irradiation 310w
Nutrition & health 277-8w

Food surpluses
Butter 279w
Disaster relief 329w
EC action 279w
European Economic Community 277w, 279w
Intervention stocks 1w, 279w

Food & Environment Protection Act 1985 725w
Pesticides 723w, 725w

Fookes, Miss Janet
Questions
Materials technology 633w

Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1229
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 815-20
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 782-3
Questions
Business statement 576
Westland helicopters, Ministers correspondence 1206

Football Safety Review
Ministerial statements (16.01.86) 1225-38

Foreign Affairs Select Committee (17.12.85) 180-218, 257, 287-8
General Belgrano 287-8

"Foreign Affairs Select Committee on Famine in Africa" (17.12.85) 180-218, 257

Foreign aid 551w
Developing countries 550-1w

Foreign companies in UK
Car industry 1062

Foreign investment in UK
Japan 1193
Westland helicopters 451w

Foreign patients
Income 69-70w
NHS charges 69-70w

Foreign policy
Afghanistan 204w
Argentina 199w
Middle East 193w
Namibia 205w
Philippines 31-2w, 198w
South Africa 195w, 293
Syrian Arab Republic 203w
Torture 363-4w
USSR 194w
Yugoslavia 203w
Zimbabwe 200w

Foreign relations
African National Congress 294
Iran 363w
Iraq 735-6w
Israel 290
Japan 205w
Libyan Arab Republic 1206
Middle East 290-1
Saudi Arabia 204w
South Africa 295, 296
Sri Lanka 202w
Strategic defence initiative 194w
Zimbabwe 200w

Foreign tourists
Immigration rules 174w
Interviews 174w
Statistics 5-6w
Visas 132w

Foreign workers
South Africa 285

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Arab boycott 291
Civil service manpower 640w
Equal opportunities 33-4w

Forestry Commission
Dorset 724-5w
Land acquisition 724-5w

Forests
Nature conservation 162w

Forman, Mr Nigel
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 308
Questions
Armed forces pensions, Costs 96w
EC Budget Council 48-9w
Economic growth 651w
European Security Conference, Stockholm 292
Income tax, Tax allowances 647w
Nuclear test ban 299
Pollution control, Disclosure of information 369w
Public participation in planning, Disclosure of information 369w

Forrest Committee see Breast Cancer Screening Working Party

Forsyth, Mr Michael
Questions
Gartcosh Steelworks, Factory closures 591w
Marginal tax rates, Low pay 646w
Rate limitation, Local government expenditure 219w

Forsythe, Clifford
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Forth, Mr Eric
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 305
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1085
Questions
Civil servants, Trade unions 720-2w
Company registration, Fees & charges 136w
Council of Ministers, Offices 463-4w
Defence contracts 911-2
European Assembly 202w
Hong Kong, Annual reports 133w
Inflation 648w
Public order policing, Civil disorder 919
Regional aid, West Midlands 1196
Securities & Investment Board, Self-regulatory system 245w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 294
Student grants, Student loans 148

Forth road bridge 723w
Income 723w
Joint boards 723w
Road tolls 566w, 723w

Foster, Mr Derek
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1166

Foulkes, Mr George
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 305
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 944, 951, 1012
Members interests (17.12.85) 243
Tobacco Smoking (Public Places) Bill, 1R (18.12.85) 346
Questions
Agricultural Advisory Services, Scotland 59-60w
AIDS, Scottish health boards 63w
Bypasses, Scotland 61-2w
Chile, Diplomatic service 298
European Economic Community, Treaties 364w
Falkland Islands, Crime 32w
Falkland Islands, Criminal investigation 32w
Falkland Islands, Fisheries 364w
Falkland Islands, Peace negotiations 191-2w
Farmers, Severe weather payments 209w
Fishing vessels, Shipping safety 479w, 582w
Food from Britain, Government grants 483-4w
Free ports 649w
Lighthouses, Davaar Island 479w
Lighthouses, Northern Lighthouse Board 479w
Nicaragua, USA 284
Northern Lighthouse Board, Expenditure 582-3w
Northern Lighthouse Board, Housing improvement 583w
Social security appeals tribunals, Scotland 79w
Westland helicopters, Cabinet Committees 1206

14 Signals Regiment 99w, 101-2w, 215w
Armed Forces discharges 99w, 215w
Armed Forces strength 101-2w

Fowler, Rt Hon Norman, *Secretary of State for Social Services*
Debates etc
Social security, Ministerial statements (16.12.85) 21-34
Social Security Bill 1R, (17.01.86) 1345
Questions
Advertising agencies, Dept of Health & Social Security 411-4w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Health & Social Security 414-6w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Civil service manpower 595w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Public appointments 504w
Drug abuse, Publicity 557-8w
Equal opportunities, Dept of Health & Social Security 595-6w
NHS finance, Regional health authorities 156-7w
Personal social services, Consultants 323-4w
Stanley Royd Hospital, Food poisoning 325w

Fox hunting
Army 379-80w, 536-7w, 538w
Military vehicles 537w, 538w
RAVC Melton Mowbray 538w

France
Fast reactors 29w
Road traffic control 113w
Sheep meat 559

Fraserburgh Harbour Order Confirmation Bill 1985/86
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591

Fraserburgh Harbour (No 2) Order Confirmation Bill 1985/86
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591

Fraserburgh Harbour (No. 3) Order Confirmation Bill 1985-86
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591

Fraser, Mr John
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 596, 639, 644-9
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 325
Questions
Brixton Prison, Body searches 458w
Distribution & Media Sales (UK), Inquiries 243w
Legal aid, Legal costs 2-3w
Nicaragua, Ministers visits abroad 283
Rate rebates, Government grants to local authorities 80-1w
Rate rebates, Lambeth 67-8w

Unemployment, Norwood 728w

Fraser, Mr Peter, *Solicitor-General for Scotland*
Questions
Legal costs, Scotland 635w
Sexual offences, Trials 290w

Fraud
City of London 135-6w, 153, 155-6, 360w, 568-9w, 1191, 1192-3
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 433-72
Criminal investigation 252-3w, 253-4w, 568-9w, 766-7, 768
Criminal proceedings 153, 155-6, (14.1.86) 925-34
Crown courts 454-5w
Financial institutions (18.12.85) 433-72
Financial Services Bill 1985/86 135-6w
Hill Kestral Communications 540w
Inland Revenue 344w
Johnson Matthey 510w
Lloyds of London 346-7w
Members correspondence 252-3w
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate 767
Prosecutions 767, 768
Social security abuse 344w

Fraud Investigation Group 766-7
Manpower 766-7, 768

Free ports 649w

Free school meals 709-10w
Scotland 110w
Social security recipients 19-20w, 110w
Wales 19-20w, 20-1w

Freedom of expression
Higher education 113w, 151
Manchester University 151
Prosecutions 152

Freeman, Mr Roger
Debates etc
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 32
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 273-4
Questions
Arms control 203w
Business statement 1217
Community programme, Voluntary organisations 398w
International economic relations 1202
"Reform of Social Security White Paper", Pensions 156
Students, Departmental publications 38w
Water Metering Steering Group Report 463w

Freemasonry 8w
Police (20.12.85) 671-2

Freeson, Rt Hon Reg
Debates etc
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 213-4
Questions
Community radio 625w
Community radio, Ethnic minorities 625w
Social security claims, Cricklewood 694w
Social security claims, Harlesden 693-4w
Social security claims, Neasden 693-4w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 146-7

Freshwater fish
Acid rain 544-5w

Freud, Mr Clement
Debates etc
Arts finance, Local government reform (20.12.85) 733-4
Education (Amendment) Bill, Rem stages (16.12.85) 109-110, 116-7, 118, 123
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1230
Questions
British Council, Finance 297
CERN, UK contributions 145
School meals, Child care 38w
Special educational needs, Pupils 123-4w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w, 144

Fuel poverty (16.12.85) 131-8

Fuels
Energy consumption 124w
Food aid 772

Funerals
Death grants 316-7w
Exceptional needs payments 436w
Social Fund 599w
South Africa 196w

Further education
Student grants 120w

Gale, Mr Roger
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 172
Questions
Petroleum exploration 26w

Galley, Mr Roy
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1377, 1399-1401
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 30
Questions
School transport, Travel concessions 116w

Gardens
Cultural heritage 357w
Scotland 357w

Gardiner, Mr George
Questions
Tax yields, Alcoholic drinks duties 361w

Gartcosh
Demonstrations 921
Factory closures 1070-1, 1071-2

Gartcosh Steelworks (20.12.85) 691-9
Factory closures 591w

Gas fuels
Standing charges 124-5w

Gas meters
Privatisation 27-8w

Gas safety
Exhibitions 245w

Gas showrooms 5-6
Privatisation 5-6

Gas supply industry
Trade unions 27w

Gas tariffs
Landlord & tenant 23-4w
Price controls 30w
Privatisation 10, 30w

Gaza
West Bank 291

GEC 347w, 719w
Mergers 179w, 609w, 719w

GEC Avionics 98w, 912
Defence contracts 98w
Nimrod aircraft 912, 913

General Belgrano 287-8
Disclosure of information 287-8
Falkland Islands 288
Foreign Affairs Select Committee 287-8

General Certificate of Secondary Education 120w

General consents 219w, 366-9w, 470w
Greater London Council 366-9w

General development orders 369-71w
Town & country planning 369-71w

General Electric Company 179w

General Medical Services Committee 421-2w

George, Mr Bruce
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1396-9
Questions
Defence Select Committee, Civil service manpower 641w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Civil service manpower 640w
House of Commons Select Committees, Administrative delays 691w
House of Commons Select Committees, Civil servants 628w
House of Commons Select Committees, House of Commons debates 683-6w
House of Commons Select Committees, House of Commons divisions 679-82w
House of Commons Select Committees, House of Commons staff 691-4w
House of Commons Select Committees, House of Commons debates 693w
House of Commons Select Committees, Members 681-4w
House of Commons Select Committees, Select Committee evidence 685-6w, 689-92w
House of Commons Select Committees, Specialist advisers 685-6w, 687-90w
House of Commons Select Committees, Temporary staff 691w
House of Commons Select Committees, Witnesses 691-2w
Select committees, Publishing 652-4w

Gifts
Ministers 578w
Prime Minister 578w, 628w

Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 240-2
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 315

Glanford
Regional aid 371-2w

Glasgow
Building industry 482w
Employment schemes 57-8w
Maternity services (18.12.85) 544-50
Mental health services 615w
Scottish courts 358-9w
Unemployment 57-8w

Glasgow District Council 614-5w
Shopping centres 614-5w

Glass industry
Barnsley 53w

GLC Research Library 469w

GLCO
Local government reform 470w

Glory Hole 464w
Derelict land grants 464w

Glyn, Dr Alan
Questions
Business statement 1220
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Heating 503-4w
Examinations, Industrial disputes 442w

Godman, Dr Norman A
Debates etc
Defence procurement (18.12.85) 385-6
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1351, 1382, 1396, 1401-3
EC Fisheries Council (19.12.85) 589
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1251, 1256, 1257-9
Questions
Business statement 1221
Coastal shipping, EC action 762-3
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 562
HMS Otter, Shipbuilding 717-8w
Scott Lithgow, Defence contracts 642w
Submarines, Defence contracts 641-2w, 911
Submarines, Tenders 642w
University finance, University Grants Committee 118w

Golding, Mr John
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No. 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 264, 274-6
Questions
Access to buildings, Mobility of disabled 655-6w
Baking industry, Staffordshire 636w

Baking industry, Working hours 635-6w
Hospitals, Telephones for disabled 505w

Goodhart, Sir Philip
Debates etc
Beckingham Hospital (20.12.85) 738-41, 743

Goodlad, Mr Alastair, Under-Secretary of State for Energy
Questions
Alternative energy, EC Energy Council 10
Alternative energy, Energy research 4
Coal mining, Industrial disputes 29w
Electricity generation 3-4
Electricity generation, Nuclear power 4-5
Fast reactors, International cooperation 29w
Industrial energy prices, Electricity area boards 13
Industrial energy prices, Temperature 13
Nuclear accidents, Hinckley Point B 30-1w
Nuclear accidents, Information 249w
Nuclear power stations, Construction 28w
Nuclear power stations, Industrial injuries 250w
Nuclear safeguards, Capenhurst 29w
Opencast mining, Environment protection 5
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Departmental reports 717w
Yelland Power Station, Power station closures 716w

Gorst, Mr John
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1088
Questions
VAT, Tax avoidance 654w

Gould, Mr Bryan
Debates etc
Copyright (18.12.85) 527
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 439-45, 456, 469, 471
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1004-10, 1014
Questions
Business statement 1217-8
Community programme, Finance 637w
Company liquidations, Ultraleisure 449-50w
Financial Services Bill 1985/86, Members interests 1058
Lloyds of London, Members interests 1069-70
Local government reform, Hainault Forest 662-3w
Multifibre arrangement 24w, 1062-3
Multifibre arrangement, EC action 184w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" Social security receipients 566-7
Sacred Heart of Mary School, Upminister 646w

Government assistance
Airbuses 634w
A320 Airbus 632w

Government assistance to industry
Energy efficiency 307w
Energy prices 13
Shipping 163w
Tobacco industry 24w
Worsley 25w, 136w, 139w

Government Communications Headquarters
European Court of Human Rights 207w
Trade union membership 207w

Government departments
Attorney-General 567-8
Criminal proceedings 567-8
Disclosure of information 446w
Speakers rulings & statements (16.12.85) 47

Government grant to local authorities
Civil defence 273w

Government grants
Action on smoking & health 428w, 429w
Agriculture 266-7w
AIDS 427w
British Film institute 35-8w
Civil defence 272-3w, 292-3w
Companies 723-4w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 271w
Defective housing 254-5w
Director of Public Prosecutions 253-4w
Doctors surgeries 603w
Domestic energy conservation 629w
Educational finance 289-90w
Employment schemes 179-83w
Energy efficiency 331w
Enterprise allowance scheme 56-7w
Export promotion 1060
Family Planning Association 80w
Fish 613w
Food from Britain 483-4w
Health education 121w
Law centres 253w
Leighton Linslade bypass 112w
London Marathon 263w
London Regional Transport 46-7w
Nature Conservancy Council 218w
Rugby 18w
Rural Water Supplies & Sewerage Acts 454w
Save the Children Fund 771-2
Trades Union Congress 639w
Victim support schemes 545-6w
Voluntary organisations 176-7w
Wales Tourist Board 286w
Wind power 27w

Government grants to local authorities 512-6w
Capital investment 21w
Child care 119w
Civil defence 9w, 272w, 293w, 483w
Housing insulation 263w
Housing investment programmes 255-6w
Insulation grants 673-9w
Rate rebates 80-1w
Rate support grants 104w
Urban programme 13w, 18-20w, 260w
Wales 617-8w

Government grants to voluntary organisations 176-7w, 441w
Kirkby Victims Support Scheme 187w, 271w

Government shareholding
Company finance 647-8w

Governments grants
Ancient monuments 678w

Governments grants to local authorities
Civil defence 273w

Gow, Mr Ian
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland 265-6w
Mortgage relief, Mortgage interest rates 1198
Northern Ireland Office, Civil service manpower 41w
Scottish Office, Civil service manpower 161w
Welsh Office, Civil service manpower 284w

Graduates
Employment 336-8w
Industry 120w
Speech therapy 444w
Unemployment 397w

Grant, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 949, 978-81, 983
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1028-9
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 320
Questions
Financial services 1057
House of Commons staff 66w
Road freight transport, Hazardous wastes 45w
Road freight transport, Road accidents 45w

Grant, Donald 294w
Tayside Health Board 294w

Great Grimsby
Fisheries 399w

Greater Glasgow Health Board 615w

Greater London
Building regulations 13-4w
Civil servants 48w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 738w
DHSS local offices 738w
Dial-a-ride 478w
Drug crimes 459w
Duty solicitors 446-7w
Employment opportunities 299-300w
Financial services 1072
Health services 234w
Health services finance 311w
Homelessness (20.12.85) 700-8
Hospital waiting lists 155w, 558w
Housing problems (20.12.85) 700-8
New businesses 566w
NHS finance 145-8w, 311w
Railway closures 761
Taxicards 476w
Unemployment 398-9w

Greater London Council
General consents 366-9w
Handicapped 469w
Housing finance 216-8w
Land values 13w
Local government expenditure 216-8w, 219w, 366-9w, 470w
Local government functions 469w
Local government land 13w, 257-8w
Local government reform 16w, 105w, 219w, 468-9w, 470w, 512w, 564
Rate equalisation 108w
Redundancy 564-5
Science & technology 105w

Greater London Council Research Library
Local government reform 469w

Greater Manchester
Arts finance 189w
Chief constables 565

Greater Manchester Police
Members correspondence 175w

Greece
Coastal shipping 763

Greenbelt
Hertfordshire (19.12.85) 665-70

Greenway, Mr Harry
Questions
Armed forces strength, Vocational guidance 917
Higher education, Freedom of expression 113w
Horses, Markets 560
House of Commons, Sanitation 160w
Imports, Dogs 5w
New businesses, Greater London 566w
Open University, University finance 544w
Prime Minister official engagements 103w, 265w, 553w, 627w
Railway closures, Greater London 761
Religious education, Schools 708w
Security, 10 Downing Street 271w, 457w
Shareholders, Investment in financial assets 1193
Teachers, Industrial disputes 143
Teachers, Pay 1206-7
UNESCO 179w

Greenwich
Local government revenue 661w

Gregory, Mr Conal
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 610, 640-2
Dog fighting, Public petitions (19.12.85) 664
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 326
Sunday trading, Public petitions (19.12.85) 663
Toys & games, Safety (13.01.86) 790
Questions
Council housing, Empty housing 218-9w
Food labelling, Chocolate 557
National Bus Company, Privatisation 760-1
Rent arrears, Council housing 257-60w
Yorkshire & Humberside 264w

Griffiths Inquiry see NHS Management Inquiry

Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Questions
A45, Road traffic 295w
Baton rounds, Metropolitan Police 171-2w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit, Manpower 6w

Griffiths, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 248-9
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1037-9
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 891-3
Questions
Overseas Development Administration, Scholarships 640w

Grist, Mr Ian
Debates etc
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 192, 204-7
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 336
Questions
Welsh Development Agency, Capital investment 615-6w

Groce, Cherry 130w
Police firearms 130w

Growth promoting hormones 613w
Black economy 613w

Grylls, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 784
Questions
Defence expenditure, Defence procurement 379w
EC Research Council 244w

Guatemala
Defence 473w

Gulf States
Ministers visits abroad 587-8w

Gulf war 206-7w, 296
United Nations 206-7w

Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn,
Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Debates etc
EC Fisheries Council, Ministerial statements (19.12.85) 584-9
Questions
Agricultural policy 278w
Butter, Food surpluses 279w
Butter, Imports 280w
Butter, Intervention stocks 351w, 483-4w, 487w
Butter, New Zealand 210w
Cattle, Animal feed 541-2w
Cereals, Agricultural land 554-5
Cereals, Agricultural production 276w
Cereals, Agricultural subsidies 551-2w
Cereals, Agricultural surpluses 276w, 553-4
Cereals, Co-responsibility levy 558
Cereals, Intervention stock 283w
Cereals, Prices 557, 558, 561
Cereals, Production quotas 557, 558
Cereals, Weather 558
Common agricultural policy, EC reform 278w, 561
Common fisheries policy, EC Fisheries Council 282w
Common sheep meat regime 560
Common sugar regime, Raw materials 279w
Crops, Pulses & seeds 277w
Drift nets, Fishing gear 614w
Environment protection, EC action 282w
Falkland Islands, Fisheries 562-3
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 562
Farm incomes 281w
Fish diseases 486w
Food additives 561
Food from Britain, Government grants 483-4w
Food surpluses, European Economic Community 277w, 279w
Intervention stocks 542-3w
Intervention stocks, Agricultural surpluses 551w
Intervention stocks, Beef & veal 540-1w
Intervention stocks, Butter 351w
Intervention stocks, Cereals 1w, 551w, 554
Intervention stocks, Food surpluses 1w
Milk, Co-responsibility levy 560-1
Milk, Production quotas 209w, 281w, 552, 553
Milk & milk products 278w
Nylon monofilament gill nets 579w
Outgoers scheme 562
Outgoers scheme, Common agricultural policy 562
Production quotas, Cereals 555
Radioactive waste disposal, Sea pollution 209-10w
Salmon, fish conservation 563
Sheep, Clawbacks 559-60
Sheep meat, Clawbacks 560
Sheep meat, Exports 559
Untreated milk, Licensing 281w

H L Chemicals 484w

Haemophilia
AIDS 70w
Screening 70w

Hainault Forest 662-3w
Local government reform 662-3w

Hamilton
Regional development grants 135w

Hamilton, Mr James
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 1059
Business statement 577
EC integration 197w

Hamilton, Mr Neil
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 309
Questions
Capital gains tax 48w
Coal mining, Redundancy pay 247-8w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 647w
Regional aid, Chester 1067
School administration, Local education authorities 149-50
Small businesses, Corporation tax 141w
Tax yields, capital gains tax 360w
Tax yields, Corporation tax 359w
Tax yields, Tax allowances 142w
Tax yields, VAT zero rated goods 142w
VAT, EC countries 305-6w

Hamilton, Mr Willie W
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1137-9

Hampshire
Industrial development 464w
Structure plans 730w
Vacant land 464w

Hampson, Dr Keith
Debates etc
Wesland helicopters (13.01.86) 783, (15.01.86) 1141, 1142, 1143
Questions
European fighter aircraft, Defence procurement 909
Sea pollution, Beaches 223-8w
Westland helicopters, Defence procurement 155

Hancock, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (17.12.85) 142
Questions
Adoption, Disclosure of information 700w
AIDS, Departmental coordination 556w
AIDS, Health service staff 556-7w
Asbestos, Brakes 407w
Civilian Pay Records Office 523w
Cruelty to children, Local government social services 437w
Devonport Dockyard, Management 381w
Devonport Dockyard, Shipbuilding 374w
Dockyards, Manpower 102w
Dockyards, Transport 374w
East Sutton Park Open Prison, Diets 625w
Glory Hole, Derelict land grants 464w
Harbour masters, Portsmouth 717w
HMS Challenger 641w
Housing investment programmes, Asbestos stripping 371w
Income tax, Orphans 654w
Industrial development, Hampshire 464w
Initial teacher training, Portsmouth 288w
Kidneys, Transplant surgery 310w
Mandatory student grants, Refugees 646w
Motorways, Noise insulation grants 407w
Navy, Armed forces civilians 374-8w
Navy, Armed forces storage depots 374w
Nicorette, Prescriptions 315w
Opticians 739w
Private education, Pupils 442w
Shipbuilding, Security 564w
Tax yields, Private education 50w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141-2
Trident, Costs 212w
VC10 aircraft, Defence contracts 97w, 247w
VC10 aircraft, Military aircraft 97w

Handbooks
Nursing homes 605w

Handicap benefits
Administrative delays 738w
Social security reform 597-8w

Handicapped (17.01.86) 1346-1404
Concessionary fares 478w
Diet & disease 78w
Greater London Council 469w

Handicapped children
Attendance allowance 598-9w
Families 315-6w
Mobility allowance 598-9w

Handicapped workers
Unemployment 725w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc
Copyright (18.12.85) 522-7
Questions
Car industry, Foreign companies in UK 1062
Insolvency Act 1985, Publicity 183w
Overseas trade, Service industries 1073-4
RAF Brampton, Fires 917
Road traffic control, Local government reform 46w

Hannam, Mr John
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1353-6
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1123
Questions
Coal mining, Scotland 2
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 647w
Nationalised industries, Privatisation 153
Social security benefits reductions 606w

Hanson Trust 633-4w

Hanwell
Railway closures 761

Harbour masters 717w
Portsmouth 717w
Privatisation 717w

Hardy, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 320-1
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1140
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 10-1, 634w
Bus fares, Price increases 759
Business statement 1220
Civil servants, Department of Health & Social Security 18
Coal mining, Working hours 7
Criminal statistics 547w
European Court of Human Rights, Government Communications Headquarters 207w
Farm incomes 281w
Gas tariffs, Privatisation 30w

National Coal Board, Overseas investment 28-9w
Special steels, Industrial production 591w

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Questions
Urban deprivation, Statistics 12w

Haringey
Civil disorder 343w
Coffee 284

Harlesden
Department of Health & Social Security local offices 693-4w
Social security claims 693-4w

Harman, Ms Harriet
Questions
Bettman Centre, Aids for handicapped 493w
Equal opportunities, Home Office 5w, 127w
Equal opportunities, Law reform 5w
Home Office, Public appointments 5w
Rape, Law reporting 346w
Supplementary benefits, Slough 739-40w
Urban programme, Holiday pay schemes 13w
Willowbrook estate, Housing improvement 259w

Harmondsworth Detention Centre 623-4w

Harris, Mr David
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 305
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1259, 1266
Tin, Cornwall (18.12.85) 357, 539-41
Questions
Cereals, Production quotas 557
Common fisheries policy, EC Fisheries Council 282w
EC Fisheries Council 487-8w

Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1017
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 891
Orders & regulations, House of Commons Standing Committees (14.01.86) 934
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 862
Questions
Channel crossing, Lighting 759
Motorways, Lighting 292w, 296-7w
M1, Road signs 405w, 631w
Nuclear weapons tests, Australia 216w
Nuclear weapons tests, Christmas Island 609w
Nuclear weapons tests, National Radiological Protection Board 906
Polaris submarines, Medical records 95-6w
Road signs, Motorways 631w

Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Questions
Ethiopia, Disaster relief 447w

Harvey, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 210-3
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 340
Questions
Small firms service, Wales 286w

Haslehurst, Mr Alan
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1145-7
Questions
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141-2

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 160-1
Questions
Banking supervision, Public appointments 1193
Mortgage relief, Mortgage interest rates 1198

Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael, Attorney-General
Questions
Associated British Foods, IRA 252w
Fraud, Criminal investigation 766-7, 768
Fraud investigation group, Manpower 768
Hill Kestrel Communications, Fraud 540w
Juries, Crown courts 445-6w
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate, Fraud 767
St Edward, Bones 540w
Trials, Costs 713w
Westland helicopters, Official secrets 614w

Hawkins, Mr Christopher
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 598, 604-5, 622, 640, 644

Hawksley, Mr Warren
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 826-9
Questions
Artificial Limb & Appliance Centres Review 310w

Hayes, Mr Jerry
Debates etc
Owoseja, Oluronke, Kidnapping (20.12.85) 725-7
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 818, 831-5, 838
Questions
Dartford tunnel, Road construction 111w
Exchange rates, Mark 650w
Iron & steel, Treaties 1059
USA, Nuclear disarmament 199w

Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney, Minister of State for Health
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1364-70
Questions
AIDS 427w
AIDS, Advisory services 71w
AIDS, Departmental coordination 556w
AIDS, Departmental publications 70w
AIDS, Discrimination 71w
AIDS, Disease control 72w
AIDS, Government grants 427w
AIDS, Haemophilia 70w
AIDS, Health education 71w
AIDS, Health service staff 556-7w
AIDS, Medical research 71w
AIDS, Patients 494w
AIDS, Research finance 71w
Amenity beds, NHS & private practice 311w
Amenity beds, Regional health authorities 314-6w
Artificial insemination, Clinics 325w
Blood, Imports 326w
Breast cancer, Screening 78w, 432w, 571-2
Cancer hazards, Radiation hazards 698w
Cervical cancer, Administrative delays 699w
Cervical cancer, Departmental circulars 238-9w
Cervical cancer, Screening 239w, 324-5w, 439w, 500w, 501w, 569-70, 570-1, 572, 699w, 737-8w
Chemists shops, Prescriptions 428w
Child health, Social class 602w
Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment, Royal ordnance factories 744-6w
Debendox, Drug side effects 498-9w
Dental charges exemptions 420w
Dental services, Fees & charges 147w
District health authorities, Capital investment 507w
District health authorities, Contracts for services 155w, 508w
District health authorities, Cost effectiveness 600-1w, 743-4w
District health authorities, Expenditure 238w, 702-3w
Doctors surgeries, Government grants 603w
Family doctors, Patients 325w
Family Planning Association 80w
Family Planning Association, Health Education Council 80w
Family practitioner committees, Audit 154w, 607w
Health service staff, Derbyshire 322-3w, 509w
Health service staff, Expenditure 736-7w
Health service staff, Housing 603w
Health service staff, Low pay 736w
Health service staff, Manpower 321w
Health services, Contracts for services 236w
Health services, Greater London 234w
Health Services Board, Declarations of interest 505w
Health services finance, Greater London 311w
Health services finance, Sponsorship 311w
Heart diseases, St Helens & Knowsley Health Authority 428w
Hospital closures, Consultation papers 228-9w
Hospital consultants, Breach of contract 699w
Hospital consultants, Conditions of employment 312w
Hospital consultants, Contracts of employment 312w
Hospital consultants, NHS & private practice 601w
Hospital Hygiene Services, Bromley Health Authority 601w
Hospital staff, Disciplinary proceedings 235-6w
Limited list prescribing 739w
Limited list prescribing, Appeals 421-2w
Limited list prescribing, Lipoflavanoid 231w
Limited list prescribing, Orders & regulations 81w
Local dental committees 420w
Marriage Act 1983, Departmental circulars 420w
Maternal mortality 81-4w
NHS, Contracts for services 385-96w, 436-8w, 702w
NHS, Management 326w, 700w
NHS, Pay 312w, 557-9w
NHS, Privatisation 311w, 427w, 429-32w, 494w, 601w
NHS, Recruitment 503w
NHS administration, Medical profession 429w
NHS charges, Foreign patients 69-70w
NHS finance, Greater London 145-8w, 311w
NHS finance, Regional health authorities 498w
NHS finance, Rural areas 75w
NHS finance, Teaching hospitals 312w
NHS Management Inquiry 326w
NHS & private practice, West Midlands 66-8w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority 230-1w
Nurses, Clothing 234w
Nurses, Recruitment 419w
Nurses, Skilled workers 95w
Opticians 739w
Patients, Family doctors 699w
Prescription charges 698w
Prescription charges exemptions, Diseases 501-2w
Prescription charges exemptions, Publicity 157-8w
Prescriptions, Costs 502w
Primary health care 155w
Primary health care, District health authorities 602w
Primary health care, Expenditure 602w
Primary health care, Homelessness 606w
Primary health care, Inner city areas 602-3w, 606w
Primary health care, NHS finance 703-4w
Regional health authorities, Codes of practice 319w
Regional health authorities, Cost effectiveness 325-6w
Regional health authorities, Declarations of interest 505-6w
Regional health authorities, NHS finance 417w
Spectacles, Costs 433w
Spectacles, NHS 326-7w
Spectacles, Prescriptions 433w
Spectacles, Prices 238w, 604w
Stanley Royd Hospital, Food poisoning 605w
Surgery, Infectious diseases 325w, 440w
Teaching hospitals, NHS finance 508-10w

Haynes, Mr Frank
Questions
Coroners 547w
Crime, Statistics 457w
Falkland Islands, EC external relations 192w
Industry, Pay 585w
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd, Finance 11
Pay settlements, National Economic Development Council 1203
Teachers, Industrial disputes 143
Westland helicopters, Ministers correspondence 1203-4

Hayward, Mr Rob
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 166
Questions
National No-Smoking Day, Opinion surveys 419w

Hazardous wastes
Road accidents 45w
Road freight transport 45w

Hazards
Channel crossing 630w

Heads of state
Brunei 629w

Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Questions
African National Congress, Foreign relations 294
Europe, Security 292-3
Nuclear test ban 299

Health education
AIDS 71w
Drug abuse 155-6w
Government grants 121w
Nutrition & health 121w

Health Education Council
Dept of Health & Social Security 429w
Family Planning Association 80w
Skoal Bandits 432w

Health hazards
Health service staff 556-7w
Motor vehicles 407w

Health physics
Merchant seamen 221-2w

Health service ancillary staff
Patients 235w

Health service staff
AIDS 556-7w
Amber Valley 322-3w, 509w
Derbyshire 322-3w, 509w
Expenditure 736-7w
Health hazards 556-7w
Housing 603w
Low pay 736w
Management 235w
Manpower 321w
Patients 235w
Pay 312-3w, 736-7w
Sick leave 324w
Training 71w

Health services
Blind 697w
Cancer 501w
Contracts for services 236w
Greater London 234w
Information 234w
Privatisation 161w
Rate limitation 571w
Scotland 164-6w

Health Services Board 505w
Codes of practice 505w
Declarations of interest 505w

Health services finance
Capital investment 326w
Greater London 311w
Joint boards 58w, 59w
Scottish health boards 59w
Sponsorship 311w

Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 639w

Health & Safety Executive
Building industry 52w

Health & Social Services & Social Security Adjudications Act 1983 571w

Heart diseases
NHS finance 504-5w
St Helens & Knowsley Health Authority 428w
Surgery 238w
Transplant surgery 504-5w

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 44-5
Questions
CERN, UK contributions 145
Intervention stocks, Cereals 551w
UNESCO 179w
VAT, Tax evasion 648w

Heathrow
Armed forces deployment 521-2w
Immigrant detainees 457-8w
Stolport 408-9w
Taxis (17.12.85) 277-82

Heating
Asbestos 371w
Council housing 719w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 503-4w

Heating allowances (16.12.85) 131-8
Income support scheme 318w

Heddle, Mr John
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 947
Questions
Building societies, Takeovers 142-3w
Drinking & driving, Publicity 583w
Religious education, Schools 708w
Supplementary benefits, Hickson, AD 76w

Heffer, Mr Eric S
Questions
Nicaragua, USA 284

Helicopters
Aerospace industry 137w, 526w
Costs 533w
Defence expenditure 535w
Defence procurement 520w, 529w, 532-3w, 534w, 609-10w, 610-1w
EC countries 515-6w
European Economic Community 533w
Factories 530w
Falkland Islands 610w
International cooperation 529-30w, 530-1w, 531-2w, 534w, 535w
Technical assistance 515-6w, 525-6w
USA 530w

Hemel Hempstead bypass 477w

Henderson, Mr Barry
Debates etc
EC Fisheries Council (19.12.85) 587
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1251, 1253-4
Questions
Business statement 581

Heroin
Drug abuse 132w
Prescriptions 132w

Hertfordshire
Commuters 409w
Greenbelt (19.12.85) 665-70
Rate support grants 104w
Unemployment 300w

Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael, Secretary of State for Defence (until 9 Jan 1986)
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1209
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 780, (15.01.86) 1098-1107, 1115, 1165
Questions
Falkland Islands, Ministers visits abroad 212w
Westland helicopters, House of Commons debates 1204

Heseltine, Michael 515w, 553-4w, 614w, 629w
Official secrets 515w
Westland helicopters 921, 1206

Hickmet, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1209-10
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1236
Questions
Bank of England, Bank loans 1193
Cyprus, United Nations 32w
Iron & steel industry, Factory closures 1071
Overseas trade, Japan 590w
Regional aid, Glanford 371-2w

Hicks, Mr Robert
Questions
Butter, Intervention stocks 351w, 487w
Intervention stocks, Butter 351w

Hickson, A D 76w
Supplementary benefits 76w

Higgins, Mr Terence
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 162-3
Questions
Coastal Shipping, EC countries 763
Economic growth, manufacturing industries 1200
Inland tax assessment, Bureaucracy 308w

High rent schemes 410-2w

High technology parks
Agricultural land 559

Higher education
EC countries 117w
Educational finance 338-40w
Freedom of expression 113w, 151
School leaving 122w
Speech therapy 444w
Student numbers 117w, 118w

Higher education admission 709-10w
Educational standards 115w
Scottish Certificate of Education 115-6w
Universities 643w

"Higher Education Consultation Paper" 118w, 120w

Highlands & Islands Development Board
Agricultural support systems 294-5w
Tourism 65w

Highlands & Scottish Tourist Board 65w

Hijacking
International cooperation 207w

Hill, Mr James
Questions
Business statement 577, 1218
Elderly, Community policing 155
Overseas trade, South Africa 1074
South Africa, Economic sanctions 294

Hill Kestrel Communications 540w
Fraud 540w

Hill livestock allowances
Scotland 294-5w

Hinckley Point B 30-1w, 64w
Nuclear accidents 30-1w, 64w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 833, 839-42, 844
Questions
North Yemen, Development aid 447-8w

Hip replacements 238w, 419w, 499-500w, 604w
Hospital waiting lists 499-500w, 604w
West Midlands Regional Health Authority 419w

Hirst, Mr Michael
Questions
"Higher Education Consultation Paper" 118w
Inflation 649w

Jordanhill College of Education, College closures 294w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 547w
Patent Office, Non-departmental public bodies 453-4w
Strategic defence initiative, Technical Assistance 560w
Vauxhall Motors 588-9w

HMS Challenger 641w

HMS Euryalus 564w

HMS Otter 564w, 717-8w
Shipbuilding 717-8w

HMS Resolution 95-6w

Hogg, Mr Douglas
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 226, 229, 236, 244
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 795, 824, 846, 808-816
Questions
Car tax 1199
Production quotas, Cereals 555

Hogg, Mr Norman
Debates etc
Industrial tribunals (18.12.85) 533
Maternity services, Glasgow (18.12.85) 544-5

Holiday pay schemes 13w
Urban programme 13w

Holland, Mr Stuart
Debates etc
Crown Agents (Amendments) Bill, Money res (16.01.86) 1336
Members (18.12.85) 364
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 186, 189-94, 206, 215, 217
St Olaves St Thomas and St Johns Charities (18.12.85) 365-71
Questions
Aid financed trade, Development aid 770
Brixton Prison, Body searches 342w
Brixton Prison, Prisoners rights 342w
Brixton Prison, Security 342w
Brixton Prison, Women 342w
Food aid, Sudan 772
Metropolitan Police, Recruitment 10-1w
Zimbabwe, Foreign policy 200w

Holloway Prison 623w
Sanitation 623w

Holt, Mr Richard
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 167
Industrial tribunals (18.12.85) 531-5, 538
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 321
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 270
Questions
Buses, Speed governors 758
City & Guilds of London Institute, Vocational education 118w
Driving tests, Dyslexia 478w
Exservicemen, Employment discrimination 906
Regional aid, Cleveland 1066

"Home Life: Residential Care" 604w

Home Office
Advertising 275w
Empty housing 458-9w
Equal opportunities 5w, 127w
Local government reform 11-2w
Public appointments 5w
Research finance 340-1w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Debates etc
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1250, 1262-4
Questions
Business statement 578
Cereals, Agricultural land 554-5
Cereals, prices 558
Civil service, Scotland 18
Coal mining, Scotland 2
Intervention stocks, Agricultural surpluses 551w
Military aircraft, Low flying 641w
Rate support grants, Lothian Regional Council 615w
Tobacco, Retail trade 138-9w
Tobacco industry, Government assistance to industry 24w
Tobacco industry, Scotland 62w
UNESCO, Commonwealth 179w

Home visits 415w
Social security claims 415w

Homelessness
Families 465-6w, 651w
Greater London (20.12.85) 700-8
Primary health care 606w
Secure tenancies 468w

Homicide
Prisoners release 462w

Honduras
Armed forces training 525w
Defence 473w
Development aid 448w
Human rights 207-8w
Refugees 207-8w

Hong Kong
Annual reports 133w
Multifibre arrangement 1063
Nationality 584w, (16.01.86) 1268-304
Overseas aid 772

Hong Kong Act 1985 (16.01.86) 1268-304

Honours
Political Honours Scrutiny Committee 3w

Hordern, Sir Peter
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 164
Questions
Block grant, Per capita costs 672-3w
Cereals, Agricultural subsidies 551-2w
Trade competitiveness, Industry 556

Hormone treatments
Human growth hormones 700w
NHS 700w

Horses
Animal welfare 281-2w
Army 536w, 537w
Export of live animals 485w
Marginal land 281-2w
Markets 560

Horticulture
EC accession 278-9w
EC internal trade 278-9w

Hospital administration 235w

Hospital beds 167w
Hospital closures 77w, 495w
Northern Ireland 266w
Regional health authorities 495w
Scotland 353-4w
Scottish health boards 354-8w

Hosptial catering
Armed forces 373w, 374w
Armed forces catering services 373w
Margarine 428w

Hospital closures
Consultation papers 228-9w
Hospital beds 77w, 495w
Middlesex Hospital 155w
NHS finance 503w
Ruchill Hospital (18.12.85) 377-8
Scottish Health boards 353-4w
Sick leave 324w

Hospital consultants
Breach of contract 699w
Conditions of employment 312w
Contracts of employment 312w
Disciplinary proceedings 312w
NHS & private practice 601w

Hospital discharges 236-7w
Community care 236-7w

Hospital Hygiene Services
Bromley Health Authority 601w

Hospital length of stay 235w, 604w

Hospital patients
Trauma 158w

Hospital radio (18.12.85) 378-80

Hospital staff
Disciplinary proceedings 235-6w

Hospital waiting lists
Acute beds 558w
Amber Valley 322w
Bolton Health Authority 496w
Coronary bypass operations 325w
Derbyshire 322w
Greater London 155w, 558w
Hip replacements 499-500w, 604w
Surgery 155w, 238w

Hospital wards
Child patients 284w

Hospitals 605w, (20.12.85) 738-44
Amber Valley 323w
Construction 266w, 554-6w
Construction costs 234-6w
Derbyshire 323w
District health authorities 84-96w
Falkland Islands 125w
Falkland Islands Company 125w
Fires 234w, 438w, 697w
Food poisoning 605w
NHS 84-96w
Northern Ireland 266w
Per capita costs 125w
Peterborough Health Authority 326w
Privatisation 236w, 293-4w, 508w
Smoking 503w
Sponsorship 605w
Telephones for disabled 505w
Wales 108w, 284-6w

House of Commons
Sanitation 160w

House of Commons accommodation
Richmond Terrace 261w

House of Commons catering
Apples 716w

House of Commons Chamber
Speakers rulings & statements (16.01.86) 1270

House of Commons debates
House of Commons Select Committees 683-4w, 693w
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 166, 167 (18.12.85) 342, 343, 344
Westland helicopters 1204

House of Commons divisions
House of Commons Select Committees 679-82w
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 251 (14.01.86) 1014, 1015

House of Commons galleries
Speakers rulings & statements (14.01,86) 983

House of Commons Library
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1209-12

House of Commons questions
Speakers rulings & statements (16.12.85) 48, (15.01.86) 1072 (16.01.86) 1224

House of Commons Select Committees 291-2w
Administrative delays 691w
Armed Forces Bill 1985/86 (20.12.85) 744
Civil servants 628w
Estimates days 693w
House of Commons debates 683-6w, 693w
House of Commons divisions 679-82w
House of Commons staff 691-4w
Members 681-4w
"Order Paper" 683-6w
Select Committee evidence 685-6w, 689-92w
Speakers rulings & statements (19.12.85) 591
Specialist advisers 685-6w, 687-90w
Temporary staff 691w

Witnesses 691-2w

House of Commons staff 66w
House of Commons Select Committees 691-4w

House of Commons voting methods
Members interests 15-6

House of Fraser 634w
Mergers 634w

House of Lords reporting
Speakers rulings & statements (18.12.85) 396

House purchase
Birmingham 458-9w
Housing Defects Act 1984 103-4w

Household Cavalry 536w, 537w

Households
Families 506w
Housing stock 16w
Social class 285w
Wales 285w
Water supply 468w

Housing
Health service staff 603w
Immigration rules 127-8w
Liverpool (20.12.85) 745-54
Waltham Forest (20.12.85) 717-24

Housing benefits
Costs 317w
Expenditure 596w
Income support scheme 318w
Lambeth 67-8w
Local government expenditure 410w
Pensioners 410w
Rate rebates 78w
Rates & rating 317w, 319w
Social security benefit reductions 410-2w
Social security benefits rules 503-4w
Social security recipients 410-2w, 701w
Social security reform 596w, 597w, 696w, 697w
Voluntary organisations 695w

Housing construction
Planning appeals 105-6w

Housing cooperatives (20.12.85) 745-54

Housing Corporation
Finance 262w

Housing Defects Act 1984 16-7w, 103-4w, 254-5w, 466-7w
Easiform housing 17w
House purchase 103-4w

Housing departments
Lewisham 920
NALGO 920

Housing design
Crime prevention 175w

Housing finance 262w, 576w
Greater London Council 216-8w
Local government expenditure 217w
Slum clearance 565

Housing improvement
Northern Lighthouse Board 583w
Willowbrook estate 259w

Housing insulation
Government grants to local authorities 263w
Wales 719w

Housing investment programmes
Asbestos stripping 371w
Government grants to local authorities 255-6w
Private rented housing 217w

Housing problems
Greater London (20.12.85) 700-8
Liverpool (16.01.86) 1337-40

Housing revenue accounts 663-4w, 664-70w
Surpluses 664-70w

Housing standards 574-6w

Housing stock 574-6w
EC countries 16w
Households 16w

Housing subsidies
Expenditure 663-4w

Howard, Mr Michael, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade & Industry*
Debates etc
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 445, 467-72
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1010-7
Insurance, Contracts (20.12.85) 677-80
Questions
Associated British Foods, Company accounts 243w
Book piracy 1067-8
Brewing industry, Public houses 136w
Companies 588w
Company accounts, Johnson Matthey 1068-9
Company law, Law reform 136-7w
Company liquidations, Cardiff 451w
Company liquidations, Inquiries 25w
Company liquidations, W G Allen 1073
Company registration, Fees & charges 136w
Distribution & Media Sales (UK), Inquiries 243w
Electricity tariffs, Landlord & tenant 23-4w
Exhibitions, Gas safety 245w
Financial Services Bill 1985/86, Fraud 135-6w
House of Fraser, Mergers 634w
Imperial Tobacco, Takeovers 633-4w
Insider trading, Prosecutions 184w
Insolvency Act 1985 137w
Insolvency Act 1985, Publicity 183w
Lloyds of London, Financial Services Bill 1985/86 589w
London Commodity Exchange, Upper Waiting Hall 633w
Manufactured goods 586w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial investment 587w
Office of Fair Trading, Cash Limits 244w
Plessey, Mergers 179w
Public utilities, Consumer protection 590-1w
Small businesses, Company accounts 243w
Takeovers, Codes of practice 335w
Trade Descriptions (Origin Marking) (Miscellaneous Goods) Order 1981 245w

Howarth, Mr Alan
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 942, 955, 973
Questions
Tax rates & bands, Taxpayers 1195
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141-2
UNESCO, UK contributions 771

Howarth, Mr Gerald
Debates etc
Insurance, Contracts (20.12.85) 676-7
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 43, (13.01.86) 787 (15.01.86) 1131
Questions
British Airways, Privatisation 580w
European fighter aircraft, International cooperation 563w
School governors, Elections 152

Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey, *Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council, Ministerial statements (18.12.85) 301-9
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 735w
Argentina, Diplomatic relations 198w, 199w
Argentina, Foreign policy 199w
Argentina, Peace negotiations 198-9w
Chile, Diplomatic service 298
Diplomatic service, Trade promotion 297-8
EC Foreign Affairs Council, EC budget 202w
EC integration 365-6w
EC reform 201w
EC reform, Parliament 201-2w
EC reform, Voting methods 201w
Europe, Security 292-3
European Assembly 202w
European Assembly, EC reform 200-1w
European communities, Vosting methods 193-4w
European Security Conference, Stockholm 292
Falkland Islands, Peace negotiations 191-2w
Hong Kong, Annual reports 133w
Iran-Iraq war 296-7
Iran-Iraq war, Peace negotiations 296
Iraq, Terrorism 200w
Jamaica, Diplomatic service 298
Jordan, Peace negotiations 288
Middle East, Peace negotiations 288, 289
Namibia, Western Contact Group 286
Portugal, EC budget contributions 207w
South Africa, African national Congress 285
South Africa, Foreign policy 195w
South Africa, Mandela, Nelson 286
South Africa, Ministers visits abroad 284-5
South Africa, Trade unions 285
South Africa, Violence 285-6
Trade promotion, Marketing 298
USSR, Foreign policy 194w

Howell, Rt Hon David
Questions
Oil prices 1201

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Cereals, Export credit guarantees 242-3w
Income tax 420-1w
Prices, Retail prices index 362w
Production quotas, Cereals 555
Social security benefits rules, Exceptional circumstances additions 69w
Standard of living, Families 418-9w
Unemployment 549w
Unemployment, Handicapped workers 725w
Unemployment benefits, EC countries 72w
Wood, Imports 332w

Howells, Mr Geraint
Debates etc
Fuel poverty (16.12.85) 131-2
Questions
Cereals, Prices 558
Class sizes, Pupil-teacher ratios 116w
Deterrence theory 563w
EC reform, Voting methods 201w

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 39-40, (13.01.86) 788
Questions
Alcoholism & crime 457w
Army, Fox hunting 379-80w, 536-7w; 538w
Army, Horses 536w
Bank of England, Banking supervision 1191
County Palatine, Magistrates 329w
Freemasonry 8w
Industrial development 585w
Magistrates, Manpower 3w
Magistrates, North West region 346w

Hubbard-Miles, Mr Peter
Questions
Rear seat belts 345w
Rear seat belts, Orders & regulations 476w

Hughes, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Oral question time intervention (13.01.86) 764
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 79, 85, 86, 89-91
Questions
Channel crossing, Cabinet 759
Channel crossing, Channel ferries 765
Channel crossing, Lorries 113w

Hughes, Mr Roy
Questions
Avon bridge 630-1w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 27w
Prescription charges 698w
Severn bridge, Debts 756

Hughes, Mr Sean

Questions
Manufacturing industries, Industrial investment 587w
Prime Minister official engagements 265w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 143
Young people, Supplementary benefits 156

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc
Homelessness, Greater London (20.12.85) 705
Housing cooperatives (20.12.85) 748-9
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1028, 1039-42
Planning inquiries, Dounreay (14.01.86) 1050
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 314-5
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 271-3
Questions
Air pollution, Consultation papers 259w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Kings College Hospital 103w
South Africa, Nassau Summit 196w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence expenditure 560-1w
Water supply, Nitrates 257w

Human growth hormones 700w
Hormone treatments 700w

Human rights
Chile 200w, 473-4w
Honduras 207-8w
Iran 363w
Iraq 296, 736w

Hume, Mr John
Questions
Youth training scheme, Northern Ireland 41w

Hunt, Mr David, Under-Secretary of State for Energy
Questions
Alternative energy, Energy research 634w
Coal mining 28w
Coal mining, Industrial injuries 250-1w
Coal mining, Industrial relations 12-3
Coal mining, Investment 26w
Coal mining, Manpower 28w
Coal mining, Private investment 29w
Coal mining, Privatisation 445w
Coal mining, Productivity 26w, 717w
Coal mining, Redundant mineworkers payments scheme 12
Coal mining, Scotland 2-3
Energy efficiency, Domestic energy conservation 331w
Energy Efficiency Year, Domestic energy conservation 330-1w
Energy Efficiency Year, Voluntary organisations 331w
Margam mine, National Coal Board 14-5
Ministers domestic visits, Coal mining 1-2
National Coal Board, Coal mine closures 330w
National Coal Board, Compensation 717w
National Coal Board, Factory closures 329-30w
National Coal Board, Overseas investment 28-9w
National Coal Board, Relocation of employees 330w
Opencast mining 28w
Smoke & chimney gases, Polkemmet Bing 551-2w
Waste disposal, Polkemmet 3
Wind power, Electricity generation 27w
Wind power, Government grants 27w

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Questions
Cereals, Agricultural production 276w
Industrial production 632w
Overseas trade, Romania 585w
Town & country planning, General development orders 369-71w

Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas, Secretary of State for the Home Department
Debates etc
Criminal Proceedings arising from Fraud Review Committee, Ministerial statements (14.01.86) 925-34
Drug crimes, Personal property (19.12.85) 591
Drug Trafficking Offences Bill, 1R (19.12.85) 591
Football Safety Review, Ministerial statements (16.01.86) 1225-38
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 792-801, 803, 811
Questions
Advertising, Home Office 275w
Airport security, Manchester Airport 569w
Alley, Eric, Civil defence 177-8w
Crown courts, Criminal proceedings 454-5w
Farrakhan, Louis 627w
Home Office, Public appointments 5w
Home Office, Research finance 340-1w
Immigration, Official secrets 455w
Immigration appeals, Members correspondence 176w
Local government reform, Home Office 11-2w
Metropolitan Police 546w
Philips, Cyril 548w
Police, Public expenditure 273-4w, 341w
Police authorities, Local government expenditure 172w, 173w
Prisons, Design 177w
Security, 10 Downing Street 271w, 457w
Victim support schemes, Government grants 545-6w
Voluntary organisations, Government grants 176-7w

Hyperbaric oxygen 76-7w
Multiple sclerosis 76-7w

Hypermarkets
County Hall 369w
Employment opportunities 13w
Planning appeals 13w
Planning permission 260w

Hypothermia
Death 321w, 322w
Economic regions 322w

Illegitimate children
Cohabitation 153w

Immigrant detainees
Disclosure of information 457-8w
Heathrow 457-8w
Indian subcontinent 623-4w
Members correspondence 9-10w

Immigrants
Bangladesh 625w

Immigration
India 715w
Members correspondence 342w
Official secrets 455w

Immigration appeals
British citizenship 8-9w
Entry clearances 715w
Members correspondence 176w
Primary purpose rule 273w

Immigration applications
Nazemi, Dr 272w
Political refugees 714w

Immigration controls 625w
Bangladesh 623-4w
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 494-507
Indian subcontinent 342w
Members correspondence 455-6w
Newcastle Airport 273w
Sri Lanka 455-6w
Statistics 9-10w

Immigration officers 625w

Immigration rules
Foreign tourists 174w
Housing 127-8w
Personal income 127-8w

Imperial Tobacco 633-4w
Takeovers 633-4w

Import controls
Fish 613w

Import penetration
Textile industry 1063-4

Import quotas
Butter 210w

Imports
Blood 326w
Butter 280w
Coal mining 8-9
Dogs 5w
Morocco 138w
Phosphates 184-5w
Salmon 543w
Strategic defence initiative 213w
Wood 332w

Income
Agricultural Development and Advisory Service 280-1w
Amenity beds 314-6w
BBC 626w
Channel crossing 345w
Foreign patients 69-70w
Forth road bridge 723w
Postal workers 450-1w
Pre-payment certificates 502w
Public sector assets 652w
Social security reform 696w

Income distribution
Assisted places scheme 643-4w

Income support
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 317-8w

Income support scheme 318w, 599w, 697w, 701w, 704-6w, 741-2w
Families 318w
Heating allowances 318w
Housing benefits 318w
Industrial disputes 599w
Pensioners 317-8w, 741-2w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 317-8w
Severe weather payments 318w
Single people 741w
Social security recipients 317-8w
Unemployed 317-8w, 597w
Young people 434w, 701w

Income Tax 420-1w, 647w
Double taxation 103w
Low pay 1201
Orphans 654w
Pay 647w
Single people 647w
Stocks & shares 511w
Tax allowances 647w
Tax rates & bands 50-1w, 190w, 647w
Tax yields 50-1w

Income tax assessment 593-4w
Overseas workers 191w

India
British residents abroad 639-40w
Immigration 715w
Special voucher scheme 640w, 715w

Indian subcontinent
Immigrant detainees 623-4w
Immigration controls 342w
Visas 342w

Indictable offences
Police cautions 546-7w

Indirect taxation
Family income 306-7w

Industrial arbitration
Conditions of employment 1206-7

Industrial building allowances
Leisure facilities 360w
Tax yields 360w

Industrial development 584-5w
Cost effectiveness 586w
Hampshire 464w
Regional planning & development 586w
Small businesses 56w

Wales 757

Industrial disputes
Coal mining 14, 29w
Examinations 442w
Income support scheme 599w
Poundswick School 149-50
Social security benefits rules 318w
Social security benefits rules 599w
Stone quarrying (18.12.85) 374-6
Teachers 114-5w, 119w, 141-2, 143, 144-5, 146-7, 544w

Industrial energy conservation
Energy efficiency 7-8

Industrial energy prices
Electricity area boards 13
Temperature 13

Industrial health & safety
Coal mining 7
Small businesses 302-3w

Industrial injuries
Building industry 79w
Coal mining 250-1w
Nuclear power stations 250w
Social security benefits 79w

Industrial Injuries Advisory Council 76w

Industrial investment
Business expansion scheme 141w
Manufacturing industries 587w

Industrial loan stocks
Small investors 1194

Industrial production 632w
Iron and steel industry 24-5w
Manufacturing industries 1199-1200
Special steels 24-5w, 591w
Westland helicopters 518-9w

Industrial relations
Coal mining 11-2, 12-3

Industrial training
Fishing crews 399w
Information technology 299w
North West region 299w

Industrial training schemes
Tameside 125w

Industrial tribunals
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 531-8

Industry
Exchange rates 509-10w
Graduates 120w
Labour costs 509-10w
Pay 585w
Trade competitiveness 566

Infectious diseases
Surgery 325w, 440w, 605w

Inflation 648w, 649w, 650w
Average earnings 650w

Information
Health services 234w
Nuclear accidents 249w

Information technology
Industrial training 299w
Universities 442-4w

Information technology centres 54w
Youth training scheme 54w

Initial teaching training 288w
Portsmouth 288w

Injuries
Building industry 52-4w

Inland Revenue
Bureaucracy 308w
Fraud 344w

Inland tax assessment
Bureaucracy 308w

Inner city areas (20.12.85) 709-16
Church of England 521w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 736w
Employment 397w
Primary health care 602-3w, 606w
Teachers appraisal 122w

Inner London Education Authority
Local government expenditure 185w

Inquiries
Company liquidations 25w
Disclosure of information 629w
Distribution & Media Sales (UK) 243w
Legal aid 446w
Lloyds of London 1069
Official secrets 768-9
Wallace, Colin 134-5w

Insider trading
Prosecutions 184w

Insolvency Act 1985 137w, 183w
Publicity 183w

Insulation
Building regulations 8

Insulation grants 263w
Government grants to local authorities 673-9w

Insurance
Contracts (20.12.85) 673-80
Restrictive trade practices 1073-4

Intellectual property
Strategic defence initiative 184w, 213-4w

"Intellectual Property Rights & Innovation Consultation Paper" 453-4w

Interest rates
Economic growth 1200
European monetary system 1191-2
Exchange rates 1198
International economic relations 1202-3
Manufacturing industries 1200-1

Intergovernmental Conference 201w, 365-6w

International Commission on Radiological Protection 220-1w, 372w

International Committee of the Red Cross 562w
Treaties 562w

International conferences
Anglo-Irish Agreement 4w
Archaeology 148-9

International cooperation 477w
Aerospace industry 517-8w
Agusta 529w, 610w
Arms trade 535w
Defence procurement 910
European fighter aircraft 563w, 909, 916
Fast reactors 29w
Helicopters 529-30w, 530-1w, 531-2w, 534w, 535w
Hijacking 207w
Nuclear test ban 290-1w
South Africa 195w
Terrorism 207w
Westland helicopters 519w, 526-8w, 529w, 530w, 532w, 534w, 610-1w, 1072

International economic relations 1202
Exchange rates 1202
Interest rates 1202-3
Western Europe 1202

International Monetary Fund
Airlines 593w
Developing countries 593w

International Tin Council (18.12.85) 539-43

Intervention stock
Cereals 283w
European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund 283w

Intervention stocks 542-3w
Agricultural surpluses 551w
Animal feed 553-4
Beef & veal 540-1w
Butter 351w, 483-4w, 487w
Cereals 1w, 551w, 554, 557
Costs 1w, 277w, 351w, 487w
Food surpluses 1w, 279w
Skimmed milk powder 540-1w

Interviews
Foreign tourists 174w
9 Signal Regiment 379w
Social security recipients 229w

Invalid care allowances 701-2w
Cohabitation 701w
Costs 701w
European Court of Justice 701w
Married women 701w

Investment
Coal mining 9, 26w

Investment business 245w

Investment in financial assets (18.12.85) 346
Financial institutions (14.01.86) 938-1024
Shareholders 1193

Investor protection 452w, 764-5, (14.01.86) 938-1024, 1073
Channel crossing 764-5
Company liquidations 1073
Westland helicopters 452w

Invisible trade balance
City of London 1192

In-service training
Dept of Education & Science 120w
Nutrition 120w

IRA
Associated British Foods 252w

Iran
Foreign relations 363w
Human rights 363w
Oil imports 249-50w
Overseas trade 331-2w

Iran-Iraq war 296-7
Peace negotiations 296

Iraq
Arms embargos 735w
Foreign relations 735-6w
Human rights 296, 736w
Kurdistan 735w
Political prisoners 735w
Terrorism 200w

Iraqi Kurdistan 735w

Iron & steel
Exports 1060, 1068
Motor components industry 1061
Treaties 1059
USSR 1065

Iron & Steel industry
Factory closures 591w, 1070-1
Industrial production 24-5w
Ministerial statements (20.12.85) 691-9
Ravenscraig Steelworks 1070, 1071-2
USA 1060

Irradiation
Food standards 310w

Irving, Mr Charles
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 316
Questions
Board & lodging charges, Costs 417-8w
Council housing, Costs 217w
Road safety, Lorries 46w
Westland helicopters, Company finance 137w

Islam
Women 208w

Islamabad
Entry clearances 624w

Isle of Man
Lighthouses 47[illegible], 582-3w

Israel
Arab boycott 33w
Arms embargoes 206w
Foreign relations 290
Ministers visits abroad 289

Italy
Westland helicopters 519w

Jackson, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 51, 62
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 44, (13.01.86) 787
Questions
Buses, Speed governors 476w
Cereals, Agricultural surpluses 276w
Cereals, Prices 561
Public expenditure, Northern Ireland 267-8w

Jamaica
Diplomatic service 298
Trade promotion 298

Janner, Mr Greville
Debates etc
Insurance, Contracts (20.12.85) 673-6, 679, 680
Questions
Arab boycott, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 291
BBC external services, Electromagnetic interference 206w
Business statement 581
Equal opportunities officers, Civil service recruitment 31w
Exchange rates, Sterling 651w
Farrakhan, Louis 627w
Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 639w
Military vehicles, Road accidents 913
Teachers, Industrial disputes 144

Japan
Balance of trade 590w
Foreign investment in UK 1193
Foreign relations 205w
Overseas trade 590w
Unemployment benefits 72w

Jarrett, Floyd 131w
Complaints against police 131w

Jarrett, Patricia 131w

Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 956-61
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1228

Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 696-7
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 872-3

Jessel, Mr Toby
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1232
Juries (18.12.85) 415-8, 422, 426
Questions
Crown courts, Criminal proceedings 454-5w
Juries 269-70w
Juries, Crown courts 445-6w
Military bands, Costs 918
Mortage relief, Mortgage interest rates 1197
Overseas aid, Bilateral aid 447w

Jet aircraft
Air force 384w

Job centres 639w
Wales 719-20w
Working hours 719-20w

Job creation schemes
South east region 299-300w

Job start scheme 399w

John, Mr Brynmor
Questions
Food labelling, Fats 556-7
Forestry Commission, Land acquisition 724-5w
Milk, Production quotas 553
Outgoers scheme 562
Sheep meat, Clawbacks 560

Johnson Matthey (17.12.85) 159-67, 305w, (18.12.85) 433-72, 510w, 649w, 1068-9
Accounting 649w
Annual reports 649w
Banking supervision 649w
Company accounts 1068-9
Company finance 594w
Fraud 510w

Johnson Matthey Metals 649w

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 226-31
Questions
Food labelling, Food additives 556

Johnston, Sir Russell
Questions
Highlands & Islands Development Board, Tourism 65w
Portugal, EC budget contributions 207w
Strategic defence initiative 560w

Joint boards 58w, 59w, 404-6w, 483w, 723w
Forth road bridge 723w
Health services finance 58w, 59w

Joint financing
Scotland 58w

Joint liaison committees 59w
Scotland 59w
Voluntary organisations 59w

Jones, Mr Barry
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 333-4
Questions
Agricultural research, Crops 2w
Common agricultural policy, Crops 2w
Cooperatives, Wales 719w
Housing insulation, Wales 719w
Job centres, Wales 719-20w
Reid, P, Members correspondence 341w

Jones, Geoffrey 525w

Jones Mr Gwilym
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 339

Jones, Mr Robert B
Questions
Aid financed trade, Water treatment 770
A41, Bypasses 477w
Unemployment benefits, Social security abuse 300w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Debates etc
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1240-6, 1249
Questions
Annual Review of Agriculture, 1986 543w
Dumping, Licensing 614w
EC Agricultural Council, Common agricultural policy 351-2w
EC Fisheries Council 487-8w
Farmers, Severe weather payments 209w
Fish, Import controls 613w
Fish, USA 613w
Priorities Board for Research & Development in Agriculture & Food 210-1w
Salmon, Northern Ireland 543w
Veterinary services 1-2w

Jordan
Peace negotiations 288
Syrian Arab Republic 289

Jordanhill College of Education 294w
College closures 294w

Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith, Secretary of State for Education and Science
Questions
Education, Departmental publications 113-4w
Education support grants, Expenditure 289-90w
Higher education, Educational finance 338-40w
Inner London Education Authority, Local government expenditure 185w
Science & technology research, Research finance 39w
Student grants, Parental contributions 39-40w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w, 119w, 141-2, 143, 144-5, 146-7
Teachers, Pay 146, 579w
Teachers appraisal 152
Turville School, Members correspondence 579w
Voluntary schools, Educational finance 340w

Judgments
Board & lodging charges 240w
Private rented housing 464w
Special educational needs 288-9w

Juries 269-70w
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 415-32
Crown courts 445-6w

Jury vetting 269-70w

Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1227-8, 1238
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 794, 798, 800, 801-12, 833, 834, 861
Questions
Police, Public expenditure 273-4w, 341w

Keays, Sarah 768-9

Kellet-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1004, 1012

Kennedy, Mr Charles
Debates etc
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 698
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 33
Statutory Sick Pay Uprating Order 1985 (15.01.86) 1179

Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 170
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 180-3, 208
Questions
British Council, Cultural relations 297
Falkland Islands, General Belgrano 288

Key, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 845-8

Keyworth
British Geological Survey 17

Kidnapping
Children (20.12.85) 725-30

Kidney failure 699-700w
Kidney patients 699-700w

Kidneys
Medical treatments 310-1w
Transplant surgery 310-1w, 698w

Kilfedder, James
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Kilroy-Silk, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Quangos (18.12.85) 354
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 322
Young people (18.12.85) 358
Questions
Birds, Scotland 721-3w
Cervical cancer, Screening 737-8w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Government grants 271w
District health authorities, Merseyside 149-52w
EC Foreign Affairs Council, EC budget 202w
Heart diseases, St Helens & Knowsley Health Authority 428w
Kirkby Victims Support Scheme, Government grants to voluntary organisations 187w, 271w
Life imprisonment 171w
Life imprisonment, Prisoners release 170-1w
Per capita costs, Prisons 170w
Police custody 620w, 621w
Police custody, Costs 621w
Police custody, Expenditure 621w
Police custody, Manpower 621w
Prison medical services, Per capita costs 172w

Prison population, Ethnic groups 170w
Prisons, Per capital costs 170w
Probation, Ethnic monitoring 130-1w
Probation, Statistics 713w
Racial attacks 622-3w
Regional health authorities, Merseyside 150w
Remand in custody 621-2w
Remand in custody, Police cells 619-20w, 715w
Student numbers, Women 121w

Kings College Hospital 103w
Prime Minister domestic visits 103w

King, Mr Roger
Debates etc
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1036, 1042-3
Questions
Motor vehicle parts, Spain 1061-2

King, Rt Hon Tom, *Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 265w
Army in Northern Ireland 265-6w
Codes of practice, Royal Ulster Constabulary 269w
Public expenditure, Northern Ireland 267-8w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Codes of practice 42w
Terrorism, Sentencing 553w

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1211-2
Prime Ministers question time point of order (19.12.85) 568
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 773, (15.01.86) 1082-7
Questions
British Aerospace, Westland helicopters 919
Business statement 573-5, 1214
"Reform of Social Security White Paper", Poverty 154-5
Westland helicopters, British Aerospace 1205
Westland helicopters, Defence procurement 564

Kinsley
Coal mine closures 7

Kirkby Victims Support Scheme 187w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 187w, 271w

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 171-2
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 28
Questions
Agricultural policy 278w
AIDS, Advisory services 71w
AIDS, Departmental publications 70w
AIDS, Discrimination 71w
AIDS, Haemophilia 70w
AIDS, Health education 71w
AIDS, Medical research 71w
AIDS, Research finance 71w
Blood, Scotland 292w
British Council 192w
Defence equipment, Nuclear weapons 561w
Factor VIII, Blood 416w
Family practitioner committees, Audit 154w, 607w
National Youth Advisory Council, Public appointments 287-8w
NHS charges, Foreign patients 69-70w
Oil revenues, Tax yields 1202
Regional health authorities, NHS finance 417w
Sea fishing, Scotland 62w
Social security payments, Administrative delays 75w
Supplementary benefits, Young people 84w, 434-5w
Youth training scheme 54w, 187w
Youth training scheme, European Social Fund 299w
Youth training scheme, Finance 187w
Youth training scheme, Ministers domestic visits 186-7w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 187w

Kneller Hall 918
Royal Military School of Music 918

Knight, Mr Greg
Debates etc
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 405, 406, 408-9
Questions
Customs, Drug crimes 144-5w
Offshore drilling, Energy research 26-7w
UK repayments from EC budget 539-40w

Knight, Dame Jill
Debates etc
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 875
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 27

Knowles, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 329
Questions
Dept of the Environment, Efficiency scrutinies 263w

Knox, Mr David
Questions
Alternative energy, EC Energy Council 10
Economic growth 651w
European Communities 206w
Manufactured goods 586w
Milk, Co-responsibility levy 560-1
Money supply, MO 306w
National income, Public sector borrowing requirement 190w
Public expenditure, National income 189w

Kurdistan
Iraq 735w

Laboratories
Blood 416w

Labour costs
Industry 509-10w

Labour only sub-contracting 42w, 50w, 52w, 186w
Building industry 42w, 52w
Self-employed 42w, 52w
Tax exemption certificates 50w

Labour Party
Defence 567

Labour turnover
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 736w
DHSS local offices 738w

Lagan Valley
By election writs (17.12.85) 139

Lambeth
Housing benefits 67-8w
Rate rebates 67-8w

Lamond, Mr James
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 304
Questions
European Security Conference, Stockholm 292
Multifibre arrangement, Textile industry 1063-4
Strategic Defence Initiative, Defence research 907

Lamont, Mr Norman, *Minister of State for Defence Procurement*
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1144
Questions
Areospace industry, Helicopters 526w
Agusta, Company finance 533w
Agusta, International cooperation 529w, 610w
Agusta helicopters, Defence procurement 530w
Air force, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 213w
Air force bases, Armed forces deployment 538w
Arms trade, International cooperation 535w
British Aerospace, Defence contracts 98-9w
Defence, Cost effectiveness 564w
Defence expenditure, Defence procurement 379w
Defence procurement 247w
Defence procurement, Cost effectiveness 372w
Defence procurement, International cooperation 910
Defence procurement, Mergers 719w
Devonport Dockyard, Management 381w
Dockyards, Management 718w
Dockyards, Privatisation 718w
Earthquakes, Defence research 211w
European fighter aircraft 915
European fighter aircraft, Defence contracts 910
European fighter aircraft, Defence expenditure 534-5w, 612w
European fighter aircraft, Defence procurement 909
European fighter aircraft, International cooperation 563w, 909, 916
Exservicemen, Employment discrimination 906
GEC, Mergers 609w
Helicopters, Defence procurement 532-3w, 534w, 609-10w
Helicopters, European Economic Community 533w
Helicopters, International cooperation 529-30w, 530-1w, 531-2w, 534w, 535w
Military aircraft, Early warning systems 562w
Ministry of Defence, Early retirement 215-6w
Nimrod aircraft, Costs 98w
Nimrod aircraft, Defence 98w
Nimrod aircraft, Defence contracts 912, 913
Nimrod aircraft, Radar 98w
Nimrod aircraft, Repairs & maintenance 97-8w
Nuclear test ban, Civil service manpower 366w
Nuclear weapons, Nuclear fuel cycle 561w
Nuclear weapons tests 216w
Nuclear weapons tests, Australia 216w, 561w
Nuclear weapons tests, Christmas Island 609w
Nuclear weapons tests, National Radiological Protection Board 906
Nuclear weapons tests, Personal injuries compensation 563w
Nuclear weapons tests, Personal injury compensation 905-6
Public footpaths, Defence Act 1842 373w
Public footpaths, Menwith 372-3w
Royal ordnance factories, Production capacity 215w
Smith, James, Defence procurement 214w, 215w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 214w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence expenditure 560-1w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence research 213w, 214w
Strategic defence initiative, Imports 213w
Strategic defence initiative, Intellectual property 213-4w
Strategic defence initiative, Lasers 214w
Strategic defence initiative, Tactical nuclear weapons 213w
Strategic defence initiative, Technical assistance 560w
Tornado aircraft, Defence expenditure 534w, 611-2w
Trident 562w
Trident, Contracts 562w
Trident, Costs 212w
Trident missiles 246w
Trident missiles, Testing 212w
VC10 aircraft, Defence contracts 97w, 247w
VC10 aircraft, Military aircraft 97w
Westland helicopters, Company finance 534w

Westland helicopters, Defence contracts 535w
Westland helicopters, Defence procurement 525-6w
Westland helicopters, International cooperation 526-8w, 529w, 530w, 532w, 534w, 610-1w
Westland helicopters, Letters 525w
Westland helicopters, Ministers correspondence 610w
Westland helicopters, Shares 533w
Westland helicopters, USA 533w

Lancashire
Local government staff 627w

Land acquisition
Defence land 916-7
Forestry Commission 724-5w

Land reclamation
Compensation 463w
Shopping centres 614-5w

Land Registry Office
Birmingham 109w

Land Resources Development Centre
Finance 770-1

Land use
Agricultural land 558-9

Land values
Greater London Council 13w

Landlord & tenant
Electricity tariffs 23-4w
Gas tariffs 23-4w

Languages education
Nordic countries 118-9w

Lasers
Nuclear weapons 909
Strategic defence initiative 214w

Latest damage 109w, 766
Building industry 766
Law Reform Committee 109w

Latham, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 609-12
Oral question time intervention (18.12.85) 287
Oral question time point of order (18.12.85) 300
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 265w
Farrakhan, Louis 627w
Foreign aid 551w
Foreign aid, Developing countries 550-1w
Israel, Arab boycott 33w
Limited list prescribing, Orders & regulations 81w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 290
Peres, Shimon, Official visits 552w
Post Office, Financial targets 650-1w
Scientific civil service, Conditions of employment 17
Skoal Bandits, British Medical Association 432w
Social security benefits, Members correspondence 432-3w
Tobacco industry, Advertising codes of practice 434w

Law centres 446w
Finance 253w, 261-2w
Government grants 253w
Local government reform 261-2w

Law enforcement
Crime 457w
Sunday trading 251-2w

Law officers
Disclosure of information 769

Law reform
Company law 136-7w
Equal opportunities 5w
Leasehold housing (14.01.86) 935-7

Law Reform Committee 109w
Latent damage 109w

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1985 290w

Law Reform (Parent & Child) (Scotland) Bill 1985/86
2R* (17.01.86) 1410

Law reporting
Rape 546w

Lawler, Mr Geoff
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1231
Questions
Multifibre arrangement 1062-3
School choice, Schools & parents 122w
Teachers, Dismissal 150
Visas, Indian subcontinent 342w

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Debates etc
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 878-82, 888, 889
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 808
Questions
Budapest Cultural Forum 208w
Financial Services Bill 1985/86, Fraud 135-6w
Immigration appeals, Members correspondence 176w
Road accidents, Breathalysers 481w
Road accidents, Cars 481w
Trade unions, Political levy 399-400w

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Debates etc
Banking supervision, Ministerial statements (17.12.85) 159-67
Questions
Bank of England, Bank loans 1193
Bank of England, Banking supervision 1191-2
Banking supervision, Public appointments 1193
Budget, USA 648w
City of London, Fraud 1192-3
City of London, Invisible trade balance 1192
Economic growth, Interest rates 1200
Economic growth, Manufacturing industries 1199-1200, 1200-1
International economic relations 1202
International economic relations, Exchange rates 1202
International economic relations, Interest rates 1202-3
International economic relations, Western Europe 1202
Oil prices 1201
Oil revenues, Tax yields 1202

Lead
Radioactive waste disposal 106w

Lead free petrol (14.01.86) 1027-48
Capital investment 634-5w
Costs 635w
Energy consumption 635w
Taxation 654-5w

Lead pollution
Water supply 12w

Leadbitter, Mr Ted
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1164-5

Leasehold housing
Law reform (14.01.86) 935-7

Leasehold Reform Bill 1985/86
1R (14.01.86) 935-7

Leave
Civil servants 720-2w

Lee, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement
Questions
Air force 101w
Air force, Armed forces discharges 381-2w
Air force, Armed forces retirement 382-3w, 383-4w
Air force, Armed forces training 564w
Air force bases, Public buildings 522w
Armed forces, AIDS 212w
Armed forces, Vocational guidance 918
Armed forces catering services, Armed forces civilians 373w
Armed forces catering services, Hospital catering 373w
Armed forces deployment, Bolton 96w
Armed forces discharges, Aircrew 99-101w
Armed forces officers, Criminal investigation 525w
Armed forces pensions, Costs 96w
Armed forces pensions, Widows 246w
Armed forces strength, Bolton 522-3w
Armed forces strength, Vocational guidance 917
Armed forces strength, 9 Signal Regiment 101-2w
Armed forces training, Aircrew 99w, 101w
Armed forces training, Morocco 212w
Armed forces training, South Africa 523w
Army, Fox hunting 379-80w, 536-7w, 539w
Army, Horses 536w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Defence 381w
Civilian Pay Records Office 522w
Defence contracts 911-2
Defence contracts, Scotland 912
Defence contracts, Scott Lithgow 914
Defence land, Land acquisition 916-7
Defence land, Rainham marshes 561w
Defence procurement, Cammell Laird 912
Defence procurement, Navy 914
Defence procurement, Warships 914
Defence procurement, West Germany 525w
Devonport Dockyard, Shipbuilding 374w
Dockyards, Manpower 102w
Dockyards, Transport 374w
14 Signal Regiment, Armed forces discharges 215w
Harbour masters, Portsmouth 717w
HMS Challenger 641w
HMS Otter, Shipbuilding 717-8w
L9A1 gas spray guns 211w
Mallon, Seamus, Ulster Defence Regiment 246-7w
Military aircraft, Low flying 641w
Military bands, Costs 918
Ministry of Defence, Fife 643w
Ministry of Defence, Security vetting 643w
Naval bases, Construction 97w
Navy, Armed forces civilians 374-8w
Navy, Armed forces storage depots 374w
9 Signal Regiment, Armed forces discharges 215w, 524w
9 Signal Regiment, Police interrogation 524-5w
Official secrets, Trials 99w
Polaris submarines, Medical records 95-6w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Armed forces catering services 373w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Contract catering 373w, 374w
Radiation hazards, Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 372w
RAF Brampton, Fires 917
Scott Lithgow, Defence contracts 642w
Shipbuilding, Security 564w
Strategic defence initiative, Technical assistance 560w
Submarines, Defence contracts 641-2w, 911
Submarines, Shipbuilding 911
Submarines, Tenders 642w
13 Signal Regiment, Armed forces discharges 523w, 524w
Type 23 frigates 914
Type 23 frigates, Defence contracts 913-4

Leeds
Water supply 220w

Leeds General Infirmary 154w, 233-4w
Building repairs 154w

Leeds Western District Health Authority 233-4w

Lee, Bruce 454w
Court of Appeal 454w

Legal advice & assistance (19.12.85) 654-62

Legal Advice & Assistance (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 1985 (19.12.85) 654-62

Legal Advice & Assistance (Prospective Cost) Regulations 1985 (19.12.85) 654-62

Legal aid 253w
Inquiries 446w
Legal costs 2-3w

Legal costs
Cash limits 635w
EC action 42w
Legal aid 2-3w
Scotland 635w

Leicestershire
Motorways 477w
Police 455w

Leigh, Mr Edward
Questions
Inflation 650w
University finance, Private investment 122w
USSR, Political refugees 205-6w

Leighton, Mr Ron
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 164
Questions
Community programme, Training allowances 398w
Employment schemes, Newham 51w
Majid, Jamila, Body searches 342-3w
Monteith, Billy, Arrests 343w
Part-time employment 51w
Self-employed, Building industry 399w
Self-employed, Ethnic groups 399w

Leighton Linslade bypass 112w
Government grants 112w

Leisure facilities
Industrial building allowances 360w

Lemibach, Pedro Fernandez 476w
Political prisoners 474w

Lesotho
Economic sanctions 923-4
South Africa 923-4

Lester, Mr Jim
Debates etc
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 194-7
Questions
International Committee of the Red Cross, Treaties 562w

Letters
Westland helicopters 525w

Lewisham
Housing departments 920

Lewis, Sir Kenneth
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1141
Questions
British Aerospace, Ministers correspondence 922
Business statement 1215-6

Lewis, Mr Terry
Debates etc
Football Safety Reviews (16.01.86) 1233-4
Members interests (17.12.85) 224
Questions
Defence procurement 155
Government assistance to industry, Worsley 25w, 136w, 139w
Nicaragua, EC external relations 201w
Nuclear weapons tests, Personal injury compensation 905-6
Public utilities, Consumer protection 590-1w
Student grants, Further education 120w

Leytonstone
Social security recipients 69w
Supplementary benefits 69w

Liability
Building industry 766

Libyan Arab Republic
Foreign relations 1206
Terrorism 1206
USA 1205-6

Licensed premises
Bingo 143-4w

Licensing
British Gas Corporation 6, 10-1
Dogs 217-8w
Dumping 614w
Nursing homes 79-80w
Pest control 721-3w
Pesticides 725w, 725w
Untreated milk 281w

Life imprisonment 171w
Prisoners release 170-1w

"Lifting the Burden White Paper" 303w, 369-71w
Small businesses 303w
Town & country planning 369-71w

Lightbown, Mr David
Debates etc
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1039, 1040
Questions
Local government land, Vacant land 729-30w
Postal services, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 241-2w
"Public Expenditure White Paper" 539w

Lighthouses
Dawsar Island 479w
Isle of Man 479w, 582-3w
Manpower 168w
Northern Lighthouse Board 479w

Lighting
Channel crossing 759
EC action 42w
Motor vehicles 42w
Motorways 292w, 296-7w, (18.12.85) 383-5, 477w

Limited list prescribing 81w, 231w, 421-2w, 739w
Appeals 421-2w
Lipoflavanoid 231w
Orders & regulations 81w

Lincolnshire
Water supply 656w

Lipoflavanoid
Limited list prescribing 231w

List D schools 162w
School closures 162w

Litherland, Mr Robert
Questions
Chile, Human rights 200w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w

Littleborough
Unemployment 566-8w

Liverpool
Building industry 491-2w
Housing (20.12.85) 745-54
Housing problems (16.01.86) 1337-40
Nursery schools 119w
Unemployment 492-3w
Urban planning (16.01.86) 1337-40

Livsey, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 339
Questions
Air force, Armed forces training 564w
European monetary system 307w
Plant breeding institute, Property transfer 286-7w
Rate support grants, Powys 1207-8
Sheep, Clawbacks 559-60

Lloyds Act 1982 Inquiry (14.01.86) 938-1024

Lloyds Bank International 517w, 518w
Westland helicopters 517w, 518w

Lloyds of London 565-6
Financial Services Bill 1985/86 589w, 1027-8, 1069-70
Fraud 346-7w
Inquiries 1069
Members interests 1057-8, 1069-70

Lloyd, Mr Ian
Debates etc
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 60-3
Questions
Food additives 275w
South Africa, S & T research 195w

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Fire Precautions (Amendment) Bill, 1R (17.12.85) 178-9
Manchester Airport (18.12.85) 351
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 806, 833
Questions
Airport security 630w
Assisted areas, North West region 139-40w
Channel crossing 475w
Factory Inspectorate, North West region 188w
Food additives 561
Foreign tourists, Immigration rules 174w
Industrial development, Regional planning & development 586w
Law centres 446w
Manchester Airport, Security 630w
Nuclear weapons, Europe 204w
Nuclear weapons, Lasers 909
Nuclear weapons tests, Personal injuries compensation 563w
Open University, Tuition fees 116w
Prime Minister official engagements 103w, 265w, 552-3w
Shareholders, Privatisation 1194

Loan guarantee scheme
Companies 301-2w

Loans
Mortgages (19.12.85) 592-653

Lobbying (17.12.85) 219-57

Local authorities
Civil defence 177-8w
Local enterprise agencies 303-4w
Non-domestic rates 570w
Planning appeals 222w
Political parties 469-70w
Urban deprivation 12w, 18-20w

Local authorities in Scotland
Civil defence 293w

Local dental committees 420w

Local education authorities
School administration 149-50
Youth training scheme 488w

Local enterprise agencies 56w, 303-4w
Local authorities 303-4w

Local government social services
Cruelty to children 437w

Local Government Act 1985 11-2w, 46w, 47-8w, 661w

Local government audit 729w

Local Government Bill 1985/86 678w

Local government expenditure 511w
Basildon District Council 922
Bed & breakfast accommodation 465-6w, 577w
Civil defence 9w
Defective housing 576w
Drug crimes 6-7w
Fire services 172w, 173w
Greater London Council 216-8w, 219w, 366-9w, 470w
Housing benefits 410w
Housing finance 217w
Inner London Education Authority 185w
Police 273-4w
Police authorities 172w, 173w
Public transport 168w, 404-6w

Rate limitation 219w
Voluntary organisations 237w

Local government finance 468w, 651w
Local government reform 222-3w

Local government functions
Greater London Council 469w

Local government land
Greater London Council 13w, 257-8w
Vacant land 729-30w

Local government reform
Arts finance 189w, (20.12.85) 731-7
Civil service manpower 11-2w, 15w, 24w, 47-8w, 49-50w, 258w
County Hall 369w
Departmental leaflets 469w
Dept of the Environment 258w
Dept of Trade & Industry 24w
Dept of Transport 47-8w
GLCO 470w
Greater London Council 16w, 105w, 219w, 468-9w, 470w, 512w, 564
Greater London Council Research Library 469w
Hainault Forest 662-3w
Home Office 11-2w
Law centres 261-2w
Local government finance 222-3w
London boroughs 677-8w
Pedestrian areas 111w
Public transport 404-6w
Rates & rating 108w
Road traffic control 46w, 490w
Road works 111w
South Bank 512w
Thamesmead Community Trust 259w
Treasury 49-50w
Voluntary organisations 237w, 603w
Woolwich Ferry 110-1w, 406-7w

Local Government Reorganisation (Transitional Provisions) Order 1985 (13.01.86) 791

Local government revenue 468w
Greenwich 661w
London Regional Transport 46-7w

Local government services
Civil defence 9w

Local government social services
Aids for handicapped 493w

Local government staff
Educational psychology 338w
Emergency planning 456w
Lancashire 627w
Manpower 469-70w, 570w, 577w
Pay 456w, 570w
Redundancy 468-9w
Thamesmead community trust 728-9w

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 663w

Local Loans (Increases of Limit) Order 1986 (14.01.86) 934

Loch area 548-9w

Loch Inchard 631w

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 221, 222
Questions
Business statement 1221-2
Coal mining, Industrial relations 12
EC reform, Voting methods 201w
"Higher Education Consultation Paper" 120w
Manufacturing industries, Castleford 126w

London boroughs
Concessionary fares 478w
Costs 677w
Local government reform 677-8w
Political affiliations 459w
Rates & rating 469w

London Commodity Exchange
Upper Waiting Hall 633w

London Coordinating Committee 469w

London docklands
Employment opportunities 220w, 467w
Stolport 408-9w

London Docklands Development Corporation
External financing limits 472w
Management techniques 571w
Property transfer 471-2w

London docklands railway 471-2w, 679w, 755, 764
Canary Wharf 755
Construction 755
Employment 471-2w
London Regional Transport 755
Manpower 679w
Private sector 764
Profitability 764
Stolport 755

London Marathon 263w
Government grants 263w

London Regional Transport 46-7w, 755
Government grants 46-7w
Local government revenue 46-7w
London docklands railway 755

London Residuary Body 259w, 369w, 677-8w
Finance 677-8w

Londonderry, East
By election writs (17.12.85) 139

Long stay patients 702w
Mental hospitals 702w

Lorries
Channel crossing 113w
Road safety 46w

Lost working days
Teachers 115w

Lothian Estates 717w
Compensation 717w

Lothian Health Board
Debts written off 292w

Lothian Regional Council 615w
Rate support grants 615w

Low flying
Military aircraft 641w

"Low Income Families, 1981" 74-6w

Low incomes (16.12.85) 131-8
Families 74-6w
Unemployed 74-6w

Low pay
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 473-93
Energy conservation 315w
Health service staff 736w
Income tax 1201
Manual workers 726w
Marginal tax rates 594-6w, 646w

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Questions
Nursery schools, Liverpool 119w

Luce, Rt Hon Richard, Minister of State Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)
Questions
Arts Council, Arts finance 512w
Arts Council, Recreation spaces 512w
Arts Council grants, Concert Halls 304-5w
Arts finance, Greater Manchester 189w
British Library, Construction, Specific cases 35w
Civil servants, Dept of Health & Social Security 18, 19-20
Civil servants, Work study 17-8
Civil servants, 10 Downing Street 18-9
Civil service, Scotland 18
Civil service, Trade unions 31w
Civil & Public Services Association 31w
Equal opportunities officers, Civil service recruitment 31w
Government grants, British Film Institute 35-8w
Non-departmental public bodies 109w
Scientific civil service, Conditions of employment 16-7
South Bank, Arts finance 512w
South Bank, Local government reform 512w
South Bank, Managers 512w
South Bank, Pulford, Richard 512w
South Bank Board, Pay 512w
Yorkshire Water Colour Society, Upper Waiting Hall 34-5w

Luxembourg Summit 201-2w

Lyell, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 803, 824-5, 852-3, 855
Questions
Common sugar regime, Raw materials 279w

Lygo, Admiral Sir Raymond 592w

L9A1 Gas Spray Guns 129-30w, 211w

McCrea, William
Members resignations (17.12.85) 139

McCrindle, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 597, 620-3
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 997-9
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 29-30
Questions
Airports, Fees & charges 733w
British Airways, Privatisation 733w
Cervical cancer, Screening 570-1
City of London, Invisible trade balance 1192
International Monetary Fund, Airlines 593w
New Cross Building Society 653w

McCurley, Mrs Anna
Questions
Naval bases, Construction 97w
Submarines, Defence contracts 911

McCusker, Harold
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

McDonald, Dr Oonagh
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 600-4
Questions
Civil servants, Dept of Health & Social Security 19-20
Economic growth, Manufacturing industries 1200-1
Iran-Iraq war, Peace negotiations 296
Tax yields, Tax allowances 309w
Universities, Research 118w

Macfarlane, Mr Neil
Questions
Prisoners release, Homicide 462w

MacGregor, Rt Hon John, Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Questions
Civil servants, Greater London 48w
Crown lands & estates, Diorama 655w
Crown lands & estates, Rates & rating 49w
Economic growth 651w
Exchange rates, Interest rates 1198
Labour costs, Industry 509-10w
Local government expenditure 511w
Local government finance 651w
Local government reform, Treasury 49-50w
Manufactured exports 306w
Mortgage relief, Mortgage interest rates 1197, 1198
National income, Public sector borrowing requirement 190w
Oil prices, Economic planning 648w
Pay settlements, National Economic Development Council 1203
Productivity, OECD countries 653w
Public expenditure, National income 189w
Public expenditure, Northern Ireland 1197
Public expenditure, Per capita costs 360w
"Public Expenditure White Paper" 539w
Public sector borrowing requirement 305w

Regional aid, Northern region 1195-6, 1196-7
Regional aid, West Midlands 1196
Unemployment 190w

Machine tools
Export controls 361w
South Africa 361w

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 321
Questions
Arab states, Christmas 203w
Coal mining, Industrial disputes 14
Westland helicopters, British Aerospace 920

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Low pay (18.12.85) 473-4
Questions
Air transport 477w
Defence land, Land acquisition 916-7
Income tax, Low pay 1201
Libyan Arab Republic, Terrorism 1206
Middle East, Ministers visits abroad 193w
South Africa, Foreign relations 296

MacKay, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Debates etc
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1264-7
Maternity services, Glasgow (18.12.85) 545-50
Questions
Agricultural Advisory Services, Scotland 59-60w
AIDS, Scottish health boards 63w
Birds, Scotland 721-3w
Blood, Scotland 292w
Body searches, Scotland 60-1w
Civil defence, Local authorities in Scotland 293w
Civil defence, Scotland 292-3w, 483w
Fish conservation, Scotland 565w
Forests, Nature conservation 162w
Health services finance, Scottish health boards 59w
Highlands & Islands Development Board, Tourism 65w
Hospital beds, Scotland 353-4w
Hospital beds, Scottish health boards 354-8w
Joint financing, Scotland 58w
Joint liaison committees, Scotland 59w
Lothian Health Board, Debts written off 292w
Maternal mortality, Scotland 63-4w
Mental health services, Glasgow 615w
NHS, Scotland 482w
Pesticides, Licensing 723w
Police, Scotland 352w
Scottish health board, Conflict of interests 161w
Scottish health boards, Capital investment 164-6w
Scottish health boards, Conflict of interests 161w, 163w
Scottish health boards, Contracts for services 293-4w
Scottish health boards, Public appointments 294w
Scottish Islands, EC grants & loans 482w
Sea fishing, Scotland 62w
Tayside Health Board 163w
Youth custody, Scotland 63w

McKelvey, Mr William
Questions
Strategic defence initiative, Foreign relations 194w

Maclean, Mr David
Questions
Business education, Universities 335w
EC Agricultural Council, Common agricultural policy 351-2w
Firearms certificates, Fees, & charges 274w
Higher education, Freedom of expression 151
Milk, Production quotas 552
Priorities Board for Research & Development in Agriculture & Food 210-1w
Road signs, Tourist attractions 345w
Strategic defence initiative, USSR 908
University teachers, Pay 335-6w

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1254-6
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1234
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985 (16.01.86) 1333-4
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 794, 823-6
Questions
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Financial targets 1061
Farmers, Debts 282w
Open University, Student numbers, Specific cases 116w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Michael
Questions
Cancer hazards, Radiation hazards 698w
Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment, Royal ordnance factories 744-6w
Military aircraft, Early warning systems 562w
Radiation hazards, Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 372w
Unemployment 639w
Wildlife Inspectorate, Professional misconduct 107-8w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 781

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Questions
Air force 101w
Air force, Armed forces discharges 381-2w
Air force, Armed forces retirement 382-3w, 383-4w
Air force, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 213w
Air force bases, Armed forces deployment 538w
Armed forces deployment, South Africa 212w
Armed forces deployment, 9 Signal Regiment 379w
Armed forces discharges, Aircrew 99-101w
Armed forces officers, Criminal investigation 525w
Armed forces strength, 9 Signal Regiment 101-2w
Armed forces training, Aircrew 99w, 101w
Armed forces training, Ulster Defence Regiment 102w
Codes of practice, Royal Ulster Constabulary 269w
Defence procurement, International cooperation 910
European fighter aircraft, International cooperation 916
14 Signal Regiment, Armed forces discharges 215w
Interviews, 9 Signal Regiment 379w
Lee, Bruce, Court of Appeal 454w
9 Signal Regiment, Armed forces deployment 525w
9 Signal Regiment, Armed forces discharges 215w, 524w
9 Signal Regiment, Police interrogation 524-5w
Official secrets, Trials 99w
Royal ordnance factories, Production capacity 215w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Codes of practice 42w
13 Signal Regiment, Armed forces discharges 523w, 524w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Training 245-6w
Wages Inspectorate, Yorkshire & Humberside 489-92w
Westland helicopters 578w
Westland helicopters, British Aerospace 592w

McQuarrie, Mr Albert
Debates etc
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 72-81, 83-4, 88, 90, 94, 97, 101, 102, 103
Questions
Cereals, Agricultural surpluses 553-4
Defence contracts, Scott Lithgow 914
Falkland Islands, Fisheries 562-3
Navigational aids, Scotland 631w
Pilotage, Scotland 580w

McTaggart, Mr Bob
Questions
Child benefit, Scotland 72-3w

McWilliam, Mr John
Debates etc
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 697

Madden, Mr Max
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1210
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 950
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1232
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1271
Oral question time point of order (15.01.86) 1074-5
Prime Ministers question time point of order (19.12.85) 568
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 323
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 34
Questions
Business statement 582, 1223
Immigration, Official secrets 455w
Immigration appeals, British citizenship 8-9w
Ministers domestic visits, Bradford 651w
Multifibre arrangement 1064
NHS, Technicians 151-2w
Railway closures 44w
Road signs, Motorways 42-3w
Slum clearance, Bradford 565
Unemployment benefits, Administrative delays 397w
UNESCO 179w
University finance, Educational finance 116-7w

Made in Britain 1061
Motor vehicle parts 1061, 1062

Madel, Mr David
Questions
Leighton Linslade bypass, Government grants 112w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114w, 115w, 147, 544w

Maginnis, Ken
Members resignations (17.12.85) 139

Magistrates
County Palatine 329w
Manpower 3w
North West region 346w
Political affiliations 329w, 346w

Majid, Jamila 342-3w
Body searches 342-3w

Major, Mr John, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health & Social Security
Debates etc
Fuel poverty (16.12.85) 133-8
Low incomes, Heating allowances (16.12.85) 133-8
Low pay (18.12.85) 487-93
Statutory Sick Pay Uprating Order 1985 (15.01.86) 1175-6, 1179-82
Questions
Departmental forms, Administrative delays 154w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Personal records 497w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil service recruitment 153w, 496w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil service manpower 496w

Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, East Midlands 496w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil servants 497w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Heating 503-4w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Labour turnover 736w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Greater London 738w
DHSS local offices, Civil service manpower 509w
DHSS local offices, Greater London 738w
Families, Exceptional needs payments 701w
Families, Low incomes 74-6w
Housing benefits, Costs 317w
Housing benefits, Rate rebates 78w
Housing benefits, Social security benefits rules 503-4w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 410-2w, 701w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 596w
Income support scheme, Young people 701w
Rate rebates, Government grants to local authorities 80-1w
Rate rebates, Lambeth 67-8w
Retirement pensions, Social security recipients 497-8w
Retirement pensions, South Africa 427-8w
Social security appeals tribunals, Scotland 79w
Social security benefits, Orkney 499w
Social security claims, Cricklewood 694w
Social security claims, Harlesden 693-4w
Social security claims, Home visits 415w
Social security claims, Neasden 693-4w
Social security payments, Administrative delays 75w
Social security payments, Post Office 228w
Social security recipients, Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 322w
Social security recipients, Leytonstone 69w
Social security recipients, Sheffield 229w
State occupational pensions, Men 147-8w
Supplementary benefits, DHSS local offices 497w
Supplementary benefits, Exceptional needs payments 321-2w
Supplementary benefits, Hickson, AD 76w
Supplementary benefits, Slough 739-40w
Supplementary benefits, Social security abuse 422w
Supplementary benefits, Social security recipients 497w, 742-4w
Supplementary benefits, Statistics 321-2w
Supplementary benefits, Young people 506-8w
Unemployment benefits, Social security recipients 498w

Makenjuola, Adebola 252w
Sexual offences 252w

Malaysia
Drug crimes 569w

Mallon, Seamus 246-7w
Ulster Defence Regiment 246-7w

Malnutrition
Ethiopia 40-1w

Malone, Mr Gerald
Debates etc
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 76, 79-80, 83, 93, 99-103
Questions
Sexual offences, Trials 290w

Management techniques
London Docklands Development Corporation 571w

Management & Personnel Office
Equal opportunities officers 31w

Managers
South Bank 512w

Manchester Airport 169w, 297w, 409w, 480w, 569w, 578w, 630w
Airport security 569w, 578w
Companies 169w
Management 297w, 409w, 480w
Manchester City Council 169w
Police firearms 569w
Security 630w

Manchester City Council 168w, 169w, 480w
Manchester Airport 169w
Public transport 168w

Manchester University
Freedom of expression 151

Mandatory student grants
Refugees 646w

Mandela, Nelson
South Africa 286

Manpower Services Commission
Training 151
Youth training scheme 113w

Manual workers
Low pay 726w

Manufactured exports 306w

Manufactured goods 586w
Balance of trade 452-3w, 587w
EC trade 453w
USA 520-1w

Manufacturing industries
Castleford 126w
Economic growth 1199-1200, 1200-1
Employment 398w
Industrial investment 587w
Industrial production 1199-1200
Interest rates 1200-1
Profitability 1200
Regional development grants 332-4w
Regional selective assistance 332-4w
Wales 285w

Maples, Mr John
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 954, 975
Questions
Building regulations, Greater London 13-4w
Woolwich Ferry, Local government reform 110-1w

Marek, Dr John
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 340
Questions
Argentina, Diplomatic relations 198w
British Rail, Railway travel 477w
Capital investment, Wales 332w
Civil disorder, Street lighting 173w
Fire regulations, Prosecutions 174-5w
Milk, Production quotas 552
Ministers correspondence, Disclosure of information 734w
Motor components industry, Iron & steel 1061
Prime Minister domestic visits, Railway travel 552w
Tristan da Cunha, Companies 364w
Tristan da Cunha, Overseas trade 33w

Margam mine 14-5
National Coal Board 14-5

Margarine
Hospital catering 428w

Marginal land
Crops 2w
Horses 281-2w

Marginal tax rates
Average earnings 1194
Low pay 594-6w, 646w
OECD countries 1194
Profits 141w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 1195
Social security reviews 495-6w
Taxpayers 1195

Marine engines
Occupational deafness 76w

Mark
Exchange rates 650w

Market share 332w, 335w, 453w
EC trade 453w

Marketing
Trade promotion 298

Marketing of Investments Board 245w, 766-7
Self-regulatory system 245w

Markets
Horses 560

Marlow, Mr Tony
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 306-7
Members interests (17.12.85) 224, 248
Members interests, Liberal Party (18.12.85) 343
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1028, 1031
Oral question time point of order (18.12.85) 300
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 799
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 45, (15.01.86) 1097, 1128
Questions
Army reserves, Armed forces training 916
Business statement 1217
Coal mining, Private investment 29w
Members & trade unions 16
Middle East, Ministers visits abroad 193w
Middle East, Violence 287
Sportsgrounds, Safety certificates 175-6w
Taxation, Families 646w

Marriage Act 1983 420w
Departmental circulars 420w

Marriage (Wales) Bill 1985/86
2R & rem stages* (17.01.86) 1410

Married people
Personal tax allowances 652w

Married women 701-2w
Invalid care allowances 701w
Retirement pensions 409w

Married womens half test 409w

Marshall, Mr David
Questions
Road works, Scotland 352-3w

Marshall, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 42
Questions
Westland helicopters, British Aerospace 1204-5

Martial arts weapons 570w
Young people 570w

Mary Rose 678w
Ancient monuments 678w

Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 231-4
Questions
Coal mining, Barnsley 53w
Coal mining, Privatisation 6, 445w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit, Association of Metropolitan Authorities 6-7w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit, Manpower 6w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit, Regional crime squads 6w
Yorkshire Water Colour Society, Upper Waiting Hall 34-5w

Mason, Flt Sgt 525w

Materials Advisory Group 633w

Materials technology 633w

Maternal mortality 81-4w
Scotland 63-4w

Maternity benefits
Exceptional needs payments 436w
Public expenditure 697w

Social Fund 599w
Social security reform 696-7w
Tax yields 696-7w

Maternity services
Glasgow (18.12.85) 544-50

Mates, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 40, (13.01.86) 784

Mather, Mr Carol, Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 863

Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Debates etc
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 31
Questions
Budget, USA 648w
Ethiopia, Food aid 40w
Ethiopia, Malnutrition 40-1w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 115w

Maxton, Mr John
Questions
EC reform, Parliament 201-2w

Maxwell-Hyslop, Mr Robin
Debates etc
Business statement (13.01.86) 774
Members interests (17.12.85) 226, 247
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 310, 311, 317
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 269-71
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 788
Questions
Butter, Imports 280w
Butter, New Zealand 210w
National Bus Company, Privatisation 760
Nicaragua, Airspace 283
Veterinary services 1-2w

Mayhew, Sir Patrick, Solicitor-General
Debates etc
Legal Advice & Assistance Regulations 1985 (19.12.85) 654-7, 660-2
Questions
Attorney-General, Security 446w
Crown Prosecution Service, Manpower 159w
Duty solicitors, Greater London 446-7w
Family courts review, Family courts 446w
Fraud, Criminal investigation 253-4w
Fraud, Members correspondence 252-3w
Inquiries, Official secrets 768-9
Land Registry Office, Birmingham 109w
Latent damage, Law Reform Committee 109w
Law centres 446w
Law centres, Finance 253w
Legal aid 253w
Legal aid, Inquiries 446w
Legal aid, Legal costs 2-3w
Liability, Building industry 766
Lloyds of London, Fraud 346-7w
Magistrates, Manpower 3w
Magistrates, North West region 346w
Makenjuola, Adebola, Sexual offences 252w
Official secrets, Disclosure of information 769
Rape, Law reporting 346w
Solicitor-General, Ministers correspondence 766
Sunday trading, Law enforcement 251-2w

Maynard, Miss Joan
Questions
EC integration 198w
Forests, Nature conservation 162w
Simonstown, Naval bases 134w
Water supply, Lincolnshire 656w
Water supply, Water authorities 656-62w

McCrea, William
Members resignations (17.12.85) 139

McCusker, Harold
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Meacher, Mr Michael
Debates etc
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 25-6
Statutory Sick Pay Uprating Order 1985 (15.01.86) 1176-9, 1181
Questions
Average earnings, Men 300-1w
DHSS local offices, Civil service manpower 509w
Disposable income, Social security reform 694w
Exceptional needs payments 739w
Family credit, Strike benefits 495w
Family credits, Social security reform 598w
Health service staff, Manpower 321w
Human growth hormones, Hormone treatments 700w
Hypothermia, Death 322w
Income support scheme, Young people 434w
Means tested benefits, Social security reform 704-6w
NHS, Management 700w
Pensions, Average earnings 319-20w
Pensions, Employers contributions 320w
Pensions, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 320-1w
Pensions, State earnings related pensions scheme 320w
Personal income 594w
Personal taxation 593-4w
Prescription charges exemptions, Publicity 157-8w
Prescriptions, Costs 502w
Productivity, OECD countries 653w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper", Statistics 740w
Social security benefits, Young people 495w
Social security benefits disqualification, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 324w
Social security recipients, Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 322w
Social security reform 694w
State earnings related pension scheme, Social security reform 694w, 744w
Supplementary benefits, Exceptional needs payments 321-2w
Supplementary benefits, Social security recipients 742-4w
Supplementary benefits, Statistics 321-2w
Supplementary benefits, Young people 434w
Unemployment, Economic regions 301-2w

Meadowcroft, Mr Michael
Questions
Betting & gaming duties, Bingo 143-4w
Cattle, Animal feed 541-2w
Food labelling, Fats 277w
Intervention stocks, Beef & veal 540-1w
Leeds General Infirmary 233-4w
Multifibre arrangement 1063
Oil revenues 307w
School meals, Nutrition 113w
Strategic defence initiative, Nuclear weapons 907-8
Strategic defence initiative, Royal United Services Institute 194w
Tax thresholds, Tax rates & bands 1195
Youth training scheme, Skilled workers 151

Means tested benefits
Social security reform 435-6w, 704-6w

Medical education
Ophthalmology 739w

Medical profession
NHS administration 429w

Medical records
Polaris submarines 95-6w

Medical research
AIDS 71w
Child health 602w
Diet & disease 78w
Surgery 601-2w
Trauma 38w

Medical treatment
Multiple sclerosis 76-7w

Medical treatments
Cancer (13.01.86) 898-904, (15.01.86) 1183-90
Kidneys 310-1w
Multiple sclerosis 76w, 77w

Mellor, Mr David, Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department
Debates etc
Juries (18.12.85) 429-32
Questions
Alcoholism & crime 457w
Animal experiments 173-4w
Brixton Prison, Body searches 342w, 458w
Brixton Prison, Prisoners rights 342w
Brixton Prison, Security 342w
Brixton Prison, Women 342w
Coroners 547w
Crime, Statistics 457w
Crimes of violence, Women 275w
Criminal injuries compensation 131w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Government grants 271w
Criminal Proceedings Arising From Fraud Review Committee 540w
Criminal statistics 547w
Drinking & driving, Convictions 132w
Drug abuse, Heroin 132w
Drug crimes, Malaysia 569w
East Sutton Park Open Prison, Diets 625w
Fraud, City of London 568-9w
Freemasonry 8w
Holloway Prison, Sanitation 623w
Home Office, Empty housing 458-9w
Imports, Dogs 5w
Juries 269-70w
Kirkby Victims Support Scheme, Government grants to Voluntary Organisations 271w
Lee, Bruce, Court of Appeal 454w
Life imprisonment 171w
Life imprisonment, Prisoners release 170-1w
Per capita costs, Prisons 170w
Police custody 620w, 621w
Police custody, Costs 621w
Police custody, Expenditure 621w
Police custody, Manpower 621w
Police custody, Prevention of Terrorism Acts 459-60w
Prison accommodation 7w
Prison medical services, AIDS 170w
Prison medical services, Per capita costs 172w
Prison population, Ethnic groups 170w
Prison staff, Manpower 343-4w
Prison staff, Recruitment 343w
Prison staff, Retirement 343w
Prison staff, Training 623w
Prisoners, Petitions 4w
Prisoners on remand, Prison population 170w
Prisoners release, Homicide 462w
Prisons, Per capital costs 170w
Probation, Ethnic monitoring 130-1w
Probation, Statistics 713w
Rape, Criminal injuries compensation 270-1w
Reid, P, Members correspondence 341w
Remand in custody 621-2w
Remand in custody, Police cells 619-20w, 715w
Young people, Police cautions 546-7w
Youth custody, Prisons 8w

Members (18.12.85) 361-5
House of Commons Select Committees 631-4w
Professional consultants 15

Members allowances
Members staff 15
Private members bills 441w

Members attendance
Speakers rulings & statements (18.12.85) 345

Members conduct
Public bills 734w
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 158, 243, (18.12.85) 435, 436, (13.01.86) 835, 875, (14.01.86) 917, (15.01.86) 1072, 1148, 1163, 1164

Members correspondence
Fraud 252-3w
Greater Manchester Police 175w
Immigrant detainees 9-10w
Immigration 342w
Immigration appeals 176w
Immigration controls 455-6w
NHS 601w
Reid, P 341w
Social security benefits 432-3w
Turville School 579w

Members deaths
Stevens, Martin (13.01.86) 755

Members facilities
Computers 16
Reprography 716w
Telephone systems 16

Members Fund (16.12.85) 128-30

Members interests 15-6, (17.12.85) 219-57
Business statement (17.12.85) 176-7
Financial Services Bill 1985/86 1058
House of Commons voting methods 15-6
Lloyds of London 1057-8, 1069-70
Speakers rulings & statements (14.01-86) 950, 1012-5

Members Interests Select Committee (17.12.85) 219-57

Members interventions
Speakers rulings & statements (16.12.85) 132-3, (17.12.85) 229, (18.12.85) 300, (20.12.85) 748, (14.01.86) 951, 965, 987, (15.01.86) 1162, 1186

Members pensions (16.12.85) 128-30

Members resignations
Beggs, Roy (17.12.85) 139
Forsythe, Clifford (17.12.85) 140
Kilfedder, James (17.12.85) 140
Maginnis, Ken (17.12.85) 139
McCrea, William (17.12.85) 139
McCusker, Harold (17.12.85) 140
Molyneaux, James (17.12.85) 139
Nicholson, James (17.12.85) 140
Paisley, Ian (17.12.85) 140
Powell, J Enoch (17.12.85) 140
Robinson, Peter (17.12.85) 140
Ross, William (17.12.85) 139
Smyth, Martin (17.12.85) 140
Taylor, John David (17.12.85) 140
Walker, A Cecil (17.12.85) 140

Members speeches
Speakers rulings & statements (14.01.86) 951, 965, 987 (15.01.86) 1120, 1145, (16.01.86) 1268

Members staff
Members allowances 15

Members & local authorities (18.12.85) 361-5

Members & trade unions 16

Men
Average earnings 300-1w
State occupational pensions 147-8w

Mental health services
Glasgow 615w

Mental hospitals
Child patients 702w
Long stay patients 702w

Mental patients
Death 73-4w
Respiratory diseases 73-4w

Mentally handicapped (17.01.86) 1346-1404

Menwith
Public footpaths 372-3w

Merchant, Mr Piers
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 329
Questions
Manufactured exports 306w
Regional aid, Northern region 1065
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141-2
Type 23 frigates, Defence contracts 913-4

Merchant banks
Westland helicopters 451w

Merchant seamen
Health physics 221-2w

Mergers 588w
Codes of practice 335w
Defence procurement 719w
GEC 179w, 609w, 719w
House of Fraser 634w
Plessey 179w, 609w

Merit awards 441w, 442w
Teachers 441w, 442w

Merrick
Acid rain 548-9w

Mersey Regional Health Authority 149-52w
Capital investment 149-52w

Merseyside
Building industry 491-2w
Concert halls 304-5w
District health authorities 149-52w
Regional health authorities 150w
Unemployment 493w

Merseyside County Council 304-5w

Merseyside Residuary Body 677w, 731w
Pocock, Leslie 731w
Public appointments 677w

Metropolitan Police 546w
Baton rounds 171-2w
Civil disorder 172-3w, 343w
Complaints against police 344w
Councillors 459w
Electoral register 128w
Expenditure 460w
Manpower 275w, 459w
Offices 171-2w
Police powers 126-7w
Police training 460w
Ports 459w
Recruitment 10-1w
Rewards 7w
South Africa 10-1w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 304
Juries (18.12.85) 417
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 335
Questions
Severn bridge, Road tolls 757

MFV Mhari L 582w

Mhari L
Shipping accidents 479w

Michie, Mr Bill
Questions
Financial services, Securities & Investment Board 1057
South Africa, EC external relations 194-5w

Mid Glamorgan
Cervical cancer 616-7w

Mid Glamorgan Health Authority 616-7w, 618w

Middle East 193w
Council of Ministers 133w
Foreign policy 193w
Foreign relations 290-1
Ministers visits abroad 193w
Palestine Liberation Organisation 286-7, 288
Peace negotiations 192w, 193w, 286-7, 288, 289-90, 290-1, 291-2
United Nations 291-2
Violence 287

Middlesex Hospital 155w
Hospital closures 155w

Mid-Ulster
By election writs (17.12.85) 139

Mikardo, Mr Ian
Questions
Israel, Ministers visits abroad 289
Middle East, Palestine Liberation Organisation 287

Milan Summit 197w

Military aircraft
Air force 247w
Early warning systems 562w
Low flying 641w
VC10 aircraft 97w

Military bands
Costs 918

Military exercises
Airport security 521-2w
New Zealand 734w

Military Police 213w
Air force 213w

Military vehicles
Chile 298
Fox hunting 537w, 538w
Road accidents 913

Milk
Cheese 553
Co-responsibility levy 560-1
Production quotas 209w, 281w, 552, 553

Milk & milk products 278w

Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Questions
Business statement 580

Millbank
Bus lanes 559w

Miller, Dr M S
Debates etc
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 55, 59-60
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 41
Questions
Arab states, Prisoners 192w

Mills, Mr Iain
Debates etc
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1030, 1032, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1040-1, 1043-5
Questions
Criminal Proceedings Arising From Fraud Review Committee 540w
Motor vehicle safety, EC law 111w
Motorways, Safety barriers 167w
Science & technology research, Research finance 39w
Space saver spare wheels, Motor vehicle safety 111w
Trials, Costs 713w
Association of Chief Police Officers 127w

Ministerial responsibility
Child care 552w
Speakers rulings & statements (16.01.86) 1207

Ministerial statements
Banking supervision (17.12.85) 159-67
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 168-74
Criminal Proceedings arising from Fraud Review Committee (14.01.86) 925-34
EC Fisheries Council (19.12.85) 584-9
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 301-9
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1225-38
Iron & steel industry (20.12.85) 691-9
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 310-30, 331-40
Social security (16.12.85) 21-34
Speakers rulings & statements (16.12.85) 29, 32, 46, 47, (18.12.85) 324, 336, (13.01.86) 874, (14.01.86) 932
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 35-46, (13.01.86) 777-89, 870-4

Ministers
Anglo-Irish Agreement 4w
Declarations of interest 734w
Gifts 578w
Speakers rulings & statements (17.01.86) 1372

Ministers correspondence 168w, 169w, 517w, 518w, 553-4w, 610w, 614w, 629w, 700w, 724w, 734w, 918-9, 920, 922, 1203-4
Adoption 700w
British Aerospace 918-9, 922
Disclosure of information 734w
Pearce, Austin 734w
Solicitor-General 614w, 766, 1203-4, 1206
Westland helicopters 517w, 518w, 519-20w, 553-4w, 610w, 724w, 1203-4, 1205, 1206

Ministers domestic visits
Bradford 651w
Coal mining 1-2
Youth training scheme 186-7w

Ministers of religion
Early retirement 445w
Resignations 445w

Ministers visits abroad
Falkland Islands 212w
Gulf states 587-8w
Israel 289
Middle East 193w
Nicaragua 283
Philippines 198w
South Africa 284-5

Ministry of Defence
Civil service manpower 381w
Contracts 247w
Early retirement 215-6w
Fife 381w, 643w
Security vetting 643w

Miscampbell, Mr Norman
Debates etc
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 892

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 358-9w

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 612-6
Complaints against police, Public petitions (20.12.85) 671-2
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1379
EC Fisheries Council (19.12.85) 588
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 974-8, 985, 1011, 1012
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1249, 1251, 1258, 1259-62
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 893-4
Questions
Aerospace industry, Helicopters 526w
Aerospace industry, International cooperation 517-8w
Agusta, Company finance 533w
Agusta, International cooperation 529w, 610w
Agusta, helicopters, Defence procurement 530w
Airbuses, Aerospace industry 451-2w
Arms trade, International cooperation 535w
Bank of England, Commercial bills 362w
Channel crossing, Channel ferries 535-6w
Channel tunnel, Wars 520w
Defence procurement, West Germany 525w
Economic growth, Interest rates 1200
Falkland Islands, Ferries 522w
Fisheries, Great Grimsby 399w
Helicopters, Defence procurement 532-3w, 610w
Helicopters, EC countries 515-6w
Helicopters, European Economic Community 533w
Helicopters, International cooperation 529-30w, 530-1w, 531-2w, 534w
Higher education, Student numbers 118w
Takeovers 522w
USA, Balance of trade 520-1w
USA, Defence procurement 521w
Westland helicopters 474-5w
Westland helicopters, Company finance 452w, 515w, 518-9w, 534w
Westland helicopters, Cost effectiveness 517w
Westland helicopters, Defence procurement 525-6w
Westland helicopters, Disclosure of information 515w
Westland helicopters, Discrimination 518w, 519w
Westland helicopters, European Commission 515w
Westland helicopters, International cooperation 526-8w, 529w, 530w, 534w, 610-1w
Westland helicopters, Italy 519w
Westland helicopters, Letters 525w
Westland helicopters, Ministers correspondence 517w, 518w, 519-20w, 553-4w, 610w
Westland helicopters, Shareholders 516w, 518w, 519w
Westland helicopters, Shares 533w
Westland helicopters, USA 533w

Mitchell, Mr David, *Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Debates etc
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 408-14
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 875-7, 894-5
Taxis, Heathrow (17.12.85) 279-82
Questions
Avon bridge 630-1w
British Rail, Railway travel 477w
Bus fares, Price increases 759-60
Channel crossing 475w, 630w
Channel crossing, Cabinet 759
Channel crossing, Hazards 630w
Channel crossing, Lighting 759
Channel crossing, Motor vehicles 478-80w
Channel crossing, North of England Regional Consortium 759
Channel crossing, Railway freight transport 476w
Channel crossing, Road traffic 475-6w
Channel crossing, Travel 475w
Channel tunnel, Safety 758-9
Civil servants, Disclosure of information 520w
Dartford tunnel, East London River Crossing 761
Dartford tunnel, Private sector 762
Dartford tunnel, Road traffic 762
Departmental correspondence, Dept of Transport 580-1w
Departmental leaflets, Dept of Transport 581w
London docklands railway, Private sector 764
Railway closures 44w
Railway closures, Greater London 761
Railway electrification, Dorset 44w
Railway network, Northern region 732-3w
Railway transport, Commuters 409w
Railway transport, Electic power 297w
Rear seat belts, Orders & regulations 476w
Road accidents, Breathalysers 481w
Road accidents, Cars 481w
Severn bridge, Debts 756
Severn bridge, Road tolls 757
Transport Act 1985, Publicity 581w
Tunnels, Psychology 407w

MO 306w
Money supply 306w

Moate, Mr Roger
Debates etc
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 888-90

Mobilisation for Laboratory Animals 173-4w

Mobility allowance
Handicapped children 598-9w

Mobility of disabled
Access to buildings 655-6w

Molyneaux, James
Members resignations (17.12.85) 139

Money resolution (19.12.85) 653, (14.01.86) 1025-6, (16.01.86) 1336

Money supply
MO 306w

Monktonhall Colliery
Coal mining 2-3

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
Postal services 241-2w
Public houses 136w

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 626-7
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1229
Questions
Channel crossing, Environmental impact assessment 15w
Common sheep meat regime 560
Intervention stocks, Cereals 554
Salmon, Fish conservation 563
Youth training scheme, School leaving 567w

Monteith, Billy 343w
Arrests 343w

Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Questions
Business statement 576
Chief constables, Greater Manchester 565
National Freight Company, Shares 477w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 119w

Moore, Rt Hon John, *Financial Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc
Questions
Black economy, Building industry 593w
Business expansion scheme, Bed & breakfast accommodation 651w
Business expansion scheme, Industrial investment 141w
Business expansion scheme, Scotland 652w
Capital gains tax 48w
Companies, Privatisation 647-8w
Double taxation, Canada 307-8w
Fraud, Inland Revenue 344w
Income tax 647w
Income tax, Low pay 1201
Income tax, Orphans 654w
Income tax, Tax allowances 647w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 50-1w, 190w, 647w
Income tax assessment, Overseas workers 191w
Income tax assessment, Bureaucracy 308w
Marginal tax rates, Average earnings 1194
Marginal tax rates, Low pay 646w
Marginal tax rates, Taxpayers 1195
Ministers domestic visits, Bradford 651w
National income, Taxation 648w
National insurance contributions, Employers contributions 510-1w
Oil revenues 307w
Personal income 594w
Personal tax allowances, Married people 652w
Personal taxation 593-4w
Public sector assets, Privatisation 652w
Shareholders 650w
Small businesses, Corporation tax 141w
Tax evasion 190w
Tax exemption certificates, Building industry 50w
Tax incentives, Energy efficiency 307w
Tax rates & bands, Taxpayers 1195
Tax thresholds, Tax rates & bands 1195
Tax yields, Capital gains tax 360w
Tax yields, Corporation tax 359w
Tax yields, Industrial building allowances 360w
Tax yields, Private education 50w
Tax yields, Privatisation 361w
Tax yields, Tax allowances 142w, 309w
Taxation, Day nurseries 141-2w
Taxation, Employment opportunities 650w
Taxation, Families 646w
Taxation, UK companies abroad 510w

Morocco
Armed forces training 212w
Arms trade 134w
Imports 138w

Phosphates 138w
Resources exploration 134w

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1356-64, 1380
Members Fund (16.12.85) 128-30
Questions
Aircraft, Safety measures 581-2w
Airport security, Manchester Airport 578w
Artificial Limb & Appliance Centres Review, Disclosure of information 600w
Business on own account scheme 550w
Business statement 575
Channel crossing, North of England Regional Consortium 759
Cinemas (Safety) Regulations 1985 8w
Greater Manchester Police, Members correspondence 175w
Manchester Airport, Companies 169w
Manchester Airport, Management 297w, 409w, 480w
Members allowances, Private members bills 441w
Pensions, Women 319-20w
Poundswick School, Industrial disputes 150
Public transport, Manchester City Council 168w
Rate limitation, Health services 571w
Special educational needs, Judgments 288-9w

Morris, Rt Hon John
Debates etc
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1272-3, 1276-7
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 872, (15.01.86) 1124-7
Questions
Airport security, Manchester Airport 569w
Attorney-General, Security 446w
Criminal proceedings, Government departments 567-8
Official secrets, Disclosure of information 769
Westland helicopters, Ministers correspondence 724w
Westland helicopters, Official secrets 614w

Morris, Mr Michael
Questions
Boiler conversion scheme, Coal firing scheme 27w
Chemists shops, Prescriptions 428w
Hospital catering, Margarine 428w
Overseas trade, Security 291w

Morrison, Mr Charles
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 319
Questions
Crops, Pulses & seeds 277w

Morrison, Mr Peter, Minister of State for Trade & Industry
Questions
Assisted areas, North West region 139-40w
British Shipbuilders 587w
British Steel Corporation 587w
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 1059
British Steel Corporation, Public appointments 449w
Car industry, Foreign companies in UK 1062
Car industry, Motor vehicle parts 1061
Companies, North West region 723-4w
EC Steel Council 25-6w
Economic growth, Regional planning & development 586w
European Regional Development Fund, Council of Ministers 137-8w
Exports, Iron & steel 1068
Gartcosh Steelworks, Factory closures 591w
Government assistance to industry, Worsley 25w, 136w, 139w
Imports, Morocco 138w
Industrial development, Regional planning & development 586w
Industry, Pay 585w
Iron & steel, Exports 1060
Iron & steel, Treaties 1059
Iron & steel industry, Factory closures 1070-1
Iron & steel industry, Ravenscraig Steelworks 1070, 1071-2
Local Government reform, Civil service manpower 24w
Motor components industry, Iron & steel 1061
Motor components industry, Vauxhall Motors 1062
Motor vehicle parts, Spain 1061-2
Phosphates, Imports 184-5w
Privatisation, Share ownership 1059
Public sector assets, Privatisation 1058-9
Regional aid, Chester 1067
Regional aid, Cleveland 1066
Regional aid, Northern region 589w, 1065, 1066, 1067
Regional development grants, Hamilton 135w
Research, Civil service dispersal 585-6w
Special development areas, Blyth Valley 1066-7
Special steels, Industrial production 591w
Tobacco industry, Government assistance to industry 24w
United Engineering Steels 539w
Vauxhall Motors 588-9w
Warships, British Shipbuilders 724w

Mortgage interest rates
Mortgage relief 1197, 1198
Owner occupied housing 1198

Mortgage relief
Mortgage interest rates 1197, 1198
Young people 1197

Mortgages
Loans (19.12.85) 592-653

Motor components industry
Iron & steel 1061
Vauxhall Motors 1062

Motor vehicle parts
Car industry 1061
Made in Britain 1061, 1062
Spain 1061-2

Motor vehicle registration
Wales 631w

Motor vehicle safety
Buses 476w
EC law 111w
Safety belts 345w
Space saver spare wheels 111w, 298w, 405w

Motor vehicles
Channel crossing 478-80w
Health hazards 407w
Lighting 42w
Riot Damages Act 1886 131w

Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 875-97

Motorways
Costs 731w
Death 112w
Expenditure 732w
Leicestershire 477w
Lighting 292w, 296-7w, (18.12.85) 383-5, 477w
Noise insulation grants 407w
Road accidents 112w
Road construction 477w
Road signs 42-3w, 631w
Road traffic 45-6w, 297w
Safety barriers 167w
Scotland 292w

Moynihan, Mr Colin
Debates etc
Afghanistan (20.12.85) 686
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1394-6
Members (18.12.85) 361-5
Special constables (17.01.86) 1411-5
Questions
British Steel Corporation 587w
Chemical weapons 196w
Development aid, Sudan 772
Housing departments, Lewisham 920

Mudd, Mr David
Questions
Badgers & Bovine Tuberculosis (No 2) Review 579w
Butter, Intervention stocks 483-4w

Multifibre arrangement 24w, 588w, 1062-3, 1064
EC action 184w
Hong Kong 1063
Textile industry 1063-4

Multiple occupation
Fire prevention 626w

Multiple sclerosis
Hyperbaric oxygen 76-7w
Medical treatment 76-7w
Medical treatments 76w, 77w

Murphy, Mr Christopher
Debates etc
Rates & rating (18.12.85) 376-7
Questions
Airbuses, Government assistance 634w
A320 Airbus, Government assistance 632w
Business statement 1221
Council house sales 259-60w
Council house sales, Welwyn Hatfield 463w
Employment, Welwyn Hatfield 399w
Housing benefits, Local government expenditure 410w
NHS finance, Regional health authorities 498w
Railway network, Northern region 732-3w
Railway transport, Commuters 409w
Rate support grants, Hertfordshire 104w
Sentencing, Crimes of violence 341-2w
Unemployment benefits, Welwyn Hatfield 397w

Musselburgh
Coal mining 2

M1 44w, 405-6w, 477w, 478w, 631w
Construction costs 44w
Road construction 406w, 478w
Road signs 405w, 631w

M3 362w

M5 630-1w

M25 43w, 44w, 405-6w
Construction costs 44w
Fog 43w
Road construction 406w
Road traffic 405-6w

M62 406w
Road construction 406w

Nairobi Conference 127w, 208w, 595-6w
Dept of Health & Social Security 595w
Statistics 595-6w

NALGO
Housing departments 920

Namibia
Foreign policy 205w
Political parties 133w
Racial discrimination 205w
State succession 133w
SWAPO 133w
United Nations 472w
Western Contact Group 286

Nassau Summit 196w
South Africa 196w

National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education 121w

National anthems
European Communities 521w

National Association of Ladies Circles (17.01.86) 1345

National Bus Company
Asset stripping 760
Pensions 761
Privatisation 760-1
Share ownership 760-1
Tenders 760

National Coal Board
Coal mining closures 330w
Compensation 717w
Factory closures 329-30w
Margam mine 14-5
Overseas investment 28-9w
Relocation of employees 330w

National Drugs Intelligence Unit 6-7w
Association of Metropolitan Authorities 6-7w
Manpower 6w
Regional crime squads 6w

National Economic Development Council
Pay settlements 1203
Regional planning & development 586w

National Farmers Union 613w

National Freight Company
Shares 477w

National income
Public expenditure 189w
Public sector assets 190w
Public sector borrowing requirement 190w
Taxation 648w

National insurance benefits
Expenditure 439w

National insurance contributions 420-1w
Coal mining 14
Employers contributions 510-1w
Pay 510-1w
Tax thresholds 1201

National No-Smoking Day 419w
Opinion surveys 419w

National Radiological Protection Board
Nuclear weapons tests 906

National Union of Teachers 141-2, 152
Pay 143
Strikes 141-2

National Youth Advisory Council 287-8w
Public appointments 287-8w

Nationalised industries
Privatisation 153, 1194
Westland helicopters 1058-9

Nationality
Hong Kong 584w, (16.01.86) 1268-304

NATO 564w
Channel ferries 765
Defence expenditure 535w
Nuclear weapons deployment 907
Tactical nuclear weapons 562-3w
UK contributions 4w
Warsaw Pact 292-3

Natural gas production 26w
Energy research 26-7w

Naturalisation 714w

Nature Conservancy Council
Annual reports 17w
Channel crossing 15w
Government grants 218w
Orders & regulations 14-5w

Nature conservation
Forests 162w
Wash 463w

Naval bases
Construction 97w
Faslane 97w
Simonstown 134w

Navigational aids
Scotland 631w

Navy
Armed forces civilians 374-8w
Armed forces deployment 215w
Armed forces storage depots 374w
Defence procurement 914
Shipping 641w
Warships 914

Nazemi, Dr 272w
Immigration applications 272w

NCB (Enterprise) Ltd 11, 250w
Finance 11
Research finance 11
Upper Waiting Hall 250w

Neale, Mr Gerrard
Questions
Wind power, Electricity generation 27w

Neasden
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 693-4w
Social security claims 693-4w

Needham, Mr Richard, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Building industry, Northern Ireland 42w
Hospital beds, Northern Ireland 266w
Hospitals, Northern Ireland 266w
NHS finance, Northern Ireland 268-70w
Residential care of children, Northern Ireland 134-5w

Neighbourhood watch schemes 547w
Police relations with public 155

Neill Committee see Lloyds Act 1982 Inquiry

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 305-6
Members interests (17.12.85) 221, 229, 235-6, 241, 249
Oral question time point of order (15.01.86) 1076
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 788, 874, (15.01.86) 1089
Questions
Business statement 1220-1
Coal mining, Manpower 28w
Government grants to local authorities 512-6w
Johnson Matthey Metals 649w
Public sector assets, Privatisation 1058-9
South Africa, Foreign policy 195w
South Africa, Trade unions 285
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w
UK contributions, NATO 4w
Westland helicopters, International cooperation 1072
Westland helicopters, Public sector 1204

Nelson, Mr Anthony
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 940-1, 982, 987-91
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 325-6
Questions
Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan 289

Nepal
Prime Minister visits abroad 922

New blood lectureships 442-4w

New businesses 566w
Greater London 566w

New Cross Building Society 653w

New Towns (Access to Information) (Scotland) Bill 1985/86
2R Order read (17.01.86) 1410

New Zealand
Butter 210w, 280w
Military exercises 734w

Newcastle Airport 273w
Immigration controls 273w

Newham
Employment schemes 51w
Prevention of Terrorism Acts 459-60w
Social security benefits 496w
Thames Flood Barrier 257-8w

Newry & Armagh
By election writs (17.12.85) 140

Newton, Mr Tony, Minister of State for Social Security
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges, Ministerial statements (17.12.85) 168-74
Statutory Sick Pay Uprating Order 1985 (15.01.86) 1177
Questions
Aids for handicapped, Blind 411w
Artificial Limb & Appliance Centres Review 310w, 740w
Artificial Limb & Appliance Centres Review, Disclosure of information 600w
Bed & breakfast accommodation, Tyne & Wear 553w
Bettman Centre, Aids for handicapped 493w
Blind, Social services 697w
Board & lodging charges, Costs 417-8w
Board & lodging charges, Social security recipients 240w
Board & lodging charges, Tyne & Wear 740w
Board & lodging charges, Young people 418w
Child benefit 436w
Child benefit, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 318w
Child benefit, Scotland 72-3w
Disposable income, Social security reform 694w
Exceptional needs payments 739w
Exceptional needs payments, Draught-proofing materials 315w
Families, Supplementary benefits 700-1w
Family credit, Social security claims 435w, 495w
Family credit, Social security reform 694-5w
Family credit, Strike benefits 495w
Family credit, Tax rates & bands 696w
Family credits, Social security reform 598w
Family income supplement, Social security reform 596-7w
Family income supplements, Social security recipients 434w
Funerals, Death grants 316-7w
Funerals, Exceptional needs payments 436w
Handicap benefits, Administrative delays 738w
Handicap benefits, Social security reform 597-8w
Handicapped children, Families 315-6w
Handicapped children, Mobility allowance 598-9w
Hospitals, Telephones for disabled 505w
Housing benefits, Expenditure 596w
Housing benefits, Local government expenditure 410w
Housing benefits, Pensioners 410w
Housing benefits, Rates & rating 317w, 319w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 597w, 696w, 697w
Housing benefits, Voluntary organisations 695w
Income, Social security reform 696w
Income support scheme, Heating allowances 318w
Income support scheme, Housing benefits 318w
Income support scheme, Industrial disputes 599w
Income support scheme, Pensioners 317-8w, 741-2w
Income support scheme, Severe weather payments 318w
Income support scheme, Single people 741w
Income support scheme, Social security recipients 317-8w
Income support scheme, Unemployed 317-8w 597w
Income support scheme, Young people 434w
Income tax 420-1w
Invalid care allowances 701-2w
Invalid care allowances, Costs 701w
Invalid care allowances, European Court of Justice 701w
Invalid care allowances, Married women 701w
Low pay, Marginal tax rates 594-6w
Married women, Retirement pensions 409w
Maternity benefits, Public expenditure 697w

Maternity benefits, Social security reform 696-7w
Means tested benefits, Social security reform 435-6w, 704-6w
National insurance benefits, Expenditure 439w
Occupational deafness, Marine engines 76w
Pensions, Average earnings 319-20w
Pensions, Employers contributions 320w
Pensions, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 320-1w
Pensions, State earnings related pensions scheme 320w
Pensions, Women 319-20w
"Reform of Social Security Consultation Paper" 598w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper", Statistics 740w
Rent rebates, Social security reform 596w
Severe disablement allowance, Administrative delays 499w
Severe disablement allowance, Social security benefits disqualification 437w
Severe disablement allowance, Social security recipients 499w
Severe weather payments 599-600w
Severe weather payments, Exceptional needs payments 71-2w
Social Fund, Finance 319w
Social Fund, Maternity benefits 599w
Social security, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 310w
Social security benefits, Costs 414w, 596w
Social security benefits, Industrial injuries 79w
Social security benefits, Members correspondence 432-3w
Social security benefits, Newham 496w
Social security benefits, Young people 495w
Social security benefits disqualification, "Reform of Social Security White Paper" 324w
Social security benefits reductions 606w
Social security benefits rules, Exceptional circumstances additions 69w
Social security benefits rules, Industrial disputes 318w
Social security benefits rules, Seasonal workers 239-40w
Social security benefits rules, Students 229-30w
Social security reform 598w, 694w
Social security reviews, Marginal tax rates 495-6w
Standard of living, Families 418-9w
State earnings related pensions scheme, Social security reform 694w
State earnings related pensions scheme, Social security reform 744w
Supplementary benefits, Board & lodging charges 553-4w
Supplementary benefits, Carers 599w
Supplementary benefits, Costs 319w
Supplementary benefits, Young people 84w, 434-5w
Unemployment benefits, EC countries 72w
Water charges, Social security reform 597w
Young people, Social security benefits rules 422-6w

NHS
Cleaning services 427w
Contracts for services 385-96w, 436-8w, 702w
Early retirement 429-32w
Hormone treatments 700w
Hospitals 84-96w
Management 326w, 700w
Members correspondence 601w
Pay 312w, 557-9w
Prices 557-9w
Privatisation 311w, 427w, 429-32w, 494w, 601w
Recruitment 503w
Scotland 482w
Smoking 503w
Spectacles 326-7w
Technicians 151-2w
Telephones for disabled 505w

NHS administration
Departmental circulars 420w
Medical profession 429w
Nurses 429w

NHS charges
Foreign patients 69-70w

NHS complaints 232w
Clinical judgements 231w, 232w, 233w
Ex gratia payments 231w

NHS finance
Greater London 145-8w, 311w
Heart diseases 504-5w
Hospital closures 503w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority 498w
Norther Ireland 268-70w
Primary health care 703-4w
Regional health authorities 156-7w, 417w, 498w
Rural areas 75w
Teaching hospitals 312w, 508-10w

NHS Management Inquiry 326w

NHS & private practice
Amenity beds 311w
Hospital consultants 601w
West Midlands 66-8w

Nicaragua
Airspace 283
Coffee 284
EC external relations 201w
Ministers visits abroad 283
USA 283-4

Nicholls, Mr Patrick
Questions
Animal welfare 347-8w
Car tax 1199
Dogs, Licensing 217-8w
Energy efficiency, Industrial energy conservation 7-8
Income tax 647w
Limited list prescribing, Appeals 421-2w
Student grants, Deeds of Covenant 120w
Untreated milk, Licensing 281w

Nicholson, James
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Nicorette
Prescriptions 315w

Nigeria
Children (20.12.85) 725-30

Nimrod aircraft 97-8w, 562w, 912
Costs 98w
Defence 98w
Defence contracts 97-8w, 912, 913
GEC Avionics 912, 913
Radar 98w
Repairs & maintenance 97-8w

9 Signals Regiment 99w, 101-2w, 215w, 379w, 524-5w
Armed forces deployment 379w, 525w
Armed forces discharges 99w, 215w, 524w, 525w
Armed forces strength 101-2w
Interviews 379w
Police interrogation 524-5w

Nitrates
Water pollution 545w, 656w
Water supply 257w

Nitrogen oxides 544w

Noise insulation grants 407w
Motorways 407w

Non-departmental public bodies 109w, 453-4w
Patent Office 453-4w

Non-domestic rates
Local authorities 570w

Nordic countries 118-9w
Languages education 118-9w

Norfolk
Smoking related diseases 73-5w

Norris, Mr Steve
Debates etc
Low pay (18.12.85) 476-9, 483, 484-5

North Devon 580w
Road construction 580w

North Devon link road 580w

North Down
By election writs (17.12.85) 140

North East Hampshire structure plan 730w

North East region 190w
Customs officers 190w

North East Thames Regional Health Authority 230-1w, 501w
Cancer 501w

North of England Regional Consortium
Channel crossing 759

North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board
External financing limits 164w

North Sea
Offshore drilling 248-9w

North Sea oil
Oil exports 28w
Technical assistance 250w

North West region
Assisted areas 139-40w
Companies 723-4w
Factory Inspectorate 188w
Industrial training 299w
Magistrates 346w
Regional development grants 139-40w
Sewers 15w

North West Thames Regional Health Authority 498w
NHS finance 498w

North West Water Authority 260w
Water charges 260w

North Yemen
Development aid 447-8w

Northern Ireland 579w
Agriculture 266-7w
Autumn Statement 267-8w
Body searches 185-6w
Building industry 42w, 186w
Cost per pupil 554w
Demonstrations 266w, 340w
Devolution 565
Emergency powers (16.01.86) 1307-30, 1331-5
Hospital beds 266w
Hospitals 266w
NHS finance 268-70w
Police 265-6w
Prisons 185-6w
Public expenditure 267-8w, 1197
Pupil-teacher ratios 554w
Residential care of children 134-5w
Salmon 543w
Terrorism (16.01.86) 1307-30
Trials (16.01.86) 1331-5
Youth training scheme 41w

Northern Ireland Office
Civil service manpower 41w
Oral questions 65-6w

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 Independent Review (16.01.86) 1331-5

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985 (16.01.86) 1331-5

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provision) Act 1978 (Continuance) (No 3) Order 1985 (16.01.86) 1307-30

Northern Ireland (Loans) Bill 1985/86
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591

Northern Lighthouse Board 168w, 582-3w
Expenditure 582-3w
Housing improvement 583w
Lighthouses 479w

Northern region
Customs officers 190w, 191w
Development agencies 1195-6
Drug crimes 190w
Railway network 732-3w
Regional aid 589w, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1195-6, 1196-7
Small businesses 1067
Unemployment 1065, 1066

Norway
Coastal shipping 762-3

Norwood
Unemployment 728w

Nuclear accidents
Hinckley Point B 30-1w, 64w
Information 249w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 549w

Nuclear disarmament (18.12.85) 380-3
Defence research 906
USA 199w

Nuclear fuel cycle
Nuclear weapons 561w

Nuclear fuel reprocessing
Dounreay 109-10w, 160w, (14.01.86) 1049-56
Fast reactors 109-10w

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Nuclear accidents 549w

Nuclear physics
Research finance 145

Nuclear power
Electricity generation 4-5
Radioactive waste disposal 4-5

Nuclear power stations
Advanced gas-cooled reactors 30-1w
Construction 28w
Death 250w
Electricity generation 3-4
Industrial injuries 250w
Nuclear safety 30w

Nuclear safeguards 609w
Capenhurst 29w

Nuclear safety
Nuclear power stations 30w
Radioactive waste disposal 220-1w
Scotland 64w

Nuclear test ban 196-7w, 299
Civil service manpower 366w
East West relations 290-1w
International cooperation 290-1w
Research 366w
Strategic defence initiative 197w

Nuclear weapons
Defence equipment 561w
Europe 204w
Lasers 909
Nuclear fuel cycle 561w
Road transport 913
South Pacific 734w
Strategic defence initiative 907-8

Nuclear weapons deployment
Deterrence theory 915
NATO 907
Nuclear weapons policy 915
Strategic defence initiative 907
USSR 908

Nuclear weapons policy (18.12.85) 380-3
Clwyd, Ann 915
Deterrence theory 915
Nuclear weapons deployment 915

Nuclear weapons tests 216w
Australia 159w, 160w, 216w, 561w, 629w
Christmas Island 609w
Exservicemen 906
National Radiological Protection Board 906
Personal injuries compensation 563w
Personal injuries compensation 905-6
Radiation hazards 561w
Seismic monitoring 298-9
Strategic defence initiative 910

Nugee Committee see Flats Management Committee of Inquiry

Nursery schools
Cost per pupil 707-9w
Liverpool 119w

Nurses
Average earnings 1199
Clothing 234w
Fire resistant materials 234w
Management 326w
NHS administration 429w
Recruitment 419w
Skilled workers 95w

Nursing homes
Fires 697w
Handbooks 605w
Licensing 79-80w

Nutrition
In-service training 120w
School meals 113w, 644w

Nutrition & health
Food additives 276w
Food labelling 556
Food standards 277-8w
Health education 121w

Nylon monofilament gill nets 579w

Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 605-9

Oakthorpe
Fires 1205

O'Brien, Mr William
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 266-9

Occupational deafness
Marine engines 76w

Occupational pensions
Employees contributions 320-1w
State earnings related pension scheme 320w

Occupations
Specialist advisers 685-6w

OECD countries
Marginal tax rates 1194
Productivity 653w

Office of Fair Trading
Cash limits 244w

Office of Telecommunications
Prices 589w

Offices
Council of Ministers 463-4w
Metropolitan Police 171-2w
Thamesmead Community Trust 729w

Official hospitality 264w, 628w
Chequers 264w
10 Downing Street 264w

Official Report
Speakers rulings & statements (16.01.86) 1213, 1239

Official secrets
Daily Telegraph 455w
Disclosure of information 769
Heseltine, Michael 515w
Immigration 455w
Inquiries 768-9
Open government 919
Parkinson, Cecil 768-9
Trials 99w
Westland helicopters 614w, 629w

Official secrets acts 629w, 768-9, 919
Prosecutions 919

Official stationery 381w
Publicity 381w

Official visits
Peres, Shimon 552w

Offshore drilling
Energy research 26-7w
North Sea 248-9w

Oil depletion
Oil reserves 13-4

Oil exports
North Sea oil 28w

Oil imports
Iran 249-50w

Oil industry
Capital investment 248w

Oil prices 1201
Economic planning 648w
Public sector borrowing requirement 1202

Oil reserves
Oil depletion 13-4
Oil recovery 13-4

Oil revenues 307w
Tax yields 1202

Oil rigs
Manpower 248-9w

Okehampton bypass 371w, 407w
Dept of the Environment 371w
Dept of Transport 407w
Anniversaries 371w, 407w

Okehampton Bypass (Confirmation of Orders) Bill 1985/86
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591

Old peoples homes
Registered homes 79-80w

Oldchurch Hospital (13.01.86) 898-904
Radiotherapy (13.01.86) 898-904

O'Neill, Mr Martin J
Questions
Defence procurement, Cammell Laird 912
Defence procurement, Warships 914
Regional aid, Northern region 1067

Onslow, Mr Cranley
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1212
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 874, (15.01.86) 1120-4
Questions
Drift nets, Fishing gear 614w
Fish, Import controls 613w
Fish, USA 613w
Fish conservation, Scotland 565w
Fish diseases 486w
Fishing gear 579w
Graduates, Employment 336-8w
Nylon monofilament gill nets 579w
Unemployment, Graduates 397w

Open government
Official secrets 919

Open University 544w
Student numbers, Specific cases 116w
Tuition fees 116w
University finance 122w, 544w, 711-2w

Open University Visiting Committee 544w

Opencast mining 28w
Environment protection 5
Planning permission 464-6w
Privatisation 445w

Opening hours 503-4w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 503-4w

Ophthalmology
Medical education 739w

Opinion surveys
National No-Smoking Day 419w

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Questions
EC Steel Council 25-6w
Health service staff, Derbyshire 322-3w, 509w
Hospital waiting lists, Derbyshire 322w
Hosptials, Derbyshire 323w
Milk, Production quotas 209w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Derbyshire 289w

Regional aid, Northern region 1197
School leaving, Derbyshire 645w
School leaving certificates, Derbyshire 645-6w
Supplementary benefits, Board & lodging charges 553-4w

Opposition Days
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1082-174

Opticians 739w

Oral questions
European Communities (18.12.85) 300
Northern Ireland Office 65-6w
Speakers rulings & statements (18.12.85) 300, 345, (19.12.85) 568, (13.01.86) 769, (15.01.86) 1059, 1075, 1076, (16.01.86) 1192

Order of business
Council of Ministers 365w

Order Paper 683-6w
House of Commons Select Committees 683-6w

Orders & regulations
A47 477w
Continental shelf 30w
Limited list prescribing 81w
Nature Conservancy Council 14-5w
Rear seat belts 476w
Road freight transport 45w
Pilotage 167w
Speakers rulings & statements (14.01.86) 934
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 14-5w

Ordnance Survey
Financial targets 104w
Management 104-5w

Orkney
Social security benefits 499w

Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Questions
Alternative energy, Energy research 634w
Energy efficiency, Domestic energy conservation 331w
Energy Efficiency Year, Domestic energy conservation 330-1w
Energy Efficiency Year, Voluntary organisations 331w
National Coal Board, Coal mine closures 330w
National Coal Board, Factory closures 329-30w
National Coal Board, Relocation of employees 330w

Orphans
Income tax 654w

Orroseja, Oluronke (20.12.85) 725-30

Osborn, Sir John
Debates etc
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 402-5, 406, 414
Questions
Iron & steel industry, Industrial production 24-5w

Ottaway, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 598
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 435, 455-9

Outgoers scheme 552, 562
Common agricultural policy 562
Tenant farmers 562
Unemployment 552

Outpatients
Children 108w

Overcharging
Defence contracts 214w, 215w

Overseas aid 551w
Africa 770
Agriculture 769
Bilateral aid 447w
Debts 308-9w
Developing countries 550-1w
Estimates days (17.12.85) 180-218, 257
EC aid 447w
Hong Kong 772
Overseas students 713w
Sudan 771-2
UNESCO 241w

Overseas Development Administration
Scholarships 640w

Overseas investment
National Coal Board 28-9w

Overseas students
Overseas aid 713w
Student numbers 709-11w
Welsh Plant Breeding Station 336w

Overseas trade
Argentina 199w
Diplomatic service 203-4w
Iran 331-2w
Japan 590w
Romania 585w
Security 291w
Security equipment 589w
Service industries 1073-4
South Africa 1074
Trade promotion 298
Tristan da Cunha 33w
USSR, 590w, 1064-5

Overseas workers
Income tax assessment 191w

Owen, Rt Hon David
Questions
Lloyds of London 565-6

Owen, Gwynfor 525w

Own resources 359w
Bank of England 359w

Owner occupied housing
Mortgage interest rates 1198
Planning permission 673w

O'Dwyer, Ella 342w

O'Shea, Tony (20.12.85) 673-80

Page, Sir John
Debates etc
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 410
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 947-8
Juries (18.12.85) 419-21
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 872

Page, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Greenbelt, Hertfordshire (19.12.85) 665-7
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 41
Questions
M25, Road construction 406w
M25, Road traffic 405-6w
Road construction, Berkhamsted bypass 765-6

Paisley, Ian
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Palestine 202w
Self-determination of states 291

Palestine Liberation Organisation
Middle East 286-7, 288
Peace negotiations 193w
Terrorism 287
USA 289-90

Parental contributions
Student grants 39-40w

Parents
Social security benefits rules 422-6w

Parents rights
Schools & parents 39w

Park, Mr George
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1118-9
Questions
Car tax 1199
South America, Debts 200w

Parkinson, Cecil 768-9
Official secrets 768-9

Parks
Arts Council 512w

Parliament
EC reform 201-2w

Parliamentary constituencies
Unemployment 125w

Parliament papers
Speakers rulings & statements (13.01.86) 787, 788, 1077, 1087, (16.01.86) 1209-12

Parliamentary private secretaries 348-52w

Parliamentary recess
Speakers rulings & statements (19.12.85) 754

Parris, Mr Matthew
Questions
Agriculture, Northern Ireland 266-7w
Bus fares, Price increases 759-60
Copyright, Television programmes 24w
Limited list prescribing, Lipoflavanoid 231w
United Engineering Steels 539w

Parrot Corporation 615-6w

Parry, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Liverpool (16.01.86) 1337-40, 1341, 1344
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 318
Questions
Arts Council grants, Concert halls 304-5w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 30w
British residents abroad, Prisoners 473w
Building industry, Belfast 454w
Building industry, Death 52-4w
Building industry, Glasgow 482w
Building industry, Labour only subcontracting 52w
Building industry, Liverpool 491-2w
Building industry, Northern Ireland 42w, 186w
Building industry, Scotland 61w
Civil service, Trade unions 31w
Council house waiting lists 465w
Council house waiting lists, Waiting lists 482w
Falkland Islands, Ministers visits abroad 212w
Health & Safety Executive, Buildings industry 52w
Social security benefits, Industrial injuries 79w
Syrian Arab Republic, Foreign policy 203w
Tax exemption certificates, Building industry 50w
Unemployment, Liverpool 492-3w
Urban areas, Social deprivation 467w

Parsons, Mark 131w
Complaints against police 131w

Part-time employment 51w

Passengers
Channel crossing 478-80w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Coal mining 28w

Patent Office 453-4w
Non-development public bodies 453-4w

Patients
AIDS 494w
Family doctors 325w, 699w
Health service ancillary staff 235w
Health service staff 235w

Patten, Mr Chris, Minister of State for Education & Science
Debates etc
Education Support Grants (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 1985 (16.12.85) 126
Education (Amendment) Bill, Rem stages (16.12.85) 111-3, 117-8, 120-2
School meals (16.12.85) 126
Questions
Business education, Curriculum 123w
City & Guilds of London Institute, Vocational education 118w
Class sizes, Pupil-teacher ratios 116w
Education support grants, Expenditure 713w

Education welfare officers, Child care 185w
Educational psychology, Local government staff 338w
Educational standards, Schools 117w
Examinations, Industrial disputes 442w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 120w
Government grants to local authorities, Child care 119w
Health education, Nutrition & health 121w
In-service training, Dept of Education & Science 120w
Nursery schools, Cost per pupil 707-9w
Nursery schools, Liverpool 119w
Poundswick School, Industrial disputes 150
Religious education, Schools 708w
Religious education, Teacher training 288w
School administration, Local education authorities 149-50
School choice, Schools & parents 122w
School closures, Crayford School, Bexley 149
School governors, Elections 152
School leaving, Educational qualifications 122w
School meals, Child care 38w
School meals, Nutrition 113w
School transport, Travel concessions 116w
Special educational needs, Pupils 123-4w
Special schools, School governors 119w
Student grants, Further education 120w
Students, Departmental publications 38w
Teachers, Dismissal 150
Teachers, Merit awards 441w, 442w
Teachers, Pay 707w
Teachers appraisal, Inner city areas 122w
Youth training scheme, Educational standards 150
Youth training scheme, Manpower Services Commission 113w
Youth training scheme, Skilled workers 150-1

Patten, Mr John, *Minister of State for the Environment (Housing, Urban Affairs & Construction)*
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 262-6, 271, 272
Questions
Bed & breakfast accommodation, Local government expenditure 465-6w, 577w
Building regulations, Greater London 13-4w
Council housing, Empty housing 662w
Council housing finance 465-6w
Defective housing, Council housing finance 465-6w
Defective housing, Local government expenditure 576w
Defective housing, Repairs & maintenance 466-7w
Easiform housing, Defective housing 16-7w
Easiform housing, Housing Defects Act 1984 17w
Empty housing, Public sector housing 263-4w
Flats, Service charges 677w
Homelessness, Secure tenancies 468w
House purchase, Housing Defects Act 1984 103-4w
Housing Corporation, Finance 262w
Housing finance 576w
Housing insulation, Government grants to local authorities 263w
Housing investment programes, Government grants to local authorities 255-6w
Housing stock 574-6w
Local government revenue 468w
Nitrates, Water pollution 545w
North West Water Authority, Water charges 260w
Sewers, North West region 15w
Sewers, Water authorities 571-2w, 572-3w
Smith houses, Defective housing 254-5w
Urban development grants, Spencerbeck estate 465-6w, 574w
Water authorities, External financing limits 730-2w
Water authorities, Finance 467w, 572w
Water authorities, Privatisation 679-82w
Water authorities, Property transfer 673w
Water Metering Steering Group Report 463w
Water meters, Water charges 103w
Water pollution, Nitrates 545w
Water supply, Households 468w
Water supply, Lead pollution 12w
Water supply, Leeds 220w
Water supply, Lincolnshire 656w
Water supply, Nitrates 257w
Water supply, Water authorities 573-4w, 656-62w
Water supply industry, Privatisation 573w

Pattie, Mr Geoffrey, *Minister of State for Information Technology*
Debates etc
Copyright (18.12.85) 527-30
Questions
Aerospace industry 632w
Aerospace industry, Exports 632w
Airbuses, Aerospace industry 451-2w
Airbuses, Government assistance 634w
A320 Airbus, Government assistance 632w
British Telecom, Price increases 589w
Copyright, Recording equipment 592w
Copyright, Television programmes 24w
Counterfeit manufacturing 592w
EC internal trade 1072
EC internal trade, Financial services 1072
EC Research Council 244w
Industrial development 584-5w
Manufacturing industries, Regional development grants 332-4w
Materials technology 633w
Post Office, Financial targets 450-1w
Postal services, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 241-2w
Rolls-Royce, Company finance 590w
Westland helicopters, Avionics 243-4w
Westland helicopters, International cooperation 1072

Pavitt, Mr Laurie
Questions
Doctors, Computers 77-8w
European communities, Voting methods 193-4w
Hospital closures, Consultation papers 228-9w
Jamaica, Diplomatic service 298
NHS, Privatisation 427w
Nurses, Recruitment 419w
Nurses, Skilled workers 95w
Vaccination, Tuberculosis 151w

Pawsey, Mr J F
Debates etc
Education (Amendment) Bill, Rem stages (16.12.85) 110-1
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 324-5
Questions
AIDS 427w
AIDS, Government grants 427w
AIDS, Patients 494w
Car tax, Car industry 1198-9
Coal mining, Industrial injuries 250-1w
Crime prevention, Closed circuit television 340w
Education support grants, Expenditure 289-90w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 441w
Home Office, Research finance 340-1w
Nuclear power stations, Industrial injuries 250w
Police authorities, Local government expenditure 172w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141
Teachers, Pay 579w
Upper Waiting Hall, Exhibitions 607-8w

Pay
Ambulance services 161w
Armed forces civilians 523w
British Steel Corporation 449w
Health service staff 312-3w, 736-7w
Income tax 647w
Industry 585w
Local government staff 456w, 570w
National insurance contributions 510-1w
National Union of Teachers 143
NHS 312w, 557-9w
Pharmacists 428w
Police 716w
Regional health authorities 235w
South Bank Board 512w
Teachers 64-5w, 114-5w, 141-2, 143, 144, 146, 579w, 707w, 1203, 1206-7
Technicians 151-2w
University teachers 335-6w
Youth training scheme 727-8w

Pay review bodies 146
Teachers 144-5, 146-7

Pay settlements
Burnham Committee 119w
National Economic Development Council 1203

Peace negotiations
Angola 133w
Argentina 198-9w
Falkland Islands 191-2w
Iran-Iraq war 296
Jordan 288
Middle East 192w, 193w, 286-7, 288, 289-90, 290-1, 291-2
Palestine Liberation Organisation 193w

Pearce, Austin 734w
Ministers correspondence 734w

Pedestrian areas
Local government reform 111w

Pendry, Mr Tom
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1230-1
Questions
Companies, North West region 723-4w
Free school meals, Wales 19-20w
Hospital beds 167w
Hospital beds, Northern Ireland 266w
Hospital beds, Scotland 353-4w
Hospital beds, Scottish health boards 354-8w
Hospital closures, Hospital beds 77w, 495w
Hospitals, Construction 554-6w
Hospitals, Northern Ireland 266w
Hospitals, Wales 284-6w
Industrial training schemes, Tameside 125w
NHS, Privatisation 429-32w, 494w
School meals, Scotland 110w
School meals, Wales 20-1w
Unemployment, Littleborough 566-8w

Penhaligon, Mr David
Debates, etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 618-20, 645
EC Fisheries Council (19.12.85) 587-8
Members interests, Liberal party (18.12.85) 346
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 324
Recess motions, Christmas (18.12.85) 388
Tin, Cornwall (18.12.85) 541
Questions
Health service staff, Expenditure 736-7w
Local government staff, Pay 570w
Mortgage relief, Mortgage interest rates 1198
Oil rigs, Manpower 248-9w
Police, Pay 716w
Submarines, USA 373w
Teachers, Pay 707w

Pension funds
British Gas Corporation 9
Personal savings 1193

Pensioners
Housing benefits 410w
Income support scheme 317-8w, 741-2w
Spectacles 433w

Pensioners Right to Heat Light & Communications Bill 1985/86
1R (18.12.85) 347-9

Pensions
Administrative delays 75w
Average earnings 319-20w
Employees contributions 320w
Employers contributions 320w

National Bus Company 761
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 156, 320-1w
State earnings related pensions scheme 319-20w
Women 319-20w

Peoples Europe Committee 521w

Per capita costs
Block grant 672-3w
Cervical cancer 572
Hospitals 125w
Prison medical services 172w
Prisons 170w
Public expenditure 360w
School meals 643w
Womens prisons 170w

Per capital costs
Prisons 170w

Peres, Shimon 552w
Official visits 552w

Personal income 594w
Immigration rules 127-8w

Personal injuries compensation
Nuclear weapons tests 563w, 905-6

Personal property
Drug crimes (19.12.85) 591

Personal records
Dept of Health & Social Security 497w

Personal savings
Pension funds 1193
Social security recipients 410w

Personal social services
Consultants 323-4w

Personal tax allowances
Married people 652w

Personal taxation 593-4w

Pest control
Licensing 721-3w

Pesticides
Fenvalerate 484w
Food & Environmental Protection Act 1985 723w, 725w
Licensing 723w, 725w

Pesticides safety precautions scheme 484w

Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate 766-7
Fraud 767

Peterborough Health Authority 326w
Hospitals 326w

Peterhead Bay Harbour (16.12.85) 72-106

Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill 1985/86
Order for consideration read (16.01.86) 1191
2R (16.12.85) 72-106

Petitions
Prisoners 4w

Petroleum exploration 26w

Pharmacists
Pay 428w

Philippines
Foreign policy 31-2w, 198w

Philips, Cyril 548w

Phoenix companies 539w

Phosphates
Imports 184-5w
Morocco 138w
Resources exploration 134w

Pike, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 598-9, 633-5
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 326
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 33
Questions

British Aerospace Ministers correspondence 918-9
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 5-6
Channel tunnel, Safety 758
Industrial development, Regional planning & development 586w
Intervention stocks, Cereals 1w, 554
Middle East, Council of Ministers 133w
Nuclear weapons tests, Personal injuries compensation 563w
Prime Minister official engagements 265w, 627w
Road construction, Airedale 764
South Africa, Economic sanctions 295-6
Tax yields, Privatisation 361w
Youth training scheme, Educational standards 150

Pilot Boat R Regulations 1983 167w

Pilotage
Orders & regulations 167w
Scotland 580w

Planning appeals 106w, 222w
Birtenshaw Farm 18w
Housing construction 105-6w
Hypermarkets 13w
Local authorities 222w
Property development 106w

Planning*inquiries
Dounreay (14.01.86) 1049-56

Planning permission
Hypermarkets 260w
Opencast mining 464-6w
Owner occupied housing 673w
Road construction 763-4
Stolport 366w
Willowbrook estate 259w

Plant Breeding Institute 286-7w
Property transfer 286-7w

Plastic bullets
Police equipment 270w
West Midlands Police 270w

Playing fields
Building land 285w, 286w
Wales 285w, 286w

"Pleasure Leisure & Jobs" 345w

Plessey
Mergers 179w, 609w

Plymouth
Submarines 373w

Pocock, Leslie 731w
Dismissal 731w
Merseyside Residuary Body 731w

Points of order
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 174, (18.12.85) 300, 342, 343, 344, 466, (19.12.85) 568, (15.01.86) 1075

Polaris submarines
Medical records 95-6w
Radiation hazards 95-6w

Police (17.01.86) 1411-8
Computers 130w, 352w
Drug crimes 6w
Electoral register 128w
Expenditure 129w
Freemasonry (20.12.85) 671-2
Leicestershire 455w
Local government expenditure 273-4w
Manpower 169-70w, 178-9w, 455w, 456w, 716w
Northern Ireland 265-6w
Pay 716w
Public expenditure 273-4w, 341w
Scotland 352w

Police authorities
Civil defence 272w
Local government expenditure 172w, 173w

Police cautions 546-7w
Indictable offences 546-7w
Young people 546-7w

Police cells 619-20w, 621-2w, 715w
Remand in custody 619-20w, 715w

Police custody 620w, 621w
Costs 621w
Expenditure 621w
Manpower 621w
Prevention of Terrorism Acts 459-60w

Police detention 619-20w, 621-2w

Police equipment
Plastic bullets 270w
Riot control weapons 129-30w

Police Federation 569w

Police firearms
Groce, Cherry 130w
Manchester Airport 569w

Police interrogation
Scotland 357w
9 Signal Regiment 524-5w

Police misconduct
Sexual offences 252w
Tottenham 131w

Police powers
Metropolitan Police 126-7w

Police protection 714w
Royal Observer Corps 714w

Police relations with public
Neighbourhood watch schemes 155

Police training
Civil disorder 172-3w
Metropolitan Police 460w

Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 169-70w
Custody officers 169-70w

Polisario Front 133-4w
Diplomatic relations 133-4w

Political affiliations 329w, 346w, 459w
London boroughs 459w
Magistrates 329w, 346w

Political Honours Scrutiny Committee 3w
Honours 3w

Political levy
Trade unions 304w, 399-400w

Political parties
Local authorities 469-70w
Namibia 133w

Political prisoners
Chile 474w
Iraq 735w
Lembach, Pedro Fernandez 474w
Turkey 191w

Political refugees 714w
Immigration applications 714w
USSR 205-6w

Polkemmet
Waste disposal 3

Polkemmet Bing 551-2w
Smoke & chimney gases 551-2w

Pollock, Mr Alexander
Debates etc
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1256-7
Questions
Legal costs, Scotland 635w

Pollutants
Pollution 544w

Pollution control
Consultation papers 259w
Disclosure of information 369w

Pollution monitoring
Radioactive wastes 167w

Poole Borough Council Bill (HL) 1984/85
Rep* (16.01.86) 1191

Population
Wales 285w

Porter, Mr Barry
Debates etc

Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 975

Portillo, Mr Michael
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 10
Building societies, Company registration 143w
Inflation 650w

Ports
Metropolitan Police 459w
Scotland (16.12.85) 72-106

Portsmouth
Harbour masters 717w
Initial teacher training 288w

Portugal
EC budget contributions 207w

Post Office
Automatic credit transfer 228w
Financial targets 450-1w
Social security payments 228w

Postal services
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 241-2w

Postal workers
Income 450-1w

Postgraduate students
Science & technology research 579-80w

Poundswick School 149-50
Industrial disputes 149-50

Poverty
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 154-5

Poverty trap (18.12.85) 473-93

Powell, J Enoch
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Powell, Mr Ray
Questions
Cereals, Agricultural production 276w
Health education, Nutrition & health 121w

Powell, Mr William
Debates etc
Unemployment (18.12.85) 371-4
Questions
A1, Road construction 478w
Income tax assessment, Overseas workers 191w
Replan 644-5w
Town & country planning, General development orders 369-71w
Trade promotion, China 1073

Power industry
Capital investment 248w

Power station closures 716w
Yelland Power Station 716w

Powley, Mr John
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 327
Questions
Housing investment programmes, Government grants to local authorities 255-6w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w, 144

Powys
Educational finance 1207-8
Rate support grants 1207-8

Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Questions
Africa, Overseas aid 770

Prescott, Mr John
Questions
Health physics, Merchant seamen 221-2w
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear safety 220-1w
Radioactive waste disposal, Sea pollution 209-10w
Wages councils, Personnel 726w

Prescription charges 698w

Prescription charges exemptions
Diseases 501-2w
Publicity 157-8w

Prescription drugs
Costs 77-8w

Prescriptions
Chemists shops 428w
Costs 502w
Heroin 132w
Nicorette 315w
Spectacles 433w

Press releases
Speakers rulings & statements (18.12.85) 343

Prevention of Terrorism Acts 459-60w
Newham 459-60w
Police custody 459-60w

Preventitive medicine
AIDS 63w

Pre-payment certificates
Income 502w

Pre-school education
School population 712w

Price, Sir David
Questions
Local government finance 651w

Price controls
Gas tariffs 30w

Price increases
British Telecom 589w
Bus fares 759-60

Prices
Bread 551-2w
Cereals 555, 557, 558, 561
NHS 557-9w
Office of Telecommunications 589w
Retail prices index 362w
Spectacles 238w, 604w

Primary education
Cost per pupil 707-9w

Primary health care 155w
District health authorities 602w, 702-3w
Expenditure 602w, 703-4w
Homelessness 606w
Inner city areas 602-3w, 606w
NHS finance 703-4w

Primary purpose rule 273w
Immigration appeals 273w

Prime Minister
Gifts 578w, 628w

Prime Minister domestic visits
Kings College Hospital 103w
Railway travel 552w

Prime Minister official engagements 103w, 265w, 552-3w, 627w

Prime Minister visits abroad
Costs 264w
Nepal 922

Prime Ministers questions
Speakers rulings & statements (16.01.86) 1207

Prior, Rt Hon James
Debates etc
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1273

Priorities Board for Research & Development in Agriculture & Food 210-1w

Prison accommodation 7w

Prison medical services
AIDS 170w
Per capita costs 172w

Prison population
Ethnic groups 170w
Prisoners on remand 170w
Scotland 357-8w

Prison staff
Manpower 343-4w
Recruitment 343w
Resignation 343w
Retirement 343w
Training 623w

Prisoners
Arab states 192w
British residents abroad 473w
Petitions 4w

Prisoners on remand
Prison population 170w
Scotland 357-8w

Prisoners release
Homicide 462w
Life imprisonment 170-1w

Prisoners rights
Brixton Prison 342w

Prisons
Design 177w
Northern Ireland 185-6w
Per capita costs 170w
USA 177w
Young offenders 63w
Youth custody 8w

Private education
Charities 50w
Pupils 442w
Tax yields 50w

Private investment
Channel crossing 764-5
Coal mining 29w
Energy efficiency 7-8
Railway transport 732-3w
University finance 122w

Private members bills
Members allowances 441w

Private Members motions
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 49-71

Private notice questions
Speakers rulings & statements (16.12.85) 46

Private patients
West Midlands Regional Health Authority 66-8w

Private rented housing
Housing investment programmes 217w
Judgments 464w

Private sector
Dartford tunnel 762
London docklands railway 764

Private sector housing
Empty housing 263-4w

Privatisation
Airports 478w
British Airports Authority (16.01.86) 1239
British Airways 580w, 733w
British Gas Corporation 5-6, 6-7, 9, 10-1, 27-8w, 30w, 634w
British Shipbuilders 724w
British Steel Corporation 1059
Coal mining 6, 445w
Companies 647-8w
Dockyards 718w
Gas meters 27-8w
Gas showrooms 5-6
Gas tariffs 10, 30w
Harbour masters 717w
Health services 161w
Hospitals 236w, 293-4w, 508w
National Bus Company 760-1
Nationalised industries 153, 1194
NHS 311w, 427w, 429-32w, 494w, 601w
Opencast mining 445w
Public sector assets 652w, 1058-9
Public utilities 590-1w
Share ownership 153, 1059
Shareholders 1194
Tax yields 361w
Water authorities 679-82w
Water supply industry 573w

Probation
Ethnic monitoring 130-1w
Statistics 713w

Proctor, Mr K Harvey

Questions
Dartford tunnel, East London river crossing 761
Demonstrations, Surveillance 266w, 340w
Electricity generation 3-4
Immigration, Members correspondence 342w
Trident, Defence expenditure 562w

Production capacity 215w
Royal ordnance factories 215w

Production quotas
Cereals 554-5, 557, 558, 561
Milk 209w, 281w, 552, 553

Productivity
Coal mining 11-2, 26w, 717w
OECD countries 653w

Professional consultants
Members 15

Professional misconduct 107-8w
Wildlife Inspectorate 107-8w

Professional qualifications
Educational psychology 337-8w
Pulford, Richard 512w
Social workers 108w

Profitability
British aerospace 156
London docklands railway 764
Manufacturing industries 1200

Property development
Planning appeals 106w

Property Services Agency
Berkshire 669-72w

Property transfer
London Docklands Development Corporation 471-2w
Plant Breeding Institute 286-7w
Water authorities 673w

Prosecutions
Customs 361w
Fire regulations 174-5w
Fraud 767, 768
Freedom of expression 152
Insider trading 184w
Official secrets acts 919
Scottish courts 357w

Prosthetics
Disclosure of information 600w

Protectionism
USA 1068

Psychology
Tunnels 407w

Public appointments
Agricultural research 336w
Banking supervision 1193
British Steel Corporation 449w
Data protection tribunal 130w
Dept of Health & Social Security 504w
Home Office 5w
Merseyside Residuary Body 677w
National Youth Advisory Council 287-8w
Scottish health boards 294w
Washington Development Corporation 729w

Public bills
Members conduct 734w

Public buildings
Air force bases 522w
Airports 167w
Fire prevention (17.12.85) 178-9
Smoking 502w

Public expenditure
Defence expenditure 561w
Maternity benefits 697w
National income 189w
Northern Ireland 267-8w, 1197
Per capita costs 360w
Police 273-4w, 341w
Regional aid 1196

"Public Expenditure White Paper" 539w

Public footpaths
Cycleways 19w
Defence Act 1842 373w
Menwith 372-3w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 372-3w

Public holidays
Railway transport 297w

Public houses
Brewing industry 136w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 136w

Public inquiries
Road construction 43w

Public Order Bill 1985/86
2R (13.01.86) 792-869

"Public Order Law White Paper" 460-1w

Public order policing (13.01.86) 792-869
Civil disorder 919
Sportsgrounds (16.01.86) 1225-38

Public participation in planning
Disclosure of information 369w
Road construction 756

Public petitions
Breast Cancer (17.01.86) 1345
Complaints against police (20.12.85) 671-2
Dog fighting (19.12.85) 664
Social security (20.12.85) 672
Speakers rulings and statements (20.12.85) 672
Sunday trading (19.12.85) 663

Public sector
Westland helicopters 1204

Public sector assets
Income 652w
National income 190w
Privatisation 652w, 1058-9

Public sector borrowing requirement 305w, 347w
National income 190w
Oil prices 1202

Public sector housing
Empty housing 263-4w

Public transport
Local government expenditure 168w, 404-6w
Local government reform 404-6w
Manchester City Council 168w

Public utilities 590-1w
Consumer protection 590-1w
Privatisation 590-1w

Publicity
Drinking & driving 583w
Drug abuse 505w, 557-8w
Insolvency Act 1985 183w
Official stationery 381w
Prescription charges exemptions 157-8w
Severe weather payments 71-2w
Transport Act 1985 581w
Vaccination 78-9w

Publishing
Copyright 1067-8
Select committees 652-4w

Pulford, Richard 512w
Professional qualifications 512w
South Bank 512w

Pulses & seeds
Agricultural production 277w
Crops 277w

Pupils 698w
Private education 442w
Special educational needs 123-4w
Technical & vocational education initiative 727-8w
Travelling expenses 544w

Pupil-teacher ratios 711w
Amber Valley 289w
Class sizes 116w
Derbyshire 289w
Northern Ireland 554w

Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 314

Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 373w, 374w
Armed forces catering services 373w
Contract catering 373w, 374w

Racial attacks 622-3w

Racial discrimination
Namibia 205w

Radar
Nimrod aircraft 98w

Radiation hazards
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 372w
Cancer hazards 698w
Exservicemen 563w, 609w, 905-6
Nuclear weapons tests 561w
Polaris submarines 95-6w
Radioactive waste disposal 220-1w
ROF Burghfield 372w

Radice, Mr Giles
Debates etc
Education (Amendment) Bill, Rem stages (16.12.85) 122-3
Questions
Company liquidations, Inquiries 25w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 144-5, 147
Turville School, Members correspondence 579w

Radio frequencies
Road signs 42-3w

Radioactive waste disposal
Lead 106w

Radioactive waste disposal
Dock workers 221-2w
Nuclear power 4-5
Nuclear safety 220-1w
Radiation hazards 220-1w
Research 106w
Safety measures 221w
Sea pollution 209-10w

Radioactive wastes
Pollution monitoring 167w

Radiotherapy
Oldchurch Hospital (13.01.86) 898-904
Southend Hospital (15.01.86) 1183-90

RAF Brampton 917
Fires 917

RAF Cranwell 99w, 101w
Armed forces training 99w, 101w

RAF Finningley 101w
Armed forces training 101w

RAF Shawbury 99w
Armed forces training 99w

RAF Valley 99w
Armed forces training 99w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 338
Questions
Government grants to local authorities, Capital investment 21w

Railway closures 44w
Greater London 761
Hanwell 761

Railway electrification
Dorset 44w

Railway freight transport
Channel crossing 476w

Railway network
Northern region 732-3w

Railway transport 44w
Commuters 409w
Electric power 297w
Private investment 732-3w
Public holidays 297w

Railway travel
British Rail 477w
Prime Minister domestic visits 552w

Rainham marshes
Defence land 561w

***Raison, Rt Hon Timothy,** Minister of State for Overseas Development*
Debates etc
Crown Agents (Amendments) Bill, Money res (16.01.86) 1336
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 214-8
Questions
Africa, Food aid from EC 329w
Africa, Overseas aid 770
Aid financed trade, Development aid 770
Aid financed trade, Water treatment 770
Central America, EC aid 448-50w
Development aid, Sudan 772
Ethiopia, Disaster relief 447w
Ethiopia, Food aid 40w
Ethiopia, Malnutrition 40-1w
Falkland Islands, Hospitals 125w
Falkland Islands Company, Hospitals 125w
Food aid, Sudan 772
Foreign aid 551w
Foreign aid, Developing countries 550-1w
Honduras, Development aid 448w
Hong Kong, Overseas aid 772
North Yeman, Development aid 447-8w
Overseas aid, Agriculture 769
Overseas aid, Bilateral aid 447w
Overseas aid, Overseas students 713w
Overseas Development Administration, Scholarships 640w
Sudan, Food aid 447w
Sudan, Overseas aid 771-2
UNESCO 179w
UNESCO, Commonwealth 179w
UNESCO, Overseas aid 241w
UNESCO, UK contributions 771
Water supply, Deserts 770-1

Randall, Mr Stuart
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 165
EC Fisheries Council (19.12.85) 585-6
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1246-50
Questions
Falkland Islands, Fisheries 563
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141

Rape
Criminal injuries compensation 270-1w
Law reporting 346w

Rate equalisation 108w
Greater London Council 108w

Rate Fund contributions 663-4w
Expenditure 663-4w

Rate limitation
Appeals 465w
Basildon District Council 922
Health services 571w
Local government expenditure 219w

Rate rebates
Government grants to local authorities 80-1w
Housing benefits 78w
Lambeth 67-8w
Social security reform 596w

Rate support grant penalties (18.12.85) 310-30

Rate support grants
Government grants to local authorities 104w
Hertfordshire 104w
Lothian Regional Council 615w
Ministerial statements (18.12.85) 310-30, 331-40
Powys 1207-8
Wales (18.12.85) 331-40, 618-9w

Rates Act 1984 219w, 570w

Rates & rating (18.12.85) 376-7
Block grant 104w
Crown lands & estates 49w
Housing benefits 317w, 319w
Local government reform 108w
London boroughs 469w

RAVC Melton Mowbray 537w, 538w
Fox hunting 538w

Ravenscraig Steelworks 294w, 1059, 1070
Iron & Steel industry 1070, 1071-2
Trade unions 294w

Raw materials
Common sugar regime 279w

Reagan, President 734w
Strategic defence initiative 907-8

Rear seat belts 345w, 476w
Orders & regulations 476w

Recognition of states
Western Sahara 133-4w

Recording equipment
Copyright 592w

"Recording & Rental of Audio & Video Copyright Material Consultation Paper" 592w

Recreation spaces
Arts Council 512w

Recruitment
Metropolitan Police 10-1w
NHS 503w
Nurses 419w
Prison staff 343w
Teachers 141-2, 146

Redmond, Mr Martin
Questions
Youth training scheme, Manpower Services Commission 113w

Redundancy
Coal mining 330w
Dockyards 215-6w
Greater London Council 564-5
Local government staff 468-9w
Small businesses 55-6w

Redundancy pay
Coal mining 247-8w

Redundant mineworkers payments scheme 12, 247-8w
Coal mining 12

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 246-8
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 800
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 39, (13.01.86) 781, (15.01.86) 1151, 1152

Rees, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc
"Banking supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 164

"Reform of Social Security Consultation Paper" 434-5w, 598w

"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 21-34, 156, 310w, 317w, 318w, 320w, 434w, 436w, 495-6w, 566, 598w, 740w, 744w
Child benefit 318w
Civil servants 19-20
Income support 317-8w
Income support scheme 317-8w
Marginal tax rates 1195
Pensions 156, 320-1w
Poverty 154-5
Social security 310w
Social security benefits disqualification 324w
Social security recipients 566-7
Statistics 740w

Refugees 714w
Honduras 207-8w
Mandatory student grants 646w
Vietnam 772

Regional aid
Chester 1067
Cleveland 1066
Glanford 371-2w
Northern region 589w, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1195-6, 1196-7
Public expenditure 1196
Scunthorpe 371-2w
Tatton 1067
Wales 757
West Midlands 1196

Regional crime squads
Drug crimes 6w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit 6w

Regional development grants
Hamilton 135w
Manufacturing industries 332-4w
North West region 139-40w

Regional enterprise units 56w

Regional health authorities
Amenity beds 314-6w
Codes of practice 319w
Cost effectiveness 325-6w
Declarations of interest 505-6w
Expenditure 311w
Hospital beds 495w
Merseyside 150w
NHS finance 156-7w, 417w, 498w
Pay 235w

Regional planning & development
Economic growth 586w
Industrial development 586w
National Economic Development Council 586w

Regional selective assistance 332-4w
Manufacturing industries 332-4w

Registered homes 79-80w
Old peoples homes 79-80w

"Registration & Inspection of Nursing Homes" 605w

Reg (EEC) 2057/82 (16.01.86) 1240-67

Reid, P
Members correspondence 341w

Reinstatement grants 466-7w, 576w

Release on licence 170-1w

Religious education
Schools 708w
Teacher training 288w

Relocation of employees
National Coal Board 330w

Remand in custody 621-2w
Police cells 619-20w, 715w
Scottish courts 357w

Rent addition 506-8w

Rent allowances
Young people 506-8w

Rent arrears
Council housing 257-60w

Rent rebates
Social security reform 596w

***Renton, Mr Tim,** Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs*
Questions
Arab boycott, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 291
Arab states, Christmas 203w
Arab states, prisoners 192w
Arab states, Women 208w
Arms control 203w
British residents abroad, Prisoners 473w
Chemical weapons 196w
Chile, Human rights 473-4w
EC internal relations, Defence 474w
Entry clearances, Administrative costs 640w
European Court of Human Rights, British dependent territories 736w
European Court of Human Rights, Government Communications Headquarters 207w
Fisheries, South Atlantic 583-4w
Fishery protection, South Atlantic 584w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Civil service manpower 640w
Gulf war, United Nations 206-7w
Honduras, Defence 473w
Hong Kong, Nationality 584w

India, British residents abroad 639-40w
India, Special voucher scheme 640w
Iran, Foreign relations 363w
Iran, Human rights 363w
Iraq, Arms embargoes 735w
Iraq, Foreign relations 735-6w
Iraq, Human rights 736w
Iraq, Kurdistan 735w
Iraq, Political prisoners 735w
Israel, Arms embargoes 206w
Israel, Ministers visits abroad 289
Japan, Foreign relations 205w
Lembach, Pedro Fernandez, Political prisoners 474w
Middle East, Foreign policy 193w
Middle East, Ministers visits abroad 193w
Middle East, Palestine Liberation Organisation 286-7
Middle East, Peace negotiations 192w, 193w, 289-90, 290-1, 291-2
Middle East, Violence 287
Morocco, Arms trade 134w
Namibia, United Nations 472w
Nuclear test ban 196-7w, 299
Nuclear test ban, International cooperation 290-1w
Nuclear test ban, Strategic defence initiative 197w
Nuclear weapons, Europe 204w
Nuclear weapons tests, Seismic monitoring 298-9
Palestine 202w
Philippines, Foreign policy 198w
Philippines, Ministers visits abroad 198w
Saudi Arabia, Foreign relations 204w
Strategic defence initiative 194w
Strategic defence initiative, Foreign relations 194w
Strategic defence initiative, Royal United Services Institute 194w
Syrian Arab Republic, Foreign policy 203w
Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan 289
Treaties, Space technology 208w
USA, Nuclear disarmament 199w
West Bank 193w
Western Sahara, Recognition of States 133-4w
Westland helicopters 474-5w

Repairs & maintenance
Blackwall tunnel 480w
Defective housing 466-7w
Nimrod aircraft 96-8w
Rotherhithe tunnel 480w

Replan 644-5w

"Report of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests" 561w, 629w

Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 1985 (13.01.86) 791

Representation of the People (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1985 (16.12.85) 48

Reprography
Members facilities 716w

Research
Civil service dispersal 585-6w
Coal mining 11
Food additives 486w
Nuclear test ban 366w
Radioactive waste disposal 106w
Temporary staff 117w
Unemployment 397w
Universities 117w, 118w

Research finance
Agricultural research 771
AIDS 71w
Alternative energy 10
Home Office 340-1w
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd 11
Nuclear physics 145
Science & technology research 39w
Science Research Council 645w
Trauma 158w

Residential care
Codes of practice 604w

Residential care of children
Northern Ireland 134-5w

Residuary bodies 731w

Resignations
Ministers of religion 445w
Prison staff 343w

Resource allocation working party 498w

Resources exploration
Morocco 134w
Phosphates 134w

Respiratory diseases
Mental patients 73-4w

Restrictive trade practices
Insurance 1073-4

Retail prices index
Prices 362w

Retail trade
Tobacco 138-9w

Retirement
Prison staff 343w

Retirement pensions
Married women 409w
Social security recipients 497-8w
South Africa 427-8w
Supplementary benefits 742-4w

Rewards
Metropolitan Police 7w

Rhodes James, Mr Robert
Questions
Council of Ministers, Order of Business 365w

Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 993-4
Questions
BBC external services, Satellite broadcasting 206w
Cohabitation, Single people 153w
EC internal trade, Financial services 1072
Families, Low incomes 74-6w
Households, Families 506w
Small investors, Industrial loan stocks 1194
State occupational pensions, Men 147-8w

Richardson, Ms Jo
Questions
Arab states, Women 208w
Children, Children in care 82w
Maternal mortality 81-4w
Maternal mortality, Scotland 63-4w

Richmond terrace 261w
House of Commons accommodation 261w

Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas, *Secretary of State for Transport*
Debates etc
Airports Bill, 1R (16.01.86) 1239
Questions
Aircraft, Safety measures 581-2w
A1, Road construction 478w
Blackwall tunnel, Repairs & maintenance 480w
Blackwall tunnel, Road traffic 479w
Bus lanes, Millbank 559w
Channel crossing, Channel ferries 765
Channel crossing, Lorries 113w
Channel crossing, Private investment 764-5
Channel crossing, Road accidents 765
Channel crossing, Road traffic 345w
Channel crossing, Shipping 475w
Coastal shipping, EC action 762-3
Coastal shipping, EC countries 763
Coastal shipping, Greece 763
Concessionary fares, London boroughs 478w
Dial-a-ride, Greater London 478w
Drinking & driving, Publicity 583w
Driving tests, Dyslexia 478w
Fishing vessels, Shipping safety 479w, 582w
Lighthouses, Davaar Island 479w
Lighthouses, Manpower 168w
Lighthouses, Northern Lighthouse Board 479w
London docklands railway, Construction 755
London docklands railway, Stolport 755
London Regional Transport, Government grants 46-7w
Manchester Airport, Companies 169w
Manchester Airport, Management 297w, 409w, 480w
Motorways, Lighting 296-7w
M1, Road signs 405w, 631w
National Bus Company, Privatisation 760-1
Navigational aids, Scotland 631w
Northern Lighthouse Board, Expenditure 582-3w
Northern Lighthouse Board, Housing improvement 583w
Okehampton bypass, Dept of the Environment 371w
Okehampton bypass, Dept of the Transport 407w
Pilotage, Scotland 580w
Public transport, Local government expenditure 404-6w
Public transport, Manchester City Council 168w
Road accidents, A127 295-6w
Road signs, Motorways 631w
Road traffic control, Local government reform 46w
Road traffic control, Talgarth road 490w
Pilotage, Orders & regulations 167w
Transport supplementary grants 168-9w
Woolwich Ferry, Local government reform 110-1w

Rifkind, Mr Malcolm, *Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Secretary of State for Scotland & a Privy Counsellor from 9 Jan 1986)*
Questions
Africa, Democracy 208w
African National Congress, Foreign relations 294
Angola, Peace negotiations 133w
Council of Ministers, Order of Business 365w
Developing countries, Debts 204w
Diplomatic service, Overseas trade 203-4w
Djibouti, UK companies abroad 365w
EC integration 197w, 198w
EC reform, Voting methods 201w
European Assembly, Elections 204w
European Assembly members, Crimes of violence 32-3w
European Communities 206w
European Economic Community, Treaties 364w
Middle East, Council of Ministers 133w
Morocco, Resources exploration 134w
Namibia, Foreign policy 205w
Namibia, Political parties 133w
Namibia, Racial discrimination 205w
South Africa, EC external relations 194-5w, 195-6w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 196w, 293, 294-5, 295-6
South Africa, Foreign policy 195w
South Africa, Foreign relations 295, 296
South Africa, Funerals 196w
South Africa, Nassau Summit 196w
South Africa, S & T research 195w
South America, Debts 200w
USSR, Political refugees 205-6w
Yugoslavia, Foreign policy 203w
Zimbabwe, Foreign policy 200w
Zimbabwe, Foreign relations 200w

Right to buy 259-60w

Riot control weapons
Police equipment 129-30w
Testing 129-30w

Riot Damages Act 1886 131w
Motor vehicles 131w

River Mersey 614w

Rivers
Waste disposal 614w

Road accidents
A127 295-6w

breathalysers 481w
lers 481w
Channel crossing 765
Costs 112w
Drinking & driving 112w, 481w
Hazardous wastes 45w
Military vehicles 913
Motorways 112w
Road freight transport 45w
Traffic lights 582w

Road construction 477w
Airedale 763-4
A1 478w
A40 44w
Berkhamsted bypass 765-6
Dartford tunnel 111w
Defence land 561w
"Fairer & Faster Route to Major Road Construction" 756
Motorways 477w
M1 406w, 478w
M25 406w
M62 406w
North Devon 580w
Planning permission 763-4
Public inquiries 43w
Public participation in planning 756
Road works 756
Scotland 61-2w

Road freight transport
Hazardous wastes 45w
Orders & regulations 45w
Road accidents 45w

Road humps 405w
Road traffic control 405w

Road safety (13.01.86) 875-97
Lorries 46w

Road safety barriers
A127 295-6w

Road signs
Motorways 42-3w, 631w
M1 405w, 631w
Radio frequencies 42-3w
Tourist attractions 345w

Road tolls
Dartford tunnel 761
Forth road bridge 566w, 723w
Severn bridge 757

Road traffic
A45 295w
Blackwall tunnel 479w
Channel crossing 345w, 475-6w
Channel tunnel 475-6w
Dartford tunnel 762
Motorways 45-6w, 297w
M25 405-6w

Road Traffic Act 1972 359w

Road traffic control
France 113w
Local government reform 46w, 490w
Road humps 405w
Talgarth road 490w

Road traffic offences 569w

Road transport
Nuclear weapons 913

Road works
A19 297w
A92 61w, 162w
Costs 731w
Expenditure 732w
Local government reform 111w
Road construction 756
Scotland 352-3w

Road & rail transport comparisons
Coal stocks 29w

Roberts, Mr Allan
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 315-6
Questions
Education welfare officers, Child care 185w

Roberts, Mr Ernie
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985 (16.01.86) 1334

Roberts, Mr Wyn, *Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Cycleways, Public footpaths 19w
Free school meals, Wales 19-20w
Rural water supplies & sewerage acts, Government grants 454w
School meals, Wales 20-1w
Woolaway houses, Defective housing 167w

Robertson, Mr George
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 302
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 882-4
Questions
British Council, Finance 297
Business statement 581
Demonstrations, Gartcosh 921
EC integration 198w
Regional development grants, Hamilton 135w

Robinson, Mr Mark, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Bone marrow disorders, Transplant surgery 167w
Child patients, Wales 284w
Cornish unit houses, Wales 331-2w
Hospital beds 167w
Hospitals, Wales 108w, 284-6w
Households, Wales 285w
Playing fields, Wales 285w, 286w
Population, Wales 285w
Radioactive wastes, Pollution monitoring 167w
Social workers, Wales 108w

Robinson, Peter
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Roe, Mrs Marion
Questions
Horticulture, EC internal trade 278-9w
Marriage Act 1983, Departmental circulars 420w

ROF Burghfield
Radiation hazards 372w

Rogers, Mr Allan
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 165
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 408, 412
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 433-7, 438, 451, 454, 466, 469
Juries (18.12.85) 425
Members interests (17.12.85) 244
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 340
Questions
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w

Rolls-Royce
Company finance 590w

Romania
Overseas trade 585w

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 320
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 784, (15.01.86) 1092
Questions
Bed & breakfast accommodation, Local government expenditure 465-6w, 577w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 27-8w
Business expansion scheme, Bed & breakfast accommodation 651w
Church of England, Inner city areas 521w
Council housing, Empty housing 662w
Council housing finance 465-6w
Defective housing, Council housing finance 465-6w
Defective housing, Local government expenditure 576w
Defective housing, Repairs & maintanance 466-7w
Empty housing, Public sector housing 263-4w
Home Office, Empty housing 458-9w
Homelessness, Secure tenancies 468w
Housing finance 576w
Housing stock 574-6w
Land Registry Office, Birmingham 109w
Local government revenue 468w
Owner occupied housing, Planning permission 673w
Supplementary benefits, DHSS local offices 497w
Urban development grants, Spencerbeck estate 465-6w, 574w
Water meters, Water charges 103w
Water supply, Households 468w

Roskill Committee see Criminal Proceedings arising from Fraud Review Committee

Ross, Mr Ernie
Questions
Middle East, Palestine Liberation Organisation 286-7
NHS, Scotland 482w
Scottish health boards, Conflict of interests 161w, 163w
Scottish health boards, Contracts for services 293-4w
Scottish health boards, Public appointments 294w
Tayside Health Board 163w

Ross, Mr Stephen
Debates etc
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 878
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 782, (15.01.86) 1116, 1132
Questions
Channel tunnel, Safety 758-9
Metropolitan Police, Complaints against police 344w
National Bus Company, Privatisation 760
Prison staff, Manpower 343-4w
Prison staff, Recruitment 343w
Prison staff, Retirement 343w

Ross, William
Members resignations (17.12.85) 139

Rost, Mr Peter
Questions
Coal mining, Investment 9

Rosyth Dockyard 374w, 718w
Management 718w
Shipbuilding 374w

Rotherhithe tunnel 480w
Repairs & maintenance 480w

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1375, 1381, 1386-90
Questions
Business expansion scheme, Industrial investment 141w
Speech therapy, Higher education 444w
Speech therapy, Teachers 433-4w
Voluntary organisations, Government grants 176-7w

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 339
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 6, 11
Energy efficiency, Building regulations 8

Royal Military School of Music 918
Kneller Hall 918

Royal Observer Corps 274w, 714w
Emergency planning 714w
Police protection 714w

Royal ordnance factories
Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment 744-6w

Production capacity 215w

Royal Ulster Constabulary
Codes of practice 42w, 269w

Royal United Services Institute 194w
Strategic defence initiative 194w

Rubha Na Leachaig 631w

Ruchill Hospital (18.12.85) 377-8, 615w
Hospital closures (18.12.85) 377-8

Rugby
Government grants 18w
Sports Council 18w

Rules of engagement 609w

Rumbold, Mrs Angela, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc
Arts finance, Local government reform (20.12.85) 734-7
Questions
Acid rain, Freshwater fish 544-5w
Air pollution, Consultation papers 259w
Air pollution, Sulphur dioxide 545w
Block grant, Per capita costs 672-3w
Channel crossing, Environmental impact assessment 15w
Dogs, Licensing 217-8w
Local authorities, Non-domestic rates 570w
Local government audit 729w
Local government reform, Greater London Council 469w
Local government staff, Pay 570w
Nature Conservancy Council, Government grants 218w
Nature conservation, Wash 463w
Ordnance Survey, Financial targets 104w
Pollution, Pollutants 544w
Radioactive waste disposal, Research 106w
Rate limitation, Appeals 465w
Rate limitation, Health services 571w
Rate support grants, Hertfordshire 104w

Rural areas
Development aid 770
NHS finance 75w
Wind power 27w

Rural water supplies & sewerage acts 454w
Government grants 454w

Ryman, Mr John
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 164
Banks Colliery, Standing Order No 10 applications (17.12.85) 175
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1236-7
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 821-2
Questions
Business statement 1222
Colliery review procedure 9
Solicitor-General, Ministers correspondence 766
Special development areas, Blyth Valley 1066-7

SACEUR 562-3w

Sackville, Mr Tom
Questions
Opencast mining 28w
Opencast mining, Environment protection 5
Saudi Arabia, Foreign relations 204w

Sacred Heart of Mary School 646w
Upminster 646w

Saddleworth
Unemployment 566-8w

Sadlers Wells Theatre (20.12.85) 731-7

Safety
Channel tunnel 758-9
Toys & games (13.01.86) 790

Safety barriers
Motorways 167w

Safety belts (13.01.86) 875-97
Motor vehicle safety 345w

Safety certificates 175-6w
Sportsgrounds 175-6w

Safety measures
Aircraft 581-2w
Radioactive waste disposal 221w

Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 (16.01.86) 1225-38

Salmon
Fish conservation 563
Imports 543w
Northern Ireland 543w

Sanitation
Holloway Prison 623w
House of Commons 160w

Satellite broadcasting
BBC external services 206w

Sathananthan, Dr 132w

Saudi Arabia
Foreign relations 204w

Save the Children Fund 771-2
Government grants 771-2

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Questions
Coastal shipping, EC action 762
Martial arts weapons, Young people 570w

Scholarships
Overseas Development Administration 640w

School administration
Local education authorities 149-50

School choice
Education Act 1980 122w
Schools & parents 122w

School closures
Crayford School, Bexley 149
List D schools 162w

School governors
Elections 152
Special schools 119w

School leaving
Derbyshire 645w
Educational qualifications 122w
Higher education 122w
Youth employment 726w
Youth training scheme 567w

School leaving certificates
Derbyshire 645-6w

School meals (16.12.85) 107-25, 126, 709-10w
Child care 38w, 119w, 141-2
Nutrition 113w, 644w
Per capita costs 643w
Scotland 110w
Wales 20-1w

School nurses 237-8w, 697-8w
Educational Health Services 697-8w

School population
Pre-school education 712w

School transport
Travel concessions 116w

Schools
Armed forces 917
Class sizes 711w
Cost per pupil 708w
Educational standards 117w
Religious education 708w

Schools & parents
Parents rights 39w
School choice 122w
Special schools 119w

Science & technology
Greater London Council 105w

Science & technology research
Postgraduate students 579-80w
Private Members motions (16.12.85) 49-71
Research finance 39w
South Africa 195w

Science Research Council
Research finance 645w

Scientific civil service
Conditions of employment 16-7

Scientists
Strategic defence initiative 265w

Scope of debate
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 269, 274, (18.12.85) 464, (20.12.85) 679, 680, (15.01.86) 1178, (16.01.86) 1333

Scotland 912
Abortion deaths 63-4w
Acid rain 549w
Agricultural advisory services 16-7, 18, 59-60w
Agricultural research 59-60w
Ambulance services 161w
Birds 721-3w
Blood 292w
Body searches 60-1w
Building industry 61w
Business expansion scheme 652w
Bypasses 61-2w
Child benefit 72-3w
Civil defence 292-3w, 483w
Civil service 18
Coal mining 1-2, 2-3
Defence contracts 912
Fish conservation 565w
Free school meals 110w
Gardens 357w
Health services 164-6w
Hill livestock allowances 294-5w
Hospital beds 353-4w
Joint financing 58w
Joint liaison committees 59w
Legal costs 635w
Maternal mortality 63-4w
Motorways 292w
Navigational aids 631w
NHS 482w
Nuclear safety 64w
Pilotage 580w
Police 352w
Police interrogation 357w
Ports (16.12.85) 72-106
Prison population 357-8w
Prisoners on remand 357-8w
Road construction 61-2w
Road works 352-3w
School meals 110w
Sea fishing 62w
Social security appeals tribunals 79w
Teachers 64-5w
Tobacco industry 62w
Youth custody 63w

Scott, Mr Nicholas, *Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Amendment) Order 1985 (16.01.86) 1331-2, 1335
Questions
Body searches, Northern Ireland 185-6w
Demonstrations, Surveillance 266w, 340w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Northern Ireland 554w

Scott Lithgow 642w
Defence contracts 642w, 914

Scottish Certificate of Education 115-6w
Higher education admission 115-6w

Scottish courts
Drinking & driving 359w
Drug abuse 358-9w
Glasgow 358-9w
Prosecutions 357w
Remand in custody 357w
Summary trial 357w, 358w

Scottish Grand Committee (16.12.85) 48, 127

Scottish health boards
AIDS 63w
Capital investment 164-6w
Conflict of interests 161w, 163w
Contracts for services 293-4w, 482w

Health services finance 59w
Hospital beds 354-8w
Hospital closures 353-4w
Public appointments 294w

Scottish islands 163w, 482w
EC grants & loans 482w
Sea transport 163w

Scottish Office
Civil service manpower 161w

Screening
Breast cancer 78w, 432w, 571-2
Cervical cancer 239w, 324-5w, 439w, 500w, 501w, 569-70, 570-1, 572, 616w, 617w, 618w, 699w, 737-8w
District health authorities 324-5w
Haemophilia 70w
Wales 572

Scunthorpe
Regional aid 371-2w

Sea Fisheries (Prohibition of Fishing & Fishing Methods) (Scotland) Order 1985 62w

Sea fishing
Fishery protection 62w
Scotland 62w

Sea pollution
Beaches 223-8w
EC law 223-8w
Radioactive waste disposal 209-10w

Sea transport
Scottish islands 163w

Seasonal workers
Social security benefits rules 239-40w

Secretarial staff
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 496w

Secretaries of State
Dismissal 516w

Secure tenancies 468w
Homelessness 468w

Securities & Investments Board 1057
Financial services 1057
Self-regulatory system 245w

Security
Attorney-General 446w
Brixton Prison 342w
Europe 292-3
Expenditure 291w
Manchester Airport 630w
Overseas trade 291w
Shipbuilding 564w
10 Downing Street 271w, 457w

Security equipment
Overseas trade 589w

Security industry
Violence 921

Security vetting
Ministry of Defence 643w

Sedgemore, Mr Brian
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 163, 167
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 455, 459-66, 472
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 968-72
Questions
Brunei 628w
Developing countries, Debts 204w
In-service training, Dept of Education & Science 120w
Johnson Matthey 649w
Sultan of Brunei 629w

Seismic monitoring 298-9
Nuclear weapons tests 298-9
USSR 298-9

Select Committee evidence
House of Commons Select Committees 685-6w, 689-92w

Select Committees
Publishing 652-4w

Selective schools 117w
Educational standards 117w

Self-determination of states
Palestine 291

Self-employed
Building industry 186w, 399w
Ethnic groups 399w
Labour only sub-contracting 42w, 52w
Statistics 299w

Self-regulatory system 245w, (14.01.86) 938-1024
Marketing of Investments Board 245w
Securities & Investments Board 245w

Self-sufficiency
Blood 292w

Sensory aids
Telephones for disabled 655-6w

Sentencing
Crimes of violence 341-2w
Terrorism 553w

Service charges
Flats 677w

Service industries
Employment 398w
Overseas trade 1073-4

Severe disablement allowance
Administrative delays 499w
Social security benefits disqualification 437w, 499w
Social security recipients 499w

Severe weather payments 71-2w, (16.12.85) 131-8, 209w, 318w, 553-4, 599-600w
Exceptional needs payments 71-2w
Farmers 209w
Income support scheme 318w
Publicity 71-2w

Severn bridge 756
Debts 756
Road tolls 757

Sewers
North West region 15w
Water authorities 571-2w, 572-3w

Sexual offences
Compensation 270-1w
Evidence 290w
Makenjuola, Adebola 252w
Police misconduct 252w
Trials 290w

Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976 346w

Share ownership
National Bus Company 760-1
Privatisation 153, 1059

Shareholders 650w
Investment in financial assets 1193
Privatisation 1194
Westland helicopters 451w, 516w, 518w, 519w

Shares
Airlines 478w
British Gas Corporation 5-6, 27w
National Freight Company 477w
Westland helicopters 533w

Shaw, Mr Giles, Minister of State for the Home Department
Debates etc
Criminal Records Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1407-9
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 858-62
Special constables (17.01.86) 1415-8
Questions
Association of Chief Police Officers, Ministerial responsibility 127w
Baton rounds, Metropolitan Police 171-2w
BBC 626w
BBC, Income 626w
BBC, Television advertising 626w, 636w
BBC Advertising & Sponsorship Review 627w
Broadcasting programmes 130w
Cinemas (Safety) Regulations 1985 8w
Civil defence, Communication 7-8w
Civil defence, Government grants 272-3w
Civil defence, Government grants to local authorities 9w, 272w, 273w
Civil defence, Local government expenditure 9w
Civil defence, Local government services 9w
Civil defence, Training 272w
Civil disorder, Haringey 3[illegible]
Civil disorder, Metropolitan Police 172-3w
Civil disorder, Street lighting 173w
Community radio 625w
Community radio, Broadcasting licences 713-4w
Community radio, Ethnic minorities 625w
Complaints against police, Jarrett, Floyd 131w
Complaints against police, Parsons, Mark 131w
Crime prevention, Closed circuit television 340w
Drinking & driving, Christmas 567-8w
Drug crimes, Greater London 459w
Early warning systems, Chemical weapons 462w
Electoral register, Disclosure of information 128w
Electoral register, Metropolitan Police 128w
Electoral register, Police 128w
Emergency planning, Local government staff 456w
Emergency planning, Royal Observer Corps 714w
Fire prevention, Electric lighting 175w
Fire prevention, Multiple occupation 626w
Fire regulations, Prosecutions 174-5w
Fire services, Equipment 274w
Firearms certificates, Fees & charges 274w
Greater Manchester Police, Members correspondence 175w
Groce, Cherry, Police firearms 130w
Housing design, Crime prevention 175w
Majid, Jamila, Body searches 342-3w
Martial arts weapons, Young people 570w
Metropolitan Police, Complaints against police 344w
Metropolitan Police, Councillors 459w
Metropolitan Police, Offices 171-2w
Metropolitan Police, Police powers 126-7w
Metropolitan Police, Police training 460w
Metropolitan Police, Ports 459w
Metropolitan Police, Recruitment 10-1w
Metropolitan Police, Rewards 7w
Monteith, Billy, Arrests 343w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit, Association of Metropolitan Authorities 6-7w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit, Manpower 6w
National Drugs Intelligence Unit, Regional crime squads 6w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 547w
Plastic bullets, Police equipment 270w
Police, Computers 130w
Police, Expenditure 129w
Police, Leicestershire 455w
Police, Manpower 178-9w, 456w
Police, Pay 716w
Police equipment, Riot control weapons 129-30w
Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Custody officers 169-70w
"Public Order Law White Paper" 460-1w
Racial attacks 622-3w
Riot Damages Act 1886, Motor vehicles 131w
Road traffic offences 569w
Sentencing, Crimes of violence 341-2w
Sportsgrounds, Safety certificates 175-6w
Thames Valley Police, Manpower 128w
United Kingdom Warning & Monitoring Organisation 274w

Sheehan, Flt Sgt 525w

Sheep
Clawbacks 559-60

Sheep meat
Clawbacks 560
Exports 559
France 559

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Debates etc
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1272
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 880, 886, 890-1
Questions
Community programme, Training grants 52w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Government grants 56-7w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Small businesses 57w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Women 57w
Enterprise & deregulation unit, Costs 56w
Law centres, Finance 253w
Law centres, Local government reform 261-2w
Legal aid 253w
Loan guarantee scheme, Companies 301-2w
Local government reform, Greater London Council 16w
Open University, University finance 122w
Small businesses, Bureaucracy 55-6w
Small businesses, Industrial health & safety 302-3w
Youth training scheme 54-6w, 400-4w
Youth training scheme, Information technology centres 54w
Youth training scheme, Local education authorities 488w
Youth training scheme, Skilled workers 151
Youth training scheme, Travelling expenses 488-9w, 489-90w

Sheffield
Social security recipients 229w

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Questions
International economic relations, Western Europe 1202
Limited list prescribing 739w
Scientific civil-service, Conditions of employment 17

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Questions
Milk, Production quotas 553
Sheep meat, Exports 559

Shersby, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 325
Questions
A40, Construction costs 44w
Copyright, Recording equipment 592w
Electricity tariffs, Landlord & tenant 23-4w
Heart diseases, Transplant surgery 504-5w
London Regional Transport, Government grants 46-7w

Shipbuilding
Devonport Dockyard 374w
HMS Otter 717-8w
Rosyth Dockyard 374w
Security 564w
Submarines 641-2w, 911

Shipping
Channel crossing 475w
Government assistance to industry 163w
Navy 641w

Shipping accidents
Mhari L 479w

Shipping safety
Fishing vessels 479w, 582w

Ships
Customs 144w
Drug crimes 144w

Shop hours (18.12.85) 376-7, (19.12.85) 663

Shopping centres
Glasgow District Council 614-5w
Land reclamation 614-5w

Shops
Cardiff West 565w
Manpower 565w

Shops Act 1950 251-2w

Shops Bill (HL) 1985/86 547-8w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1210

Short Ms Clare
Debates etc
Low pay (18.12.85) 474, 482-7, 488
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1133
Questions
Community programme 51w
Primary purpose rule, Immigration appeals 273w
School leaving, Educational qualifications 122w
Unemployment 153
West Bank 193w

Short, Mrs Renee
Debates etc
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 29
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1160
Questions
Cervical cancer, Screening 571
Employment schemes, Vocational training 186w
Employment schemes, Wolverhampton 186w
Family courts review, Family courts 446w
Hip replacements, West Midlands Regional Health Authority 419w
NHS & private practice, West Midlands 66-8w
Plastic bullets, Police equipment 270w
Riot Damages Act 1886, Motor vehicles 131w

Sick leave
Health service staff 324w
Hospital closures 324w

Sick pay
Social security benefits uprating (15.01.86) 1175-82

Sikorsky helicopters (16.12.85) 35-46, 4[illegible]w, 530w, 578w, 610w (13.01.86) 777-89, (15.01.86) 1082-174

Silvester, Mr Fred
Questions
Business statement 577
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 50-1w

Simonstown
Naval bases 134w

Sims, Mr Roger
Debates etc
Beckenham Hosptial (20.12.85) 741
Questions
Business statement 576
London docklands railway, Construction 755
Multifibre arrangement, Hong Kong 1063

Single people
Cohabitation 153w
Income support scheme 741w
Income tax 647w

Skeet, Sir Trevor
Debates etc
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 49-54, 68, 71
Questions
Coal mining, Productivity 26w

Skilled workers
Nurses 95w
Youth training scheme 150-1

Skimmed milk powder
Intervention stocks 540-1w

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 166-7
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 306
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 449-55
Johnson Matthey (18.12.85) 345
Members interests, Liberal Party (18.12.85) 343, 345-6
Prime Ministers question time intervention (14.01.86) 922
Private notice questions (16.12.85) 46
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 36, 46, (13.01.86) 785, 873-4
Questions
Armed forces, Vocational guidance 918
Business statement 579-80, 1224
City of London, Fraud 1192-3
Civil servants, 10 Downing Street 18-9
Coal mining, Imports 9
Company accounts, Johnson Matthey 1069
Dept of Health & Social Security, Civil service manpower 595w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil service recruitment 496w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, East Midlands 496w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil servants 497w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Civil service recruitment 496w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Labour turnover 736w
Export credit guarantees, Ecuador 1060-1
Fayad, Mohammed 628w
Johnson Matthey, Accounting 649w
Members facilities, Computers 16
Ministers, Gifts 578w
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate, Fraud 767
Prime Minister, Gifts 578w
Prime Minister visits abroad, Costs 264w
Retirement pensions, Social security recipients 497-8w
Supplementary benefits, Social security recipients 497w
10 Downing Street, costs 264w
10 Downing Street, Official hospitality 264w
Unemployment benefits, Social security recipients 498w

Skoal Bandits 432w
British Medical Association 432w
Health Education Council 432w

Slaughterhouses
Brucellosis 283w

Slough
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 739-40w
Supplementary benefits 739-40w

Slum clearance
Bradford 565
Housing finance 565

Slums
Bed & breakfast accommodation 553w

Small businesses
Bureaucracy 55-6w
Company accounts 243w
Corporation tax 141w
Employment 303w
Enterprise allowance scheme 57w
Industrial development 56w
Industrial health & safety 302-3w
"Lifting the Burden White Paper" 303w
Northern region 1067
Redundancy 55-6w
UK trade with EC 1072

Small firms service 286w
Wales 286w

Small investors
Industrial loan stocks 1194

Smith Committee see Resource allocation working party

Smith houses 254-5w
Defective housing 254-5w

Smith, Mr Chris
Debates etc
Arts finance, Local government reform (20.12.85) 731-4, 736

Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 836-9
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 319
Questions
Armed forces, AIDS 212w
Fast reactors, International cooperation 29w
Foreign tourists, Statistics 5-6w
Milk & milk products 278w
Nature Conservancy Council, Government grants 218w
Nuclear safeguards, Capenhurst 29w
Prison medical services, AIDS 170w
Strategic defence initiative 909
Taxation, Day nurseries 141-2w
USA, Central America 205w
Water supply, Lead poliution 12w

Smith, Sir Dudley
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1230
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 31
Questions
Agricultural land, Land use 559
Business statement 575, 1215
Immigration controls, Sri Lanka 455-6w

Smith, James 214w, 215w,
Defence procurement 214w, 215w

Smith Rt Hon John
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 944, 948-56, 962
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 36-7, 45, 46, (13.01.86) 778-9, 789, 836-9, 870-1, (15.01.86) 1135, 1152-9, 1163
Questions
Iron & steel industry, Ravenscraig Steelworks 1071-2

Smith, Mr Tim
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 165
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 597, 601, 619, 642-4
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 435, 436, 445-8, 454
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 328
Questions
Small businesses, Company accounts 243w
Taxation, Employment opportunities 650w
Victim support schemes, Government grants 545-6w

Smoke & chimney gases
Polkemmet Bing 551-2w

Smoking
Hospitals 503w
NHS 503w
Public buildings 502w
Tobacco (18.12.85) 346

Smoking related diseases 73-5w, 415-6w
Death 73-5w, 415-6w
Norfolk 73-5w
West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority 415-6w

Smyth, Martin
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Snape, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 399, 402, 405-9, 410, 414
Drinking & driving (18.12.85) 518-9, 520
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1231-2
Manchester Airport (18.12.85) 352
Questions
Air freight transport, Trade competitiveness 733-4w
Car tax 1199
Dash 7 aircraft, Finance 408w
Stolport, British Airways 408w
Stolport, Heathrow 408-9w

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1234
Questions
Annual Review of Agriculture, 1986 543w
Defence procurement 247w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 192w, 291
Nimrod aircraft, Costs 98w
Nimrod aircraft, Defence 98w
Nimrod aircraft, Defence contracts 912
Nimrod aircraft, Radar 98w
Philippines, Foreign policy 31-2w
Salmon, Northern Ireland 543w
Schools & parents, Parents rights 39w

Social class
Child health 602w
Households 285w

Social deprivation 467w
Urban areas 467w

Social Fund (16.12.85) 21-34, 315w, 316w, 319w, 436w, 599w
Death grants 316-7w
Finance 319w
Funerals 599w
Maternity benefits 599w

Social security
Consultants 323-4w
Ministerial statements (16.12.85) 21-34
Public petitions (20.12.85) 672
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 310w

Social security abuse
Fraud 344w
Supplementary benefits 422w
Unemployment benefits 300w
Welwyn Hatfield 397w

Social security appeals
Administrative delays 79w
Scotland 79w

Social security benefit reductions
Housing benefits 410-2w

Social security benefits (17.01.86) 1345
Costs 414w, 596w
Industrial injuries 79w
Members correspondence 432-3w
Newham 496w
Orkney 499w
Young people 495w

Social security benefits disqualification
Family credit 434w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 324w
Severe disablement allowance 437w, 499w

Social security benefits reductions 606w

Social security benefits rules
Exceptional circumstances additions 69w
Fisheries 239-40w
Housing benefits 503-4w
Industrial disputes 318w
Parents 422-6w
Seasonal workers 239-40w
Students 229-30w
Supplementary benefits 497w
Young people 422-6w

Social security benefits uprating
Sick pay (15.01.86) 1175-82

Social Security Bill 1985/86
1R (17.01.86) 1345

Social security claims
Cricklewood 694w
Family credit 435w, 495w
Harlesden 693-4w
Home visits 415w
Neasden 693-4w

Social security commissioners 71-2w

Social security payments
Administrative delays 75w
Post Office 228w

Social security recipients
Board & lodging charges 240w, 418w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 322w
Family income supplements 434w, 498w
Free school meals 19-20w, 110w
Housing benefits 410-2w, 701w
Income support scheme 317-8w
Interviews 229w
Leytonstone 69w
Personal savings 410w
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" 566-7
Retirement pensions 497-8w
Severe disablement allowance 499w
Sheffield 229w
Supplementary benefits 497w, 509w, 742-4w
Unemployment benefits 498w

Social security reform 596w, 597-8w, 694-5w, 696-7w, 701w, 704-6w, 740w, 741-2w, 744w
Disposable income 694w
Family credit 596-8w, 694-5w
Family income supplement 596-7w
Handicap benefits 597-8w
Housing benefits 596w, 597w, 696w, 697w
Income 696w
Maternity benefits 696-7w
Means tested benefits 435-6w, 704-6w
Rate rebates 596w
Rent rebates 596w
State earnings related pensions scheme 694w, 744w
Water charges 597w

Social security reviews 435-6w, 599w
Marginal tax rates 495-6w
Strike benefits 495w
Supplementary benefits 434-5w
Young people 495w

Social services
Blind 697w
Exhibitions 556w

Social workers
Professional qualifications 108w
Wales 108w

Soft loans 585w, 1060, 1073
Aid financed trade 585w
China 585w, 1073
Export promotion 1060

Social security benefits rules
Industrial disputes 599w

Soley, Mr Clive
Debates etc
Juries (18.12.85) 426-9
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 848, 853-8
Questions
Fraud, Inland Revenue 344w
Holloway Prison, Sanitation 623w
Prison staff, Training 623w
Supplementary benefits, Social security abuse 422w
Tax evasion 190w

Solicitor-General
Ministers correspondence 614w, 766, 1203-4, 1206
Westland helicopters 724w

South Africa
African National Congress 285
Armed forces deployment 212w
Armed forces training 523w
Arms embargoes 134w
British embassies 196w
Death 285-6
EC external relations 194-5w, 195-6w
Economic sanctions 195-6w, 293, 294-5, 295-6
Employment 196w, 1074
Foreign policy 195w, 293
Foreign relations 295, 296
Foreign workers 285
Funerals 196w
International cooperation 195w
Lesotho 923-4
Machine tools 361w
Mandela, Nelson 286
Metropolitan Police 10-1w
Ministers visits abroad 284-5
Nassau Summit 196w
Overseas trade 1074
Retirement pensions 427-8w
S & T research 195w

Trade unions 285
Violence 285-6
Widows benefits 427-8w

South America
Arms trade 589w
Debts 200w

South Atlantic 583-4w
Fisheries 583-4w
Fishery protection 584w

South Bank 512w
Arts Council 512w
Arts finance 512w
Local government reform 512w
Managers 512w
Pulford, Richard 512w

South Bank Board 512w
Pay 512w

South Down
By-election writs (17.12.85) 140

South East region
Job creation schemes 299-300w

South Pacific
Nuclear weapons 734w

South Yorkshire
Bus fares 759-60

South Yorkshire County Council 6w

Southampton
Dockyards 294

Southend Hospital (15.01.86) 1183-90
Radiotherapy (15.01.86) 1183-90

Space saver spare wheels 111w, 298w, 405w
Motor vehicle safety 111w, 298w, 405w

Space technology
Treaties 208w

Spain
Motor vehicle parts 1061-2

Speaker and his deputies, *For rulings and statements see separate heading Speakers rulings & statements*
Debates etc
Amendments & new clauses (17.12.85) 219, 223, 226, 227, (19.12.85) 592, (13.01.86) 792, (14.01.86) 938, (15.01.86) 1082
Disallowed questions (16.12.85) 6, (13.01.86) 758, 769, (15.01.86) 1058
House of Commons questions (16.12.85) 47-8
Members deaths, Stevens, Martin (13.01.86) 755
Orders & regulations (16.01.86) 1307
Private Members bills (17.01.86) 1410
Procedure (16.12.85) 36, 37, 72, (17.12.85) 154, (18.12.85) 288, 414, (20.12.85) 700, 716, (13.01.86) 773, 787, (14.01.86) 1015, 1017, (15.01.86) 1105, (16.01.86) 1232, 1322
Royal Assent (19.12.85) 591
Standing Order No 10 applications, Bates Colliery (17.12.85) 175
Standing Order No 10 applications, Toys and games (13.01.86) 790
Standing Order No 10 applications, Westland helicopters (18.12.85) 341

Speakers rulings & statements
Adjournment debates (16.12.85) 132-3, (20.12.85) 748, (15.01.86) 1186
Business questions (16.01.86) 1223, 1224
Business statement (13.01.86) 774, 775
By election writs (17.12.85) 139
Calling of Members (17.12.85) 142, 249, (18.12.85) 345, (19.12.85) 568, (20.12.85) 696, (15.01.86) 1130, (16.01.86) 1221
Government departments (16.12.85) 47
House of Commons galleries (14.01.86) 983
House of Commons Chamber (16.01.86) 1270
House of Commons debates (17.12.85) 166, 167, (18.12.85) 342, 343, 344
House of Commons divisions (17.12.85) 251, (14.01.86) 1014, 1015
House of Commons questions (16.12.85) 48, (15.01.86) 1072, (16.01.86) 1224
House of Commons Select Committees (19.12.85) 591
House of Lords reporting (18.12.85) 396
Members attendance (18.12.85) 345
Members conduct (17.12.85) 158, 243, (18.12.85) 435, 436, (13.01.86) 835, 875, (14.01.86) 917, (15.01.86) 1072, 1148, 1163, 1164
Members interests (14.01.86) 950, 1012-5
Members interventions (16.12.85) 132-3, (17.12.85) 229, (18.12.85) 300, (20.12.85) 748, (14.01.86) 951, 965, 987, (15.01.86) 1162, 1186
Members speeches (14.01.86) 951, 965, 987, (15.01.86) 1120, 1145, (16.01.86) 1268
Ministerial responsibility (16.01.86) 1207
Ministerial statements (16.12.85) 29,32, 46, 47, (18.12.85) 324, 336, (13.01.86) 874, (14.01.86) 932
Ministers (17.01.86) 1372
Official Report (16.01.86) 1213, 1239
Oral questions (18.12.85) 300, 345, (19.12.85) 568, (13.01.86) 769, (15.01.86) 1059, 1075, 1076, (16.01.86) 1192
Orders & regulations (14.01.86) 934
Parliamentary papers (13.01.86) 787, 788, 1077, 1087, (16.01.86) 1209-12
Parliamentary recess (19.12.85) 754
Points of order (17.12.85) 174, (18.12.85) 300, 342, 343, 344 466, (19.12.85) 568, (15.01.86) 1075
Press releases (18.12.85) 343
Prime Ministers questions (16.01.86) 1207
Private notice questions (16.12.85) 46
Public petitions (20.12.85) 672
Scope of debate (17.12.85) 269, 274, (18.12.85) 464, (20.12.85) 679, 680, (15.01.86) 1178, (16.01.86) 1333
Sub judice (13.01.86) 828
Supplementary questions (18.12.85) 284, (15.01.86) 1067, 1069, (16.01.86) 1193, 1199, 1219
Table Office (16.12.85) 48
Unparliamentary expressions (17.12.85) 163, 166

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 304
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1014
Gartcosh Steelworks, Scottish Affairs Select Committee (19.12.85) 590
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) (No 2) Order 1985 (17.12.85) 264
Questions
African National Congress, Foreign relations 294
Blackwall tunnel, Road traffic 479w
Channel crossing, Motor vehicles 478-80w
Channel crossing, Railway freight transport 476w
Channel crossing, Road traffic 475-6w
Channel crossing, Travel 475w
Crown Prosecution Service, Manpower 159w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Greater London 738w
DHSS local offices, Greater London 738w
Handicap benefits, Administrative delays 738w
Local government land, Greater London Council 257-8w
London docklands, Employment opportunities 220w, 467w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Management techniques 571w
London docklands railway, Construction 755
London docklands railway, Private sector 764
Members conduct, Public bills 734w
Motorways, Road traffic 297w
Pearce, Austin, Ministers correspondence 734w
Pedestrian areas, Local government reform 111w
Planning permission, Stolport 366w
South Africa, EC external relations 195-6w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 146
Teachers appraisal, Inner city areas 122w
Water authorities, Finance 467w
Water supply, Deserts 770-1
Westland helicopters, British Aerospace 724w

Special constables (17.01.86) 1411-8

Special development areas
Blyth Valley 1066-7

Special educational needs 123-4w, 288-9w
Dyslexia 288-9w
Judgments 288-9w
Pupils 123-4w

Special schools
School governors 119w
Schools & parents 119w

Special steels 539w, 591w
Industrial production 24-5w, 591w

Special voucher schemes 640w, 715w
India 640w, 715w

Specialist advisers 685-6w, 687-90w
Costs 687-90w
House of Commons Select Committees 685-6w, 687-90w
Occupations 685-6w

Spectacles
Companies 326-7w
Costs 433w
NHS 326-7w
Pensioners 433w
Prescriptions 433w
Prices 238w, 604w

Speech therapy
Graduates 444w
Higher education 444w
Teachers 433-4w

Speed, Mr Keith
Questions
Air transport, Bilateral treaties 47w
British embassies, USSR 366w
Channel crossing 630w
Channel crossing, Hazards 630w
Motor vehicles, Lighting 42w
Space saver spare wheels, Motor vehicle safety 405w

Speed governors 757-8
Buses 476w, 757-8

Speller, Mr Tony
Questions
Building regulations, Energy Efficiency Year 13w
Crown Suppliers, Fees & charges 335w
Domestic energy conservation, Government grants 629w
Insultation grants, Government grants to local authorities 673-9w
Road construction, North Devon 580w
Yelland Power Station, Power station closures 716w

Spencer, Mr Derek
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 327
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 9
Fraud, Criminal investigation 768
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141-2
Westland helicopters 563-4

Spencerback estate
Urban development grants 465-6w, 574w

Spicer, Mr Jim
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 41, (15.01.86) 1114-7
Questions
Advertising agencies, Dept of Health & Social Security 411-4w
Advertising agencies, Dept of Trade & Industry 21-3w
Export promotion, Turkey 1060

Spicer, Mr Michael, *Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Questions

Air freight transport, Trade competitiveness 733-4w
Air transport 477w
Air transport, Bilateral treaties 47w
Aircraft, Fire prevention 582w
Aircraft, Fire resistant materials 582w
Airport security 630w
Airports, Fees & charges 733w
Airports, Privatisation 478w
Airports, Public buildings 167w
A41, Bypasses 477w
British Airways, Privatisation 580w, 733w
Buses, Speed governors 476w, 757-8
Dash 7 aircraft, Finance 408w
Dept of Transport, Efficiency scrutinies 298w
Manchester Airport, Security 630w
Motor vehicle registration, Wales 631w
Motorways, Leicestershire 477w
Motorways, Road construction 477w
National Freight Company, Shares 477w
Road accidents, Traffic lights 582w
Road construction, Airedale 763-4
Raod construction, Berkhamsted bypass 765-6
Road construction, "Fairer & Faster Route to Major Road Construction" 756
Road construction, North Devon 580w
Road construction, Road works 756
Road works, Costs 731w
Road works, Expenditure 732w
Stolport, British Airways 408w
Stolport, Heathrow 408-9w
Taxicards, Greater London 476w

Sponsorship
Health services finance 311w
Hospitals 605w

Sports Council
Rugby 18w

Sportsgrounds
Public order policing (16.01.86) 1225-38
Safety certificates 175-6w

Squire, Mr Robin
Debates etc
Board & lodging charges (17.12.85) 171
Oldchurch Hospital (13.01.86) 898-901
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 323
Questions
Dartford tunnel, Road traffic 762
Defence land, Rainham marshes 561w
Family credit, Social security reform 694-5w
Family credit, Tax rates & bands 696w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 697w
Housing benefits, Voluntary organisations 695w
Maternity benefits, Social security reform 696-7w
Official secrets, Open government 919
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w

Sri Lanka
Foreign relations 202w
Immigration controls 455-6w
Visas 132w, 624w

St Edward 540w
Bones 540w

St Helens & Knowsley Health Authority 428w
Heart diseases 428w

St Olaves St Thomas & St Johns Charities (18.12.85) 365-71

Staffordshire
Baking industry 636w

Staff-student ratios
Universities 121w

Stamp duties
Tax thresholds 307w

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 785

Standard of living
Families 418-9w

Standing charges (18.12.85) 347-9
Electricity 124-5w
Gas fuels 124-5w

Standing Order No 10 applications
Banks Colliery (17.12.85) 175

Stanley, Rt Hon John, *Minister of State for the Armed Forces*
Questions
Armed forces deployment, South Africa 212w
Armed forces deployment, 9 Signal Regiment 379w
Armed forces training, El Salvador 525w
Armed forces training, Ulster Defence Regiment 102w
Army reserves, Armed forces training 916
BAOR, Costs 211w
Channel crossing, Channel ferries 535-6w
Civil defence, Emergency planning 523w
Defence equipment, Nuclear weapons 561w
Defence expenditure, Public expenditure 561w
Deterrence theory 563w
Falkland Islands, Ferries 522w
International Committee of the Red Cross, Treaties 562w
Interviews, 9 Signal Regiment 379w
Military vehicles, Road accidents 913
NATO 564w
NATO, Defence expenditure 535w
Navy, Armed forces deployment 215w
Navy, Shipping 641w
9 Signal Regiment, Armed forces deployment 525w
Nuclear safeguards 609w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Deterrence theory 915
Nuclear weapons policy, Clwyd, Ann 915
Nuclear weapons policy, Nuclear weapons deployment 915
Simonstown, Naval bases 134w
Submarines, USA 373w
Tactical nuclear weapons, NATO 562-3w
Territorial Army & Volunteer Reserve 916
Ulster Defence Regiment, Training 245-6w

Stanley Royd Hospital 325w, 605w
Food poisoning 325w, 605w

State earnings related pensions scheme
Occupational pensions 320w
Pensions 319-20w
Social security reform 694w, 744w

State occupational pensions
Men 147-8w
Women 147-8w

State succession
Namibia 133w

Statistics
Crime 457w

Statutory Sick Pay Uprating Order 1985 (15.01.86) 1175-82

Steel, Rt Hon David
Debates etc
Business statement (13.01.86) 774-5
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 694
Members interests, Liberal party (18.12.85) 343
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1089, 1095-8
Questions
Ambulance services, Scotland 161w
Business statement 1215
Fraud, City of London 155-6
List D schools, School closures 162w
Official secrets acts, Prosecutions 919

Sterling
Exchange rates 651w

Stern, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 251
Questions
Air force bases, Public buildings 522w
Airports, Public buildings 167w
Archaeology, International conferences 148-9
European fighter aircraft 915
Housing benefits, Rate rebates 78w
Inflation, Average earnings 650w
Prime Minister official engagements 627w
Prisoners on remand, Prison population 170w
Rolls-Royce, Company finance 590w
Severn bridge, Road tolls 757
Stocks & shares, Income tax 511w
Stocks & shares, USA 511w
USSR, Foreign policy 194w

Stevens, Mr Lewis
Debates etc
Low pay (18.12.85) 480-2, 484
Questions
Dept of Transport, Efficiency scrutinies 298w
Small businesses, "Lifting the Burden White Paper" 303w

Stevens, Martin (13.01.86) 755
Members deaths (13.01.86) 755

Stewart, Mr Allan, *Under-Secretary of State for Scotland*
Questions
Building industry, Glasgow 482w
School meals, Scotland 110w
Shopping centres, Glasgow District Council 614-5w
Teachers, Scotland 64-5w
Tobacco industry, Scotland 62w
Unemployment, Glasgow 57-8w

Stewart, Mr Andy
Questions
Milk, Production quotas 553

Stewart, Rt Hon Donald
Debates etc
Criminal Records Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1407
Fisheries, EC action (16.01.86) 1252-3
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 103
Questions
Alternative energy, Energy research 4

Stewart, Mr Ian, *Economic Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 592-600, 601-2, 622
Questions
Africa, Debts 308-9w
Bank of England 652w
Bank of England, Commercial bills 362w
Bank of England, Financial institutions 359w
Bank of England, Own resources 359w
Building societies, Company registration 143w
Building societies, Takeovers 142-3w
Coinage, Commonwealth Games 592w
European monetary system 307w
Exchange rates, Mark 650w
Exchange rates, Sterling 651w
Financial institutions, Banks 309w
Financial institutions, City of London 360w
Fraud, Johnson Matthey 510w
Inflation 649w, 650w
Inflation, Average earnings 650w
International Monetary Fund, Airlines 593w
Johnson Matthey 305w, 649w
Johnson Matthey, Accounting 649w
Johnson Matthey, Annual reports 649w
Johnson Matthey, Banking supervision 649w
Johnson Matthey, Company finance 594w
Johnson Matthey Metals 649w
Money supply, MO 306w
New Cross Building Society 653w
Stocks & shares, Income tax 511w
Stocks & shares, USA 511w
Tax thresholds, Stamp duties 307w
Trustee savings banks, Banks 363w

Stobhill Hospital (18.12.85) 544-50

Stockholm
European Security Conference 292

Stockport
Unemployment benefit offices 639w

Stocks & shares
Income tax 511w
USA 511w

Stokes, Mr John
Questions
Business statement 1216
Nuclear weapons policy, Clwyd, Ann 915

Stolport
British Airways 408w
Heathrow 408-9w
London docklands 408-9w
London docklands railway 755
Planning permission 366w

Stone quarrying
Blenau Ffestiniog (18.12.85) 374-6
Industrial disputes (18.12.85) 374-6

Stott, Mr Roger
Debates etc
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 887-8
Questions
Chile, Arms embargoes 199w
Coastal shipping, Greece 763
National Bus Company, Privatisation 761
Sports Council, Rugby 18w

Strang, Mr Gavin
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1236
Official Report (16.01.86) 1213, 1239
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 783, (15.01.86) 1147-8
Questions
Business statement 1223
Cereals, Co-responsibility levy 558
Coal mining, Unemployment 26w
Iron & steel industry, Ravenscraig Steelworks 1071
Johnson Matthey, Annual reports 649w
Milk, Production quotas 552
Nuclear weapons deployment, Deterrence theory 915
Nuclear weapons tests, Australia 159w, 160w, 561w
Nuclear weapons tests, Seismic monitoring 298-9

Strangford
By election writs (17.12.85) 140

Strategic defence initiative 194w, 560w, 909
Civil servants secondment 160w
Computer applications 910-1
Defence contracts 214w
Defence expenditure 560-1w
Defence research 213w, 214w, 906, 907
Deterrence theory 907-8
Edinburgh University 910
Foreign relations 194w
Imports 213w
Intellectual property 184w, 213-4w
Lasers 214w
Nuclear test ban 197w
Nuclear weapons 907-8
Nuclear weapons deployment 907
Nuclear weapons tests 910
Reagan, President 907-8
Royal United Services Institute 194w
Scientists 265w
Tactical nuclear weapons 213w
Technical assistance 4w, 533w, 560w
Technology transfer 213-4w
Treaties 208w
USSR 908, 1065

Strathclyde
Building industry 482w

Straw, Mr Jack
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 1013
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 316, 330
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1093
Questions
Departmental correspondence, Dept of Transport 580-1w
Departmental leaflets, Dept of Transport 581w
Local Government Bill 1985/86 678w
[redacted] government expenditure 511w
Local government staff, Lancashire 627w
Local government staff, Manpower 469-70w, 599w
Transport Act 1985, Publicity 581w

Street lighting 173w, 175w
Civil disorder 173w
Crime prevention 173w, 175w

"Strengthening the Local Voluntary Sector Consultation Paper" 176-7w

Strike benefits
Family credit 495w
Social security reviews 495w

Strike Command 384w

Strikes
National Union of Teachers 141-2

Structure plans
Hampshire 730w

Student grants 147-8
Deeds of Covenant 120w
Further education 120w
Parental contributions 39-40w
Student loans 148

Student numbers
Higher education 117w, 118w
Overseas students 709-11w
Women 121w

Student numbers, Specific cases
Open university 116w

Students
Deeds of covenant 229-30w
Departmental publications 38w
Social security benefits rules 229-30w
Supplementary benefits 147-8

Sub judice
Speakers rulings & statements (13.01.86) 828

Submarines
Cammell Laird 911
Defence contracts 641-2w, 911
Plymouth 373w
Shipbuilding 641-2w, 911
Tenders 642w
USA 373w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering 911

Sub-postmasters 450-1w

Successor authorities 677w

Sudan
Agriculture 772
Development aid 772
Disaster relief 447w
Food aid 447w, 772
Overseas aid 771-2

Sugar
Chemical industries 279w

Sulphur dioxide 3, 544-5w, 548-9w
Air pollution 3, 545w

Sultan of Brunei 629w

Sumberg, Mr David
Questions
Business statement 577-8
Easiform housing, Defective housing 16-7w
Easiform housing, Housing Defects Act 1984 17w
Israel, Arms embargoes 206w
Middle East, Palestine Liberation Organisation 287

Summary trial
Scottish courts 357w, 358w

Sunday trading
Law enforcement 251-2w
Public petitions (19.12.85) 663

Supplementary benefits
Board & lodging charges 69w, 553-4w, 740w
Carers 599w
Costs 319w
DHSS local offices 497w
Disadvantaged 154-5
Exceptional needs payments 321-2w
Families 700-1w
Hickson, AD 76w
Leytonstone 69w
Retirement pensions 742-4w
Slough 739-40w
Social security abuse 422w
Social security benefits rules 497w
Social security recipients 497w, 509w, 742-4w
Social security reviews 434-5w
Statistics 321-2w
Students 147-8
Young people 84w, 156, 434-5w, 506-8w

Supplementary questions
Speakers rulings & statements (18.12.85) 284, (15.01.86) 1067, 1069, (16.01.86) 1193, 1199, 1219

Supply estimates (17.12.85) 258

"Supply Estimates 1985/86, Supplementary Estimates" (17.12.85) 258

"Supply Estimates 1986/87, Votes on Account" (17.12.85) 258

Support for innovation scheme 633w

Surgery
Death 601-2w
Heart diseases 238w
Hospital waiting lists 155w, 238w
Infectious diseases 325w, 440w, 605w
Medical research 601-2w

Surplus land 286w

Surpluses
Housing revenue accounts 664-70w

Surveillance
Demonstrations 266w, 340w

SWAPO 133w, 472w
Namibia 133w
United Nations 472w

Syrian Arab Republic
Foreign policy 203w
Jordan 289

Table Office (16.12.85) 48
Speakers rulings & statements (16.12.85) 48

Tactical nuclear weapons
NATO 562-3w
Strategic defence initiative 213w

Takeovers 522w
Building societies 142-3w
Codes of practice 335w
Imperial Tobacco 633-4w

Talgarth road 490w
Road traffic control 490w

Tameside
Industrial training schemes 125w
Temporary employment 125w

Tanker aircraft 97w, 247w

Tapsell, Sir Peter
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 163-4
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 307
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 971
Members interests (17.12.85) 235-7
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 782

Tatton
Regional aid 1067

Tax allowances
Income tax 647w
Tax yields 142w, 309w

Tax avoidance
VAT 654w

Tax evasion 190w
VAT 648w

Tax exemption certificates 50w
Building industry 50w
Labour only subcontracting 50w

Tax harmonisation
European Communities 521w

Tax incentives 307w
Energy efficiency 307w

Tax rates & bands
Family credit 696w
Income tax 50-1w, 190w, 647w
Tax thresholds 1195
Taxpayers 1195

Tax thresholds
National insurance contributions 1201
Stamp duties 307w
Tax rates & bands 1195

Tax yields
Alcoholic drinks duties 361w
British Gas Corporation 123w
Capital gains tax 360w
Corporation tax 359w
Electricity supply industry 123w
Income tax 50-1w
Industrial building allowances 360w
Maternity benefits 696-7w
Oil revenues 1202
Private education 50w
Privatisation 361w
Tax allowances 142w, 309w
VAT zero rated goods 142w

Taxation
Day nurseries 141-2w
Employment opportunities 650w
Families 646w
Lead free petrol 654-5w
National income 648w
UK companies abroad 510w

Taxicards
Greater London 476w

Taxis
Heathrow (17.12.85) 277-82

Taxpayers
Marginal tax rates 1195
Tax rates & bands 1195

Taylor, John David
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Taylor, Mr John Mark
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 630, 634, 636-7
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 799
Questions
Company liquidations, WG Allen 1073
Latent damage, Law Reform Committee 109w
Philips, Cyril 548w
Prime Minister official engagements 103w, 553w, 627w
Strategic defence initiative, Technical assistance 560w
Tax thresholds, Stamp duties 307w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 114-5w
Yugoslavia, Foreign policy 203w

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (18.12.85) 303
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1031
Southend Hospital (15.01.86) 1186
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 783
Questions
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 452-3w
Channel crossing, Private investment 764-5
EC budget, UK contributions 511w, 655w
EC integration 365-6w
EC internal relations, Defence 474w
EC reform, Voting methods 201w
European Assembly members, Crimes of violence 32-3w
European Communities, National anthems 521w
EC law, Conditions of employment 552w
European fighter aircraft, Defence expenditure 534-5w, 612w
Food surpluses, European economic community 279w
Helicopters, Defence procurement 520w, 534w, 609-10w
Helicopters, International cooperation 532w
Intervention stocks 542-3w
Manufactured goods, EC trade 453w
NATO, Defence expenditure 535w
Nitrates, Water pollution 545w
Peoples Europe Committee 521w
Tornado aircraft, Defence expenditure 534w, 611-2w
Westland helicopters, Defence procurement 566
Westland helicopters, International cooperation 532w
Westland helicopters, Merchant banks 451w

Tayside Health Board 163w, 294w
Grant, Donald 294w

TA11 Airbus 634w

TA9 Airbus 634w

Teacher training
Religious education 288w

Teachers
Advisory Conciliation & Arbitration Service 147
Child care 144
Conditions of employment 1203
Dismissal 150
Educational standards 442w
Industrial disputes 114-5w, 119w, 141-2, 143, 144-5, 146-7, 544w
Lost working days 115w
Manpower 707w
Merit awards 441w, 442w
Pay 64-5w, 114-5w, 141-2, 143, 144, 146, 579w, 707w, 1203, 1206-7
Pay review bodies 144-5, 146-7
Recruitment 141-2, 146
Scotland 64-5w
Speech therapy 433-4w
Trade unions 114w, 143, 144

Teachers appraisal 122w, 152
Inner city areas 122w

Teaching hospitals
Cervical cancer 571
NHS finance 312w, 508-10w

Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman, *Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster*
Questions
County Palatine, Magistrates 329w

Technical assistance
Defence research 908
Helicopters 515-6w, 525-6w
North Sea oil 250w
Strategic defence initiative 4w, 533w, 560w

Technical & vocational education initiative
Pupils 727-8w

Technicians
NHS 151-2w
Pay 151-2w

Technology transfer
Strategic defence initiative 213-4w
USSR 1065
Westland helicopters 1205-6

Telephone charges (18.12.85) 347-9

Telephone systems
Members facilities 16

Telephones for disabled
Hospitals 505w
NHS 505w
Sensory aids 655-6w

Television
BBC external services 206w

Television advertising
BBC 626w, 636w

Television programmes
Copyright 24w

Temperature
Industrial energy prices 13

Temple-Morris, Mr Peter
Questions
Iran-Iraq war 296-7
Middle East, Peace negotiations 290-1
Milk, Production quotas 281w

Temporary employment 125w, 695w
Tameside 125w

Temporary staff 51w
House of Commons Select Committees 691w
Research 117w

10 Downing Street 264w, 271w, 457w, 628w
Civil servants 18-9
Costs 264w
Official hospitality 264w
Security 271w, 457w

Tenant farmers
Outgoers scheme 562

Tenants cooperatives 259w, 728-9w

Tenders 61-2w, 381w, 429w, 463-4w, 517w, 642w, 718w, 760
Defence contracts 517w
East London river crossing 111w
National Bus Company 760
Submarines 642w

Terlezki, Mr Stefan
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 337
Questions
Company liquidations, Cardiff 451w
Motor vehicle registration, Wales 631w
Playing fields, Wales 285w, 286w
Shops, Cardiff West 565w
Technology transfer, USSR 1065

Termination of employment
Contracts for services 155w

Territorial Army & Volunteer Reserve 916

Terrorism
Capital punishment 553w
International cooperation 207w
Iraq 200w
Libyan Arab Republic 1206
Northern Ireland (16.01.86) 1307-30
Palestine Liberation Organisation 287
Sentencing 553w

Test tube babies
Clinics 325w

Testing
Fire services 274w
Riot control weapons 129-30w
Trident missiles 212w

Textile industry
Bradford 1063
Import penetration 1063-4
Multifibre arrangement 1063-4

Thames Flood Barrier
Newham 257-8w

Thames Valley Police 128w, 129w, 169-70w, 178-9w
Manpower 128w

Thamesmead Community Trust 259w, 728-9w
Elections 259w
Local government reforms 259w
Local government staff 728-9w
Offices 729w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret, *Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service*
Debates etc
Deposited papers (16.01.86) 1210
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1088-95
Questions
Aerospace industry, International cooperation 517-8w
Airport security, Manchester Airport 578w
Anglo-Irish Agreement, International conferences 4w

Anglo-rish Agreement, Ministers 4w
Animal welfare 347-8w
British Aerospace, Ministers correspondence 918-9, 922
British Aerospace, Profitability 156
British Aerospace, Westland helicopters 919, 920-1
Brunei 628w
Channel crossing 920
Channel tunnel, Wars 520w
Chief constables, Greater Manchester 565
Child care, Ministerial responsibility 552w
Church of England, Inner city areas 521w
Civil servants, Disclosure of information 520w
Criminal proceedings, Government departments 567-8
Defence procurement 155
Demonstrations, Gartcosh 921
Devolution, Northern Ireland 565
Disclosure of information, Inquiries 629w
Domestic energy conservation, Government grants 629w
Double taxation, Canada 103w
Elderly, Community policing 155
European Communities, National anthems 521w
EC law, Conditions of employment 552w
Fayed, Mohammed 628w
Fires, Coal mining 1205
Fraud, City of London 153, 155-6
Government grants to local authorities 512-6w
Greater London Council, Local government reform 564
Greater London Council, Redundancy 564-5
Heathrow, Armed forces deployment 521-2w
Helicopters, Defence procurement 520w
Helicopters, EC countries 515-6w
Honours, Political Honours Scrutiny Committee 3w
House of Commons Select Committees, Civil servants 628w
Housing departments, Lewisham 920
Libyan Arab Republic, Terrorism 1206
Libyan Arab Republic, USA 1205-6
Lloyds of London 565-6
Local government expenditure, Basildon District Council 922
Members conduct, Public bills 734w
Military exercises, New Zealand 734w
Ministers, Gifts 578w
Ministers correspondence, Disclosure of information 734w
Nationalised industries, Privatisation 153
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Dounreay 160w
Nuclear weapons tests, Australia 159w, 160w, 629w
Official secrets, Open government 919
Official secrets acts, Prosecutions 919
Parliamentary private secretaries 348-52w
Pearce, Austin, Ministers correspondence 734w
Peoples Europe Committee 521w
Peres, Shimon, Official visits 552w
Prime Minister, Gifts 578w, 628w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Kings College Hospital 103w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Railway travel 552w
Prime Minister official engagements 103w, 265w, 552-3w, 627w
Prime Minister visits abroad, Costs 264w
Prime Minister visits abroad, Nepal 922
Public order policing, Civil disorder 919
Public sector borrowing requirement 347w
Rate support grants, Powys 1207-8
"Reform of Social Security White Paper", Pensions 156
"Reform of Social Security White Paper", Poverty 154-5
"Reform of Social Security White Paper", Social security recipients 566-7
Slum clearance, Bradford 565
Strategic defence initiative, Civil servants secondment 160w
Strategic defence initiative, Scientists 265w
Strategic defence initiative, Technical assistance 4w
Sultan of Brunei 629w
Takeovers 522w
Teachers, Pay 1203, 1206-7
10 Downing Street, Costs 264w
10 Downing Street, Official hospitality 264w
Trade competitiveness, Industry 566
UK contributions, NATO 4w
Unemployment 153
USA, Balance of trade 520-1w
USA, Defence procurement 521w
Violence, Security industry 921
Westland helicopters 563-4, 567, 578w
Westland helicopters, British Aerospace 920, 1204-5
Westland helicopters, Cabinet Committees 1206
Westland helicopters, Civil servants 1206
Westland helicopters, Company finance 347w, 515w, 518-9w
Westland helicopters, Cost effectiveness 517w
Westland helicopters, Defence procurement 155, 564, 566
Westland helicopters, Disclosure of information 515w
Westland helicopters, Discrimination 518w, 519w
Westland helicopters, European Commission 515w
Westland helicopters, House of Commons debates 1204
Westland helicopters, Italy 519w
Westland helicopters, Ministers correspondence 517w, 518w, 519-20w, 553-4w, 1203-4, 1206
Westland helicopters, Official secrets 629w
Westland helicopters, Public sector 1204
Westland helicopters, Shareholders 516w, 518w, 519w,
Yorkshire & Humberside 264w
Young people, Supplementary benefits 156

Thermal insulation
Energy Efficiency Year 13w

13 Signals Regiment 523w, 524w
Armed forces discharges 523w, 524w

Thomarin, Sylvia 342-3w
Body searches 342-3w

Thomas, Mr D E
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 798, 842-5
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 335-6
Stone quarrying, Industrial disputes (18.12.85) 374-6
Westland helicopters (13.01.86) 786-7
Questions
Civil defence, Communication 7-8w
Civil defence, Emergency planning 523w
Nuclear test ban 196-7w
Radioactive wastes, Pollution monitoring 167w
Rural water supplies & sewerage acts, Government grants 454w
Social workers, Wales 108w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence research 906
Violence, Security industry 921

Thomas, Dr Roger
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (18.12.85) 338
Questions
Bone marrow disorders, Transplant surgery 167w

Thompson, Mr Jack
Questions
Economic growth, Regional planning & development 586w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 120w

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Questions
Double taxation, Canada 103w
Higher education, Educational finance 338-40w
National insurance contributions, Employers contributions 510-1w
Nuclear test ban 196-7w
Wind power, Government grants 27w

Thorne, Mr Neil
Debates etc
Juries (18.12.85) 424-6
Questions
Alley, Eric, Civil defence 177-8w
Defence procurement, Mergers 719w
Exhibitions, Social services 556w
GEC, Mergers 609w

Thorne, Mr Stan
Questions
Prime Minister visits abroad, Nepal 922

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1349-50, 1367, 1372-6, 1379, 1380, 1383, 1385-6, 1390
Financial institutions, Fraud (18.12.85) 444, 450, 466-7
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 943
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 33
Questions
Armed forces deployment, Bolton 96w
Armed forces strength, Bolton 522-3w
Arts finance, Greater Manchester 189w
Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency 650w
Defence, Cost effectiveness 564w
Exports, Wealth 1061
Food surpluses, European Economic Community 277w
Hospital waiting lists, Bolton Health Authority 496w
Immigration rules, Housing 127-8w
Industrial development, Regional planning & development 586w
Industrial training, Information technology 299w
NHS administration, Medical profession 429w
North West Water Authority, Water charges 260w
Planning appeals 106w
Planning appeals, Birtenshaw Farm 18w
Planning appeals, Housing construction 105-6w
Planning appeals, Property development 106w
Self-employed, Statistics 299w

Tin
Consolidated Fund debates (18.12.85) 539-43
Cornwall (18.12.85) 539-43

Tobacco
Retail trade 138-9w
Smoking (18.12.85) 346
Young people 138-9w

Tobacco industry
Advertising codes of practice 434w
Government assistance to industry 24w
Scotland 62w

Tobacco Smoking (Public Places) Bill 1985/86
1R (18.12.85) 346

Tornado aircraft 611-2w
Defence expenditure 534w, 611-2w

Torney, Mr Thomas
Questions
Multifibre arrangement, Textile industry 1063
South Africa, EC external relations 194-5w

Torture
Amnesty International 363-4w
Foreign policy 363-4w

Tottenham
Civil disorder 919
Police misconduct 131w

Tourism
Highland & Islands Development Board 65w

Tourist attractions 345w
Road signs 345w

Town & country planning
General development orders 369-71w
"Lifting the Burden White Paper" 369-71w

Town & Country Planning Act 1971 222w

Townsend, Mr Cyril D
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 42
Questions
Jordan, Peace negotiations 288

Toys & games
Safety (13.01.86) 790

Tracey, Mr Richard, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)*
Debates etc
Greenbelt, Hertfordshire (19.12.85) 667-70
Questions
Greater London Council, Science & technology 105w
Hypermarkets, Planning permission 260w
Industrial development, Hampshire 464w
Local government expenditure, Greater London Council 366-9w
Local government expenditure, Greater London Council 470w
Local government land, Greater London Council 13w, 257-8w
Local government reform, Civil service manpower 15w, 258w
Local government reform, County Hall 369w
Local government reform, Departmental leaflets 469w
Local government reform, Greater London Council 16w, 468-9w
Local government reform, Greater London Council Research Library 469w
Local government reform, Hainault Forest 662-3w
Local government reform, London boroughs 677w
Local government revenue, Greenwich 661w
London Marathon, Government grants 263w
London Residuary Body, Finance 677-8w
Mary Rose, Ancient monuments 678w
Merseyside Residuary Body, Pocock, Leslie 731w
Merseyside Residuary Body, Public appointments 677w
Owner occupied housing, Planning permission 673w
Planning appeals 106w, 222w
Planning appeals, Birtenshaw Farm 18w
Planning appeals, Housing construction 105-6w
Planning appeals, Hypermarkets 13w
Planning appeals, Local authorities 222w
Planning appeals, Property development 106w
Planning permission, Opencast mining 464-6w
Planning permission, Stolport 366w
Sports Council, Rugby 18w
Town & country planning, General development orders 369-71w
Washington Development Corporation, Public appointments 729w

Trade competitiveness
Air freight transport 733-4w
Coal mining 9
Exchange rates 566
Industry 566

Trade Descriptions (Origin Marking) (Miscellaneous Goods) Order 1981 245w

Trade promotion
Association of British Chambers of Commerce 587w
China 1073
Diplomatic service 297-8
Jamaica 298
Marketing 298
Overseas trade 298
USSR 1064-5

Trade union membership
Government Communications Headquarters 207w

Trade unions
British Dental Association 125w
Civil servants 720-2w
Civil service 31w
Gas supply industry 27w
Political levy 304w, 399-400w
Ravenscraig Steelworks 294w
South Africa 285
Teachers 114w, 143, 144

Trades Union Congress
British Gas Corporation 30w
Government grants 639w

Tradewinds Airways 733-4w

Traffic lights
Costs 111-2w
Road accidents 582w

Training
Child care 185w
Civil defence 272w
Educational psychology 337-8w
Health service staff 71w
Manpower Services Commission 151
Prison staff 623w
Ulster Defence Regiment 245-6w

Training allowances 398w, 727-8w
Community programme 398w
Companies 727-8w

Training grants
Community programme 52w

Transplant surgery
Bone marrow disorders 167w
Computer applications 698w
Heart diseases 504-5w
Kidneys 310-1w, 698w

Transport
Dockyards 374w

Transport Act 1985 581w
Publicity 581w

Transport costs
Channel crossing 475w

Transport supplementary grants 168-9w

Transport & Road Research Laboratory 407w

Trauma
Hospital patients 158w
Medical research 38w
Research finance 158w

Travel
Channel crossing 475w

Travel concessions
School transport 116w

Travelling expenses
Pupils 544w
Youth training scheme 488-9w, 489-90w

Treasury
Local government reform 49-50w

Treaties
European Economic Community 364w
International Committee of the Red Cross 562w
Iron & Steel 1059
Space technology 208w
Strategic defence initiative 208w

Treaty of Rome 201-2w, 474w, 591-2w

Trials
Costs 713w
Northern Ireland (16.01.86) 1331-5
Official secrets 99w
Sexual offences 290w

Trident 562w
Contracts 562w
Costs 212w
Defence expenditure 562w

Trident missiles 246w
Testing 212w

Trident submarines
Defence contracts 911

Trinity House 168w

Trippier, Mr David, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Community programme, Training grants 52w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Government grants 56-7w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Small businesses 57w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Women 57w
Enterprise & deregulation unit, Costs 56w
Fisheries, Great Grimsby 399w
Industrial training, Information technology 299w
Loan guarantee scheme, Companies 301-2w
Local enterprise agencies, Local authorities 303-4w
New businesses, Greater London 566w
Small businesses, Bureaucracy 55-6w
Small businesses, Employment 303w
Small businesses, "Lifting the Burden White Paper" 303w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Pupils 727-8w
Youth training scheme 54-6w, 187w, 400-4w
Youth training scheme, Finance 187w
Youth training scheme, Information technology centres 54w
Youth training scheme, Local education authorities 488w
Youth training scheme, Ministers domestic visits 186-7w
Youth training scheme, Pay 727-8w
Youth training scheme, School leaving 567w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 187w
Youth training scheme, Travelling expenses 488-9w, 489-90w

Tristan da Cunha
Companies 33w, 364w
Overseas trade 33w

Trotter, Mr Neville
Questions
Warships, British Shipbuilders 724w

Trustee savings banks
Banks 363w

Tuberculosis
Vaccination 151w

Tuition fees
Open University 116w

Tunnels
Driving 407w
Psychology 407w

Turkey
Export promotion 1060
Political prisoners 191w

Turville School 579w
Members correspondence 579w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Questions
Coinage, Commonwealth Games 592w
Government grants to local authorities, Child care 119w
Marginal tax rates, Average earnings 1194
Trade unions, Political levy 304w

Tyne & Wear
Bed & breakfast accommodation 553w
Board & lodging charges 740w
Customs officers 144w
Defence industries 913-4

Type 23 Frigates 913-4
Defence contracts 913-4

Ulster Defence Regiment
Armed forces training 102w
Mallon, Seamus 246-7w
Training 245-6w

Ultraleisure
Company liquidations 449-50w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 449-50w

Underpayments 489-92w
Yorkshire & Humberside 489-92w

Unemployed
Adult education 644-5w
Income support scheme 317-8w
Low incomes 74-6w

Unemployment 153, 190w, (18.12.85) 371-4, 549w, 639w
Blyth Valley 1066-7
Building industry 454w
Cleveland 1196-7
Coal mining 26w
Copeland 188w
Economic regions 301-2w, 638-9w
Glasgow 57-8w
Graduates 397w
Greater London 398-9w
Handicapped workers 725w
Hertfordshire 300w
Littleborough 566-8w
Liverpool 492-3w
Merseyside 493w
Northern region 1065, 1066
Norwood 728w
Outgoers scheme 552
Parliamentary constituencies 125w
Research 397w
Saddleworth 566-8w
Statistics 725w
Wales 285w
Wandsworth 398-9w

Unemployment benefit offices 639w
Stockport 639w

Unemployment benefits
Administrative delays 397w
EC countries 72w
Japan 72w
Social security abuse 300w
Social security recipients 498w
Welwyn Hatfield 397w

Unemployed
Income support scheme 597w

UNESCO 179w
Commonwealth 179w
Overseas aid 241w
UK contributions 297, 771

Unfair competition
British Airways 733w
Westland helicopters 519w

Unfair dismissal (Increase of Limits of Basic & Special Awards) Order 1985 (19.12.85) 662

United Engineering Steels 539w

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority
Departmental reports 717w

United Kingdom Warning & Monitoring Organisation 274w

United Nations
Chile 473-4w
Cyprus 32w
Falkland Islands 191-2w
Gulf War 206-7w
Middle East 291-2
Namibia 472w
SWAPO 472w

United Technologies (16.12.85) 35-46, 451w, (13.01.86) 777-89, (15.01.86) 1082-174

Universities
Business education 335w
Higher education admission 643w
Information technology 442-4w
Research 117w, 118w
Staff-student ratios 121w

University College Aberystwyth 336w

University finance
Educational finance 116-7w
Open University 122w, 544w, 711-2w
Private investment 122w
University Grants Committee 118w, 442-4w

University teachers
Careers development 712w
Pay 335-6w
Working hours 335-6w

Unparliamentary expressions
Speakers rulings & statements (17.12.85) 163, 166

Untreated milk 281w
Licensing 281w

Upminster
Sacred Heart of Mary School 646w

Upper Bann
By election writs (17.12.85) 140

Upper Waiting Hall
Exhibitions 607-8w
London Commodity Exchange 633w
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd 250w
Yorkshire Water Colour Society 34-5w

Urban areas (20.12.85) 709-16
Social deprivation 467w

Urban deprivation 12w, 18-20w
Local authorities 12w, 18-20w
Statistics 12w

Urban development grants 574w, (20.12.85) 709-16
Spencerbeck estate 465-6w, 574w

Urban planning
Liverpool (16.01.86) 1337-40

Urban programme
Government grants to local authorities 13w, 18-20w, 260w
Holiday pay schemes 13w

US bases 538w
Armed forces deployment 538w

USA
Aerospace industry 517-8w
Armed forces deployment 205w
Arms control 199w
Balance of trade 452-3w, 520-1w
Budget 648w
Central America 205w
Company taxation 510w
Contadora Group 205w
Defence procurement 521w, 526-8w
Deficit financing 648w
Dogs 5w
European Economic Community 1059
Fish 613w
Helicopters 530w
Iron & steel industry 1060
Libyan Arab Republic 1205-6
Manufactured goods 520-1w
Nicaragua 283-4
Nuclear disarmament 199w
Palestine Liberation Organisation 289-90
Prisons 177w
Protectionism 1068
Stocks & shares 511w
Submarines 373w
Western Europe 1202
Westland helicopters 474-5w, 533w

USSR (20.12.85) 681-90
British embassies 366w
Foreign policy 194w
Iron & steel 1065
Nuclear weapons deployment 908
Overseas trade 590w, 1064-5
Political refugees 205-6w
Seismic monitoring 298-9
Strategic defence initiative 908, 1065
Technology transfer 1065
Trade promotion 1064-5

Vacancies
Community programme 303w
Wales 285w

Vacant land
Hampshire 464w
Local government land 729-30w

Vaccination
Discounts 151w
Publicity 78-9w
Tuberculosis 151w

Vaccine damaged children
Compensation 157w

van Straubenzee, Sir William
Questions
Ministers of religion, Early retirement 445w

VAT
EC countries 305-6w
Tax avoidance 654w
Tax evasion 648w

VAT threshold
Building industry 593w

VAT zero rated goods 142w
Tax yields 142w

Vauxhall Motors 588-9w
Motor components industry 1062

VC10 aircraft 97w, 247w
Costs 97w
Defence contracts 97w, 247w
Defence procurement 97w
Military aircraft 97w

Ventilation
Channel tunnel 758-9

Veterinary investigation centres 1-2w

Veterinary medicine 485-6w
Antibiotics 485-6w

Veterinary services 1-2w

Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering 642w
Defence procurement 912
Submarines 911

Victim support schemes 271w, 545-6w
Government grants 545-6w

Vietnam
Refugees 772

Viggers, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 594, 638-40
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 32
Westlands helicopters (13.01.86) 872
Questions
Armed forces pensions, Widows 246w
Breast cancer, Screening 432w, 571-2
Civil servants, Dept of Health & Social Security 19
South African, Foreign policy 195w
Voluntary schools, Educational finance 340w

Violence
African National Congress 285
Middle East 287
Security industry 921
South Africa 285-6

Violent disorder (13.01.86) 792-869

Viral diseases
Discrimination 71w

Visas
Bangladesh 624w
Foreign tourists 132w
Indian subcontinent 342w
Sri Lanka 132w, 624w

Vocational education
City & Guilds of London Institute 118w

Vocational guidance
Armed forces 918
Armed forces strength 917

Vocational training
Employment schemes 186w

Voluntary organisations
Community programme 398w
Energy Efficiency Year 331w
Government grants 176-7w
Housing benefits 695w
Joint liaison committees 59w

Local government expenditure 237w
Local government reform 237w, 603w

Voluntary redundancy 330w

Voluntary schools
Educational finance 340w

Vote Office 652-4w

Voting methods
EC reform 201w
European communities 193-4w
EC law 552w

Waddington, Mr David, *Minister of State for the Home Department*
Debates etc
Hong Kong, Nationality (16.01.86) 1268-77, 1302-4
Immigration control (18.12.85) 503-7
Questions
British citizenship 715w
Data protection tribunal, Public appointments 130w
Entry clearances, Dacca 624w
Entry clearances, Immigration appeals 715w
Equal opportunities, Home Office 5w, 127w
Equal opportunities, Law reform 5w
Foreign tourists, Immigration rules 174w
Foreign tourists, Statistics 5-6w
Immigrant detainees, Heathrow 457-8w
Immigrant detainees, Indian subcontinent 623-4w
Immigrants, Bangladesh 625w
Immigration, Members correspondence 342w
Immigration appeals, British citizenship 8-9w
Immigration controls 625w
Immigration controls, Bangladesh 623-4w
Immigration controls, Sri Lanka 455-6w
Immigration controls, Statistics 9-10w
Immigration rules, Housing 127-8w
Local government staff, Lancashire 627w
Naturalisation 714w
Nazemi, Dr, Immigration applications 272w
Newcastle Airport, Immigration controls 273w
Political refugees, Immigration applications 714w
Primary purpose rule, Immigration appeals 273w
Refugees 714w
Shops Bill (HL) 1985/86 547-8w
Special voucher scheme, India 715w
Visas, Bangladesh 624w
Visas, Foreign tourists 132w
Visas, Indian subcontinent 342w
Visas, Sri Lanka 132w, 624w

Wages councils
Personnel 726w
Young people 726w

Wages Inspectorate
Yorkshire & Humberside 489-92w

Wainwright, Mr Richard
Questions
Argentina, Diplomatic relations 199w
Arms trade, South America 589w
Community programme, Vacancies 303w
Community programme, Working hours 303w

Waiting lists
Council house waiting lists 482w

Waldegrave, Mr William, *Minister of State for the Environment (Countryside & Local Government)*
Debates etc
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emissions (14.01.86) 1027-34, 1035, 1041, 1045-7
Questions
Health physics, Merchant seamen 221-2w
Local Government Bill 1985/86 678w
Local government staff, Manpower 469-70w, 577w
Nature Conservancy Council, Annual reports 17w
Pollution control, Disclosure of information 369w
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear safety 220-1w
Sea pollution, Beaches 223-8w
Wildlife Inspectorate, Professional misconduct 107-8w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Orders & regulations 14-5w

Walden, Mr George, *Under-Secretary of State for Education & Science*
Debates etc
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 67-71
Questions
Agricultural & Food Research Council 336w
Archaeology, International conferences 148-9
Business education, Universities 335w
CERN, UK contributions 145
Educational psychology, Professional qualifications 337-8w
Freedom of expression, Prosecutions 152
Graduates, Employment 336-8w
Higher education, Freedom of expression 113w, 151
Higher education, Student numbers 117w, 118w
Higher education admission 709-10w
Higher education admission, Scottish Certificate of Education 115-6w
"Higher Education Consultation Paper" 118w, 120w
Initial teacher training, Portsmouth 288w
Languages education, Nordic countries 118-9w
Mandatory student grants, Refugees 646w
Medical research, Trauma 38w
Open University, Student numbers, Specific cases 116w
Open University, Tuition fees 116w
Open University, University finance 122w, 544w, 711-2w
Overseas students, Student numbers 709-11w
Plant Breeding Institute, Property transfer 286-7w
Postgraduate students, Science & technology research 579-80w
Replan 644-5w
School leaving, Derbyshire 645w
School leaving, Educational qualifications 122w
Science Research Council, Research finance 645w
Speech therapy, Higher education 444w
Staff-student ratios, Universities 121w
Student grants 147-8
Student grants, Deeds of Covenant 120w
Student grants, Student loans 148
Student numbers, Women 121w
Universities, Higher education admission 643w
Universities, Research 117w, 118w
University finance, Educational finance 116-7w
University finance, Private investment 122w
University finance, University Grants Committee 118w, 442-4w
University teachers, Careers development 712w
University teachers, Pay 335-6w
Welsh Plant Breeding Station, Overseas students 336w

Wales
Capital investment 332w
Cash limits 619w
Cervical cancer 616w, 617w, 618w
Child patients 284w
Cooperatives 719w
Cornish unit houses 331-2w
Economic situation 756
Free school meals 19-20w, 20-1w
Government grants to local authorities 617-8w
Hospitals 108w, 284-6w
Households 285w
Housing insulation 719w
Industrial development 757
Job centres 719-20w
Manufacturing industries 285w
Motor vehicle registration 631w
Playing fields 285w, 286w
Population 285w
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 331-40, 618-9w
Regional aid 757
School meals 20-1w
Screening 572
Small firms service 286w
Social workers 108w
Unemployment 285w
Vacancies 285w

Wales Tourist Board 286w
Government grants 286w

Walker, A Cecil
Members resignations (17.12.85) 140

Walker, Mr Bill
Debates etc
Gartcosh Steelworks, Scottish Affairs Select Committee (19.12.85) 590-1
Iron & steel industry, Scotland (20.12.85) 695
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 92-5, 102
Westland helicopters (15.01.86) 1102
Questions
Business statement 578
Cereals, Weather 558

Walker, Rt Hon Peter, *Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Boiler conversion scheme, Coal firing scheme 27w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 5-6, 6-7, 30w
Coal mine closures, Kinsley 7
Coal mining, Imports 8-9
Coal mining, Industrial disputes 14
Coal mining, Industrial health & safety 7
Coal mining, Investment 9
Coal mining, Productivity 11-2
Coal mining, Redundancy pay 247-8w
Coal mining, Unemployment 26w
Coal mining, Working hours 7
Colliery review procedure 9
Energy efficiency, Building regulations 8
Energy efficiency, Energy prices 8
Energy efficiency, Industrial energy conservation 7-8
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd, Finance 11
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd, Research finance 11
NCB (Enterprise) Ltd, Upper Waiting Hall 250w
Power industry, Capital investment 248w

Wallace, Mr James
Debates etc
Planning inquiries, Dounreay (14.01.86) 1049-53, 1054-5
Questions
Armed forces training, South Africa 523w
Common fisheries policy, EC Fisheries Council 282w
Defence procurement, Navy 914
Higher education admission, Scottish Certificate of Education 115-6w
Iron & steel industry, Ravenscraig Steelworks 1070
Lighthouses, Manpower 168w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Dounreay 109-10w, 160w
Scottish Islands, EC grants & loans 482w
Social Security benefits, Orkney 499w
Strategic defence initiative, Technical assistance 560w
Tax incentives, Energy efficiency 307w

Wallace, Colin 134-5w
Inquiries 134-5w

Waller, Mr Gary
Debates etc
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1982 (13.01.86) 884-7
Questions
Multifibre arrangement 588w
M1, Road construction 406w
Road construction, Airedale 763-4

Road works, Costs 731w
Road works, Expenditure 732w

Walters, Mr Dennis
Questions
Middle East, Peace negotiations 192w, 289

Waltham Forest
Council housing (20.12.85) 717-24
Housing (20.12.85) 717-24

Wandsworth
Unemployment 398-9w

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Debates etc
Leasehold Reform Bill, 1R (14.01.86) 935-7
Questions
Child patients, Wales 284w
Cornish unit houses, Wales 331-2w
Hospitals, Wales 108w
Namibia, Foreign policy 205w

Wardle, Mr Charles
Questions
Employment, Inner city areas 397w
Student grants, Parental contributions 39-40w

Wareing, Robert N
Debates etc
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1368-9, 1372, 1390-4
Questions
British Aerospace, Ministers correspondence 922
Community programme, Exservicemen 637-8w
Dumping, Licensing 614w
Fire prevention, Multiple occupation 626w
Imperial Tobacco, Takeovers 633-4w
Local government audit 729w
Merseyside Residuary Body 677w, 731w
Merseyside Residuary Body, Pocock, Leslie 731w
Merseyside Residuary Body, Public appointments 677w
Sri Lanka, Foreign relations 202w
Water authorities, Property transfer 673w

Warren, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 38, (15.01.86) 1148-50

Wars
Channel tunnel 520w

Warsaw Pact
NATO 292-3

Warships
British Shipbuilders 724w
Defence procurement 914
Navy 914
West Germany 525w

Wash
Nature conservation 463w

Washington Development Corporation 729w
Public appointments 729w

Waste disposal
Polkemmet 3
Rivers 614w

Water
Acid rain 549w

Water authorities
External financing limits 572w, 730-2w
Finance 467w, 572w
Privatisation 679-82w
Property transfer 673w
Sewers 571-2w, 572-3w
Water pollution 656-62w
Water supply 573-4w, 656-62w

Water charges 463w
North West Water Authority 260w
Social security reform 597w
Water meters 103w

Water Metering Steering Group Report 463w

Water meters
Water charges 103w

Water pollution
East Anglia 257w
Nitrates 545w, 656w
Water authorities 656-62w

Water supply
Deserts 770-1
EC countries 468w
Households 468w
Lead pollution 12w
Leeds 220w
Lincolnshire 656w
Nitrates 257w
Water authorities 573-4w, 656-62w

Water supply industry
Privatisation 573w

Water treatment
Aid financed trade 770

Watts, Mr John
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 602, 630-3
Questions
Export promotion, Data banks 587w
Hypermarkets, Planning permission 260w
Labour costs, Industry 509-10w
Metropolitan Police, Offices 171-2w
Personal tax allowances, Married people 652w
Police, Expenditure 129w
Police, Manpower 178-9w
Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Custody officers 169-70w
Religious education, Teacher training 288w
Thames Valley Police, Manpower 128w
Urban programme, Government grants to local authorities 18-20w, 260w

Wealth
Exports 1061

Weather
Cereals 558

Weetch, Mr Ken
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 623-5
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 808
Questions
British Dental Association, Trade unions 125w
Dental charges exemptions 420w
Dental services, Fees & charges 147w
Departmental forms, Administrative delays 154w
Local dental committees 420w
USA, Central America 205w

Wells, Mr Bowen
Debates etc
Low pay (18.12.85) 479-80
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 199-201, 215
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 328
Questions
Namibia, Western Contact Group 286
South Africa, Economic sanctions 293

Wells, Sir John
Debates etc
Channel crossing (18.12.85) 403
Questions
House of Commons catering, Apples 716w
Reprography, Members facilities 716w

Welsh Development Agency
Capital investment 615-6w

Welsh Office
Civil service manpower 284w

Welsh Plant Breeding Station 336w
Overseas students 336w

Welwyn Hatfield 397w, 399w, 463w
Council house sales 463w
Employment 399w
Social security abuse 397w
Unemployment benefits 397w

West Bank 193w, 286-7, 290-1
Gaza 291

West Germany
Air force 381-2w
Armed forces 211w
Defence procurement 525w
Warships 525w

West Midlands
NHS & private practice 66-8w
Regional aid 1196

West Midlands Police
Plastic bullets 270w

West Midlands Regional Health Authority 66-8w, 419w
Hip replacements 419w
Private patients 66-8w

West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority 415-6w
Smoking related diseases 415-6w

Western Contact Group
Namibia 286

Western Europe
International economic relations 1202
USA 1202

Western Sahara
Recognition of States 133-4w

Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 35-46, 137w, 155, 243-4w, 347w, 451w, 452w, 474-5w, 515-6w, 517-8w, 518-9w, 520w, 529-30w, 530-1w, 531-2w, 533w, 534w, 535w, 553-4w, 563-4, 566, 567, 578w, 592w, 609-10w, 610-1w, 614w, 629w, 724w, 734w, (13.01.86) 777-89, 870-4, 918-9, 920, 922, 1058-9, (15.01.86) 1082-174, 1203-4
Avionics 243-4w
British Aerospace 592w, 724w, 918-9, 920-1, 922, 1204-5
Cabinet Committees 1206
Civil servants 1206
Company finance 137w, 347w, 452w, 515w, 518-9w, 534w
Cost effectiveness 517w
Defence contracts 515w, 534w, 535w
Defence procurement 155, 525-6w, 564, 566
Disclosure of information 515w, 520w, 919, 920-1
Discrimination 518w, 519w
Employment 1204
European Commission 515w
European Court of Justice 518w
Foreign investment in UK 451w
Heseltine, Michael 921, 1206
House of Commons debates 1204
Industrial production 518-9w
International cooperation 519w, 526-8w, 529w, 530w, 532w, 534w, 610-1w, 1072
Investor protection 452w
Italy 519w
Letters 525w
Lloyds Bank International 517w
Lloyds International Bank 518w
Merchant banks 451w
Ministerial statements (16.12.85) 35-46, (13.01.86) 777-89, 870-4
Ministers correspondence 517w, 518w, 519-20w, 553-4w, 610w, 724w, 1203-4, 1205, 1206
Nationalised industries 1058-9
Official secrets 614w, 629w
Opposition Days (15.01.86) 1082-174
Public sector 1204
Shareholders 451w, 516w, 518w, 519w
Shares 533w
Solicitor-General 724w
Technology transfer 1205-6
Unfair competition 519w
USA 474-5w, 533w

WG Allen 1073
Company liquidations 1073

Wheeler, Mr John
Debates etc
Football Safety Review (16.01.86) 1232
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 820-3

Rate support grants (18.12.85) 319
Questions
BAOR, Costs 211w
Djibouti, UK companies abroad 365w
Entry clearances, Fees & charges 291w
Local government land, Greater London Council 13w
Metropolitan Police 546w
Prisons, Design 177w

White, Mr James
Questions
Unemployment, Glasgow 57-8w

Whitfield, Mr John
Debates etc
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 994-7
Questions
British Aerospace, Westland helicopters 921

Whitney, Mr Ray, *Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security*
Debates etc
Beckenham Hospital (20.12.85) 741-4
Oldchurch Hospital (13.01.86) 901-4
Southend Hospital (15.01.86) 1187-90
Questions
Action on smoking & health, Government grants 428w, 429w
Adoption, Disclosure of information 700w
Blood alcohol levels 435w
Cancer, North East Thames Regional Health Authority 501w
Child health 237-8w
Child health, Medical research 602w
Child patients, Mental hospitals 702w
Children, Children in care 82w
Cohabitation, Single people 153w
Cruelty to children 603w
Cruelty to children, Local government social services 437w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Action on Smoking & Health 429w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Statistics 604w
Diet & disease, Medical research 78w
District health authorities, Merseyside 149-52w
Doctors, Computers 77-8w
Drug abuse, Family doctors 505w
Educational health services 600w
Exhibitions, Social services 556w
Factor VIII, Blood 416w
Food standards, Irradiation 310w
Health education, Drug abuse 155-6w
Health service ancillary staff, Patients 235w
health service staff, Management 235w
Health service staff, Pay 312-3w
Heart diseases, Transplant surgery 504-5w
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 499-500w, 604w
Hip replacements, West Midlands Regional Health Authority 419w
Hospital catering, Margarine 428w
Hospital closures, Hospital beds 77w, 495w
Hospital closures, NHS finance 503w
Hospital closures, Sick leave 324w
Hospital discharges, Community care 236-7w
Hospital length of stay 235w, 604w
Hospital patients, Trauma 158w
Hospital waiting lists, Bolton Health Authority 496w
Hospital waiting lists, Coronary bypass operations 325w
Hospital waiting lists, Derbyshire 322w
Hospital waiting lists, Greater London 558w
Hospital waiting lists, Surgery 155w
Hospitals 605w
Hospitals, Construction 554-6w
Hospitals, Construction costs 234-6w
Hospitals, Derbyshire 323w
Hospitals, Fires 234w, 438w, 697w
Hospitals, Food poisoning 605w
Hospitals, Peterborough Health Authority 326w
Hospitals, Sponsorship 605w
Households, Families 506w
Human growth hormones; Hormone treatments 700w
Hypothermia, Death 321w, 322w
Kidney failure, Kidney patients 699-700w
Kidneys, Transplant surgery 310-1w, 698w
Leeds General Infirmary 233-4w
Leeds General Infirmary, Building repairs 154w
Local government expenditure, Voluntary organisations 237w
Mental patients, Respiratory diseases 73-4w
Middlesex Hospital, Hospital closures 155w
Multiple sclerosis, Medical treatment 76-7w
National No-Smoking Day, Opinion surveys 419w
NHS, Hospitals 84-96w
NHS, Technicians 151-2w
NHS complaints 232w
NHS complaints, Clinical judgements 231w, 232w, 233w
Nicorette, Prescriptions 315w
Nursing homes, Handbooks 605w
Nursing homes, Licensing 79-80w
Pupils 698w
Regional health authorities, Merseyside 150w
Regional health authorities, Pay 235w
Residential care, Codes of practice 604w
School nurses, Educational health services 697-8w
Skoal Bandits, British Medical Association 432w
Smoking, Hospitals 503w
Smoking, Public buildings 502w
Smoking related diseases, Death 415-6w
Smoking related diseases, Norfolk 73-5w
Speech therapy, Teachers 433-4w
Surgery, Death 601-2w
Surgery, Hospital waiting lists 238w
Surgery, Infectious diseases 605w
Tobacco industry, Advertising codes of practice 434w
Vaccination, Publicity 78-9w
Vaccination, Tuberculosis 151w
Vaccine damaged children, Compensation 157w
Voluntary organisations, Local government reform 603w

Wick
DHSS local offices 499w

Widows
Armed forces pensions 246w

Widows benefits
South Africa 427-8w

Wiggin, Mr Jerry
Debates etc
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 40, (13.01.86) 782 (15.01.86) 1135-7

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Debates etc
Breast cancer, Public petitions (17.01.86) 1345
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Bill, 2R (17.01.86) 1367, 1382-6
Questions
Government grants to local authorities, Wales 617-8w
Military exercise, New Zealand 734w
Ministry of Defence, Security vetting 643w
Nuclear weapons tests, Australia 629w
Planning appeals 222w
Planning appeals, Local authorities 222w
Rate support grants, Wales 618-9w
Trident 562w

Wildlife Inspectorate 107-8w
Professional misconduct 107-8w

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 14-5w, 218w, 372-3w, 463w
Orders & regulations 14-5w
Public footpaths 372-3w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Debates etc
Overseas aid (17.12.85) 186-9
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 39, (13.01.86) 781, 873, (15.01.86) 1100, 1105, 1139-45
Questions
Defence research, Technical assistance 908
Exhibitions, Gas safety 245w

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Debates etc
Members interests (17.12.85) 223-4
Members interests, Liberal party (18.12.85) 342
Recess motions, Christmas (18.12.85) 386-9
Westland helicopters, Government departments (16.12.85) 47
Questions
Disclosure of information, Inquiries 629w
Employment schemes, Government grants 179-83w
Motor components industry, Vauxhall Motors 1062
Nazemi, Dr, Immigration applications 272w
Westland helicopters, Official secrets 629w

Willowbrook estate 259w
Housing improvement 259w
Planning permission 259w

Wilson, Mr Gordon
Debates etc
Business statement (13.01.86) 775
Peterhead Harbours (South Bay Development) Order Confirmation Bill, 2R (16.12.85) 75, 76, 87-8
Questions
Acid rain 548-9w
Acid rain, Freshwater fish 544-5w
Acid rain, Scotland 549w
Air pollution, Sulphur dioxide 545w
Continental shelf, Orders & regulations 30w
Defence contracts, Scotland 912
Financial institutions, Banks 309w
North Sea oil, Technical assistance 250w
Pollution, Pollutants 544w
Trustee savings banks, Banks 363w

Wind power
Electricity generation 27w
Government grants 27w
Rural areas 27w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc
Public Order Bill, 2R (13.01.86) 796
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 45, (15.01.86) 1123, 1125, 1143-5, 1160
Questions
Business statement 582, 1222-3
Immigrant detainees, Heathrow 457-8w
Mallon, Seamus, Ulster Defence Regiment 246-7w
Members interests 15-6
South Africa, Foreign relations 295

Winterton, Mrs Ann
Questions
Family Planning Association 80w
Family Planning Association, Health Education Council 80w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
"Reform of Social Security White Paper" (16.12.85) 34
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 45
Questions
Aerospace industry 632w
Aerospace industry, Exports 632w
Aerospace industry, Manpower 636-7w
Black economy, Building industry 593w
Building industry, Complaints 570-1w
Housing stock, EC countries 16w
Housing stock, Households 16w
Motorways, Road traffic 45-6w
Namibia, United Nations 472w
Sewers, North West region 15w
VAT threshold, Building industry 593w

Witnesses
House of Commons Select Committees 691-2w

Wolverhampton
Employment schemes 186w

Women
Arab states 208w

Average earnings 300-1w
Brixton Prison 342w
Crimes of violence 127w, 275w
Dept of Health & Social Security 504w
Enterprise allowance scheme 57w
Equal opportunities 5w
Islam 208w
Pensions 319-20w
State occupational pensions 147-8w
Student numbers 121w

Womens prisons
Per capita costs 170w

Wood
Exports 332w
Imports 332w

Wood, Mr Timothy
Debates etc
Rate support grants (18.12.85) 328
Questions
Car industry, Motor vehicle parts 1061
Company law, Law reform 136-7w
Drug abuse, Publicity 557-8w
Insolvency Act 1985 137w
Navy, Armed forces deployment 215w
NHS finance, Regional health authorities 156-7w
Sudan, Food aid 447w

Woodall, Mr Alec
Questions
Coal mine closures, Kinsley 7

Woodcock, Mr Mike
Questions
Lead free petrol, Capital investment 634-5w
Lead free petrol, Costs 635w
Lead free petrol, Energy consumption 635w
Taxation, Lead free petrol 654-5w

Woolaway houses 167w
Defective housing 167w

Woollard, Brian (20.12.85) 671-2

Woolwich Ferry 110-1w, 406-7w
Local government reform 110-1w, 406-7w

Work study
Civil servants 17-8

Working hours
Baking industry 635-6w
Coal mining 7
Community programme 303w
Job centres 719-20w
University teachers 335-6w

World Archaeological Congress 148-9
Association of University Teachers 148-9

Worsley
Government assistance to industry 25w, 136w, 139w

Wrigglesworth, Mr Ian
Debates etc
"Banking Supervision White Paper" (17.12.85) 162
Business statement (13.01.86) 776
Financial Services Bill, 2R (14.01.86) 999-1001
Science & technology research (16.12.85) 54-6
Westland helicopters (16.12.85) 43, (13.01.86) 784
Questions
A19, Road works 297w
Customs officers, North East region 190w
Customs officers, Northern region 191w
Drug crimes, Northern region 190w
Regional aid, Northern region 1067, 1196

Yelland Power Station 716w
Power station closures 716w

Yeo, Mr Tim
Debates etc
Low pay (18.12.85) 474-6, 487
Questions
Argentina, Foreign policy 199w
Cereals, Agricultural production 276w
Defence procurement, Cost effectiveness 372w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 647w
Lloyds of London, Financial Services Bill 1985/86 589w
Takeovers, Codes of practice 335w
Teachers, Industrial disputes 141
Trade Descriptions (Origin Marking) (Miscellaneous Goods) Order 1981 245w

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority 233-4w

Yorkshire Water Authority 656-62w

Yorkshire Water Colour Society 34-5w
Exhibitions 34-5w
Upper Waiting Hall 34-5w

Yorkshire & Humberside 264w
Underpayments 489-92w
Wages Inspectorate 489-92w

Young, Mr David
Questions
EC integration 197w

Young, Sir George, *Under-Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc
Building Societies Bill, 2R (19.12.85) 649-53
Homelessness, Greater London (20.12.85) 703-8
Housing co-operatives (20.12.85) 749-53
Housing, Waltham Forest (20.12.85) 720-4
Liverpool (16.01.86) 1340-4
Urban areas (20.12.85) 712-6
Questions
Access to buildings, Mobility of disabled 655-6w
Building industry, Complaints 570-1w
Building regulations, Energy Efficiency Year 13w
Council house sales 259-60w
Council house sales, Welwyn Hatfield 463w
Council house waiting lists 465w
Council housing, Costs 217w
Council housing, Empty housing 218-9w
Council of Ministers, Offices 463-4w
Crown Suppliers, Fees & charges 335w
Dept of the Environment, Efficiency scrutinies 263w
Glory Hole, Derelict land grants 464w
Housing finance, Greater London Council 216-8w
Housing investment programmes, Asbestos stripping 371w
Housing investment programmes, Private rented housing 217w
Housing stock, EC countries 16w
Housing stock, Households 16w
Insulation grants, Government grants to local authorities 673-9w
Law centres, Local government reform 261-2w
Local government land, Vacant land 729-30w
London docklands, Employment opportunities 220w, 467w
London Docklands Development Corporation, External financing limits 472w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Management techniques 571w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Property transfer 471-2w
London docklands railway, Employment 471-2w
London docklands railway, Manpower 679w
Private rented housing, Judgments 464w
Regional aid, Glanford 471-2w
Rent arrears, Council housing 257-60w
Richmond terrace, House of Commons accommodation 261w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Elections 259w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Local government reform 259w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Local government staff 728-9w
Thamesmead Community Trust, Offices 729w
Urban areas, Social deprivation 467w
Urban deprivations, Statistics 12w
Urban programme, Government grants to local authorities 18-20w, 260w
Urban programme, Holiday pay schemes 13w
Willowbrook estate, Housing improvement 259w

Young offenders
Prisons 63w

Young people
Board & lodging charges 418w
Income support scheme 434w, 701w
Martial arts weapons 570
Mortgage relief 1197
Police cautions 546-7w
Rent allowances 506-8w
Social security benefits 495w
Social security benefits rules 422-6w
Social security reviews 495w
Supplementary benefits 84w, 156, 434-5w, 506-8w
Tobacco 138-9w
Wages councils 726w

Younger, Rt Hon George *Secretary of State for Scotland (Secretary of State for Defence from 9 Jan 1986)*
Debates etc
Iron & steel industry, Ministerial statements (20.12.85) 691-9
Questions
Ambulance services, Scotland 161w
Defence attaches 608-9w
Defence research, Technical assistance 908
Defence Select Committee, Civil service manpower 641w
Drinking & driving, Scottish courts 359w
Drug abuse, Scottish courts 358-9w
Hill livestock allowances, Scotland 294-5w
Jordanhill College of Education, College closures 294w
List D schools, School closures 162w
North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, External financing limits 164w
Nuclear safety, Scotland 64w
Nuclear weapons, Lasers 909
Police interrogation, Scotland 357w
Prison population, Scotland 357-8w
Ravenscraig Steelworks, Trade unions 294w
Remand in custody, Scottish courts 357w
Scottish Office, Civil service manpower 161w
Sea transport, Scottish Islands 163w
Strategic defence initiative, 560w, 909
Strategic defence initiative, Computer applications 910-1
Strategic defence initiative, Defence expenditure 560w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence research 906, 907
Strategic defence initiative, Edinburgh University 910
Strategic defence initiative, Nuclear weapons 907-8
Strategic defence initiative, Nuclear weapons deployment 907
Strategic defence initiative, Reagan, President 907-8
Strategic defence initiative, USSR 908
Summary trial, Scottish courts 357w, 358w
Trident, Defence expenditure 562w

"Your Business in the Making" 581w

Youth custody
Prisons 8w
Scotland 63w

Youth employment
School leaving 726w

Youth training scheme 54-6w, 187w, 400-4w
Board & lodging charges 489-90w
Educational standards 150
European Social Fund 299w
Finance 41w, 54w, 187w
Information technology centres 54w
Local education authorities 488w
Manpower Services Commission 113w
Ministers domestic visits 186-7w
Northern Ireland 41w
Pay 727-8w

School leaving 567w
Skilled workers 150-1
Take-up of employment 187w
Travelling expenses 488-9w, 489-90w
Yugoslavia
Foreign policy 203w
Zimbabwe
Foreign policy 200w
Foreign relations 200w